

PBOT Downtown Meter Rate Adjustment
Subcommittee Meeting #2 Summary

July 15th 2015 | 3:30-5:30 p.m. | Portland Building 2nd Floor Room B

Subcommittee members in attendance: Ben Schonberger- **Housing Land Advocates**, Betsy Ames- **Office of Management & Finance**, Ian Stude- **Portland State University**, Reza Farhoodi- **Pearl District Neighborhood Association**, Helen Ying- **OldTown/ChinaTown Neighborhood Association**, Pete Collins- **South Waterfront Community Relations**, Felicia Williams- **Downtown Neighborhood Association**, Bob Buchanan- **Pioneer Place/Portland Business Alliance**, Mujtaba Ali- **SmartPark Garage**, Nicole Knudsen- **SEIU**, Tony Jordan- **Citizen at Large**, and Tina Wyszinski- **Goose Hollow Neighborhood Association**

City Staff: PBOT: Judith Gray, Malisa McCreedy, Marni Glick, Grant Morehead, Kathryn Doherty-Chapman, Ericka Nebel (Commissioner Novick's office)

Consultants in attendance: Rick Williams, Rick Williams Consulting

Facilitator: Eryn Deeming Kehe, JLA Public Involvement

1. Welcome and introductions

Ms. Deeming Kehe explained that the purpose of this meeting is to discuss the amount for a meter rate increase and any operational changes the committee might want to suggest in combination with the meter rate increase agreed to at the previous meeting

Decision making

Ms. Deeming Kehe clarified that the larger policy committee agreement is to try to get to consensus, but if consensus is not reached, the committee would go with a 50% plus 1 vote majority. She said a 2/3 vote is not the rule for decision making.

2. Review of June 23rd meeting outcome

Ms. Deeming Kehe reviewed the last meeting discussion and that at the last meeting, the group agreed that the necessary criteria had been met to justify a meter rate increase. There were 6 votes in support, 2 abstentions and 1 no vote.

3. Public Comment

There was no public comment

4. Presentation/Discussion

Ms. Gray presented technical information on parking occupancy, price changes in garages and TriMet fares. Then she accepted questions from the group.

Question: Is there demand for shoppers to park there at the Old Town garage now?

Rick Williams Response (RW): The recent survey of parkers there showed that only 2% of parkers were visitors or shoppers. Anecdotally he knows that customers usually come at 10 or later, the garages used to be full before 10 am and the full sign went up and the garage operators saw that visitors would try

and park in the garage but the full sign was up so they had to leave. So we know there is demand and the question is how do we get the full sign down so we have room for shoppers to park?

Question: What about the capacity/occupancy on-street downtown? Is the on-street occupancy full adjacent to that garage?

RW Response: Yes, the Lancaster data shows that through much of the day it is above the target occupancy.

Comment: Some input from the Old Town/Chinatown board- They have difficulty finding both parking on street and in garages in Chinatown/Old Town.

Comment: I mentioned this before, since there parking occupancy is extremely full after 7pm, it seems that we should consider suggesting changing the enforcement hours. I hope we have time to discuss this later.

Staff Response: Yes, we can discuss that later, thank you.

Comment: When we do this public information campaign would we consider putting it in different languages?

Staff response: Yes.

Question: Regarding SmartPark, do you mean limiting the number of monthly passes or changing the rate of the daily pass?

Staff response: We don't do monthly passes now, we would consider changing the daily rate to open up more room for short term visitors.

5. **Primary Recommendation: Meter rate increase amount**

Ms. Gray explained the staff recommendation to increase meter rates by 40 cents to \$2.00 per hour.

Then she discussed the research on the price elasticity of demand and other cities' experiences.

Question: I'd like to add these top three bullet points of operational changes to our recommendations to Council and add that we make this process a lot more nimble in the future. If variability is the key, then we need to be able to do that without getting 20 people in a room arguing over ten cents here and there.

Ms. Gray showed information on meter rates in other cities.

Meter rates range from \$.25- \$6 per hour in the U.S. with smaller cities like Portland in the \$1.50-\$4.00 range.

Discussion on raising the meter rates by 40 cents to \$2.00

Question: Are the garage prices higher or lower than on-street? Would this make the garages cheaper than on street?

Staff response: Yes this would make the garage prices lower than on-street which is existing City policy.

Comment: We should push the larger policy committee to get performance based pricing in the future, so we don't need to consider the next 7 years on this decision. We should focus on getting the right price now. I would recommend a \$.40 increase now. People will shift to other modes too.

Comment: I would favor the higher end of the price options, I think it bodes well for the future performance based pricing. In the future we would want to lower prices in some areas, it may lead to more public acceptance for more flexibility. Will Council have pressure to reduce the rate that we recommend? Maybe we start a little higher with our recommendation? Also TriMet fares are still the same, and parking rates should be higher than transit.

Comment: 40 cents sounds good, but I appreciate the idea that we should aim high in anticipation of a compromise. Bundling the increase to the other operational changes, like time stays would be a good idea. The pay by phone is a good idea, did the vote on that go to City Council yet?

Staff response: Yes, the ordinance to authorize a Request for Proposals for Pay by phone went to City Council today and it was approved.

Comment: If we are encouraging other modes, we should consider discounted parking for motorcycles and scooters. I think that would help people shift away from driving. There's also very little motorcycle parking now as is. I think \$.40 is a fair price but I feel bad about hourly low-income employees.

Comment: I would like to add a policy discussion later for a parking pass for low income workers. I guess that will be handled in the larger policy committee. Because of the constituency I represent, lower income workers, I abstain from voting.

Comment: I am in favor of a lower increase because South Waterfront occupancy is lower. We should really put the burden on the larger policy committee to push performance based pricing forward.

