

## **Suggestions for Improvement of the City of Jacksonville Public Parking Operations**

**Prepared by the  
TRUE Commission**

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- 1. The City's Attitude Toward Parking** It is suggested that the City formally clarify its attitude toward parking. Specifically, should available parking spaces be inexpensive, even if this policy makes them scarce? Should they be available, but expensive? Should the parking operation be self-supporting? Should it be a profit center? Should parking be priced at "market"? Or should parking be subsidized at some level by the City?
- 2. Parking Management's Mission** Division Chief Carle provided the TRUE Commission's Parking Committee with the Mission Statement developed in the 2002 benchmarking efforts. While helpful to a point, it is thought further clarification would be helpful. Should the Authority anticipate future parking needs? Should the Authority take steps to buy or lease additional parking facilities to meet present or future needs? How does the Division react to for-profit competition like Park Space?
- 3. Parking Pricing Philosophy** Parking is a commodity whose value is determined almost entirely by location. Assuming it is consistent with the City's parking philosophy (see #1 above), increase or decrease parking rates in an effort to achieve occupancy of 90 – 95%. Such a policy will maximize revenues while ensuring vacant space for the public. If a facility fills, increase the rates to discourage some parkers and open more spaces. If occupancy declines, reduce the rates to attract new parkers.
- 4. Parking Management Authority** Provide parking management with the authority, possibly within prescribed limits, to adjust monthly and transient parking rates to respond to changing market conditions (such as a special event, street closure, new competition, etc.).
- 5. Reserved Parking Spaces** Eliminate reserved parking spaces (preferably), or charge a significant premium for them. Reserved spaces require additional effort to police, and create a negative impression in the public's mind when they see empty spaces in a garage which is displaying a "full" sign. Further, reserved spaces eliminate "diversity", or the ability to sell 110 or more monthly parking permits in a 100-space garage because all of the parkers are never there at the same time.
- 6. "Free" Parking** The City "comps" parking to boards and commissions, as well as certain City employees and users of City vehicles. Additionally, JEDC grants free parking to companies in an effort to attract them to the City. It is recommended the market value of such parking be "charged", or at least attributed to, the entity benefiting from the "free" parking. At an absolute minimum, such grants should be tracked carefully and "credited" to the operation of the Public Parking Division.
- 7. Technology** There have been a number of technological advances in the parking industry in recent years, the "Autoview" system for example. Although probably requiring a capital expenditure, some of this equipment has the potential to increase parking revenues

considerably and/or reduce labor. Therefore it is recommended that parking management be given authority to test and evaluate such devices.

- 8. Unified Parking Management** Currently the Department of Administration and Finance, the Jacksonville Transportation Authority, SMG, and Metropolitan Parking Systems, Inc. are all involved in the City's parking operations. This can hardly be efficient. It is recommended, therefore, that all of the facilities be managed by the Parking Facilities and Enforcement Division of the City's Department of Administration and Finance.
- 9. Water Street Garage** The debt service on the Water Street garage is charged to parking operations, although not the revenues. This adversely affects operating results. To more accurately reflect actual conditions, it is recommended that at least an accounting entry should be made to reverse the charge.
- 10. Police and Fire Pension Fund** The Police and Fire Pension Fund receives 30% of parking ticket revenue which vitiates the parking management's improvement efforts and arbitrarily reduces operating income. It is recommended that a credit to income be given on the operating statement to more accurately reflect operating results.
- 11. Employee parking** It is recommended that, wherever possible, City employees should park in remote parking facilities and use the Skyway people mover.