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Public Policy Boring? Not When It Involves Parking

from Page 32

in areas that are not “prime” in terms of the ability to pay for parking? Is the short-term influx of revenue better than a well-managed program that provides a long-term revenue stream that is predictable and reliable?

Discipline in all areas

Cities are experiencing many parking problems today, such as the inability to pay for improvements, all-day parking in on-street spaces and abuse of accessible spaces.

Just as “one size does not fit all,” not all cities share these problems to equal degrees. What are the determining factors in various cities?

The reasons these problems are occurring are many, and include inappropriate regulations, outdated regulations, inadequate or inappropriate enforcement and outdated rates.

Organized, proactive, analytical, customer-sensitive parking management has existed for more than 30 years in cities across the United States.

Some cities control so little of the parking supply (as public parking) that they cannot substantially influence the market, either overall or in selected locations.

Many cities did not create parking management organizations, and lack of management meant that very little got done and fragmented departments did not understand the concept or how various program elements should work together.

When cities did create parking management organizations, some allowed them to deteriorate over time in the misguided search for more revenue.

Discipline is needed in parking management, just as in the management of any other significant resource. This means that:

- funds need to be devoted to the analysis necessary to develop and manage good parking programs;

- equipment and facilities need to have adequate budgets for updating and repair; and

- enforcement, wayfinding, design, regulations, PARCS – all need to be a part of the program, not just parking rates.

The focus on raising revenue, particularly to use for things other than the constant improvement of existing parking and programs, promotes the focus on rates and a reluctance to devote time and resources to the other parts of parking management that make the systems work.

Habits are hard to change

Where should parking money go? This is typically not a decision that parking managers get to make. Often it is a political decision, usually local but not always so. Many public officials and sometimes others in the public want parking money; they see parking as a “cash cow” to be milked for other uses. Generally, they do not understand the programs.

What are the dangers in diverting parking revenue from parking activities?

The most common danger is that funds are not set aside for capital improvements such as garage restoration and repair; updated PARCS (parking access and revenue control systems); updated parking meters; and vehicles and equipment to support the parking program.

The second most common danger is lack of funding for a dedicated organization and staff: “We can run this in existing departments” no matter how many departments are involved. Analysis is no longer the basis for decisions. All the functions except the “revenue producing” ones get neglected. This results in lower revenue anyway.

The truth of the matter is that once parking revenue is diverted to other programs or needs, it is almost impossible to get it back – even if funds are needed for parking! So both public administrators and members of the public should be careful before suggesting that significant net revenue can be diverted to other uses without adequate consideration of what it will mean over time for public parking.

Following fashion is not always best

Some aspects of parking are almost always the same, no matter where you are. People will say there is not enough parking, the price is too high, parking is not convenient, the walk is too long, etc., etc.

However, the context in which parking occurs is always different. There are variations in the political, economic, physical, historic and geographic landscapes.

Organized, proactive, analytical, customer-sensitive parking management has existed for more than 30 years in cities across the United States. The strategies are proven, analysis is simple but not simplistic, and results have been shown in numerous cities.

Don’t adopt the latest fashion because it receives a lot of publicity. Learn from your colleagues with successful programs, and develop your own that work in your environment.

Know who you are, and do it right for where you are!

Barbara Chance, Ph.D., is CEO of Chance Management Advisors. She can be reached at Barbara.Chance@chancemanagement.com.

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Larry Donoghue Associates, Inc.

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Gavin Duncan

Jacobs Consultancy

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Gerald R. "Bob" Harkins

University of Texas, Austin

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Alliant Insurance Services

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Airports

Universities

Cities

Private Sector/Operators/

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The Public Private Partnership

Otherwise known as the Three Ps. Rick West leads a panel on how to fund the maintenance and repairs of your aging facilities. Let's someone else do it and you keep the money.

Rick West

Parking Entrepreneur

What Does your Customer Think?

PT columnist and parker Melissa Bean Sterzick takes a firm but humorous look at what the world thinks of parking, and how we can fix it.