Comment: There is a large portion of downtown meters adjacent to housing and the meter time stays don't make any sense. How quickly is the City able to change these time limits?

Staff response: Getting something through Council takes several months, so we would have time to get the time stay changes on the city staff work schedules so the two changes could happen simultaneously.

Comment: I recommend a 60 cent increase. It's ridiculous for us to find the perfect price when there's all these factors that go into this. I think it's remarkable that have all come to consensus on moving toward performance based management, that's great. Parking in front of the business you are going to is a luxury good. I have a feeling that there is latent demand and if we raise the prices too low, then it will be quickly filled and then people will continue to cruise. I am also pessimistic that performance based pricing will happen anytime soon. I am also worried that the SmartPark prices will get out of whack.

Comment: I think 40 or 60 cent change good. I think that we should come to Council with a strong committee recommendation rather than planning to negotiate.

Comment: I like the 20 cent increase which will get us to the 86% occupancy and it seems to match better with SmartPark pricing. I am interested in parking because my restaurants don't want the rates to be increased. I don't want to hurt the businesses there.

Comment: Can we do 20 cents in South Waterfront and 40 cents Downtown now? Does the policy allow that?

Staff response: Not at this time. The current policy we have is one price for the district. But that can change in the future. It seems that everyone says that we need to be able to have more flexibility for the future.

Comment: I agree we should add these other operational changes now, we can't overlook them as a part of this. Timing is also a concern, if we roll this out in the fall before the Christmas season that would not be good.

Staff response: We would not do this change until January, so you don't have to worry about Christmas.

Comment: Ok, then I support a 40 cent increase with the caveat that it not happen until January, and with those other operational items.

Comment: When we talk about the high demand areas 60 cents make sense, I know in other areas we don't have that demand now, but I think it would prod leaders to move toward demand responsive pricing.

Question: When do these two changes go to City Council?

Staff response: We would go to Council for this meter rate change in the fall of this year, but not implement until next year (winter 2016). The other policy changes including performance based pricing would go to council until later next year (2016).

Vote: The committee voted to increase downtown meter rates by \$. 40 to \$2.00 an hour.

Action: 10 Yes votes and 2 no votes.

The two no votes reasons which were stated prior in the discussion, include:

1. Impact to low income workers, additional hardship
2. Prefer to increase to \$.20, concern about losing customers

Ms. Deeming Kehe: Is this the closest we will get to agreement?

The group agreed it was the closest they would get to agree on a \$.40 meter rate increase, with the understanding that this change would not be implemented until January 2016.

6. Supplemental recommendations discussion

Ms. Gray: I heard agreement to add all of these operational change to the council recommendation, changes to the time stays, SmartPark Garage day rates, and an information campaign. I also heard that this group wants to see performance based management move forward.

Comment: These are two different Council items. Performance based management is different, than this meter rate change. I would like to get the performance based pricing recommendation to Council twice.

Comment: I see this effort is to establish a more accurate baseline to introduce a variable pricing program.

Comment: The time limit conversation is also closely tied to changing meter enforcement hours.

Staff response: I agree that's important to discuss in the larger policy committee.

Ms. Deeming Kehe: Can we agree on these three operational changes? (The time stays, SmartPark garages, public information campaign) And then add that the policy committee continue work on performance based pricing?

Question: How would the City decide on the time stay changes? It seems important that they engage with businesses and residents to determine a good plan.

Staff response: Yes the City would discuss with adjacent businesses and residents to determine their unique needs. The current city policy states that the one hour time stays may be changed with consultation with local businesses, so we cannot change them without input.

Note: The committee voted to recommend the following to City Council regarding Downtown parking:

1. Adjustments to time limits to better meet customer and visitor needs
2. Public information program in conjunction with a rate increase
3. SmartPark price changes to open up capacity for customers

The committee also voted to encourage the Central City Parking Policy Committee to:

1. Support implementation of a performance-based parking management system

Action: 12 yes votes, a unanimous consensus to add these operational recommendations to City Council

Comment: I don't want to lose the discussion of adjustments to evening rates, extended hours in garages. Maybe it's for the larger policy committee.

Staff Response: It's something that has been looked at as an option in the past few years in the Smart Park garages and we can continue that conversation.

Comment: Workers are bicycling or using Trimet, and there's not enough bike parking downtown.

Staff response: Businesses can currently request that the City add bike parking.

7. Meeting # 1 Notes Summary: Are there any edits to the last meeting notes?

Action: No one had changes to the meeting summary.

8. Meeting was adjourned at 5:30pm.

Summary of actions:

With ten yes votes and two no votes, the subcommittee voted to recommend **that City Council increase Downtown parking meter rates by \$0.40 to \$2.00 an hour**, to be implemented after the 2015 holiday shopping season.

With twelve yes votes, the subcommittee unanimously recommend to Council and staff to make the following changes to parking operations, as part of a **package of operational adjustments** aimed at better serving customer parking needs in Downtown:

1. Adjustments to time limits to better meet customer and visitor needs
2. Changes to the all-day prices at SmartPark to open up capacity for customers
3. Public information in conjunction with a rate increase

Having developed these recommendations under current procedures for the downtown meter district, the subcommittee expressed support for a data-driven approach to setting meter rates, consistent with the Performance Based Parking Management concepts that are being considered as part of the Central City Parking Policy Update.

Items to take to larger Central City policy committee:

- **Performance based parking management**
 - Variability of pricing by location and time of day
 - Flexibility without going to Council for votes on meter changes
 - Consider eliminating time limits or extending them to be much longer
- Pay by phone, easier to pay
- Motorcycle/scooter parking- reduced rates, more spaces dedicated for them
- Parking pass system for low-income workers (maybe pass in garages)
- Extending meter enforcement hours into evening
- Time stays in general need to be considered and changed