Melissa Bean Sterzick

Parking Today Columnist

Rules for Parking

You've heard about market based parking rates and how they will change your lives, but have you heard the founder of the theory talk about something else? Dr. Donald Shoup from UCLA holds forth on other issues that affect the way people park – can you say “blocking a sidewalk.” You'd be surprised by the political hassles enforcing that little law can cause

Dr. Donald Shoup
Professor of Urban Planning, UCLA

The Largest Parking System Ever

Just what is happening in the Middle East? In case you haven't noticed, Abu Dhabi is installing the largest parking system on the planet, and PT's correspondent is there for every bit of it. Hear the report on what this massive system will look like.

Peter Guest
Past President of British Parking Association and Parking Today European Correspondent

Marketing Your Parking

Clyde Wilson brings two decades of working for a private operator and another with cities and owners to bear on the issue of what to do with all those empty spaces. Nights, weekends, and that pesky, empty roof level. Clyde will give you ideas that will make your operation hum, and fill your bank account.

What About On Street Wireless Technology?

This CEO from Down Under list the benefits and pitfalls of installing wireless systems in your streets and counting those empty (and full) on street spaces. Declan Ryan describes how they are doing it in Australia, and what the technology can do for us here in the States.

Technology, Technology, Technology

It can solve some problems, but can create as many more. Michelle Krakowski holds forth on what “is” and what's “coming” both on street and off. Pay on Foot – old hat. Pay by Cell – almost here. Pay and Display – don't stand in the way. But do they have an IP address? These technology issues, and more.

Numbers, AH the Numbers

Researcher Dale Denda brings is unique view to parking numbers. How many do we have? How much are we worth? How many will we build? We'll sell how much? These answers and more with Dale and his graphs, charts, and remarks.

Your Garage is NOT Secure

Arguably one of the most interesting and entertaining speakers ever to grace a PIE podium, Randy Atlas brings humor and horror to this most important subject. What can you do without breaking the bank? Plus, what can you do before you pour the first yard of concrete? Randy has the answers.

SCHEDULE

Sunday, March 30

11 AM – 5 PM – Registration Open

Noon – 9 PM – Exhibit Set up

1 – 5 PM – **Boot Camp**

Monday March 31

7:30 AM – 5 PM – Registration Open

8 AM – 11AM – Seminars

11 AM – 3 PM – Exhibits Open

3 PM – 5 PM – Seminars

Tuesday April 1

7:30 – 5 PM – Registration Open

8 AM – 11 AM – Seminars and Roundtables

11 AM – 3 PM – **Exhibits Open**

Wednesday April 2

7:30 – 10 AM – Registration Open

8 AM – 11 AM – Seminars

Note: Seminars are timed so Exhibitors can attend any seminar they wish.

**Complete Schedule Details are Available
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Monday Tuesday

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Full details, schedule, seminar details and on line registration at: www.parkingtoday.com/pie

BIG Little Company Wins Chicago Parking Advertising Deal

A small marketing firm, BIG Media Sales LLC, has edged out larger competitors to win the exclusive marketing contract for four downtown Chicago parking garages in a deal valued at \$7-million to \$12-million.

The multi-year deal with Chicago Loop Parking LLC, a Morgan Stanley Infrastructure Partners investment covers Grant Park-North, Grant Park-South, Monroe Street garage and the new Millennium Park parking structure. BIG Media Sales is responsible for parking garage advertising, promotions and product sampling, which will hold down parking fees by generating other forms of revenue.

"These are new revenue streams we hadn't even thought of," says Dennis Pedrelli, president of Chicago Loop Parking LLC, a Morgan Stanley Infrastructure Partners investment.

The agreement gives BIG Media Sales the right to sell interior advertising on walls, floors, pillars and stairs as well as custom displays, banner ad placements, and advertising on the back of garage tickets. Additionally, the deal lets the media company distribute samples in both entrance and exit lanes.

The garages can hold a total of 9,200 cars, but typically have an "in and out" average of about 10,000 cars per day, with an average of 1.5 people per car. During peak months, while special events like "Taste of Chicago" is going on, that number goes upwards to about 45,000 people going in and out of the garages" says Antonio (Tony) DiPaolo, Regional Vice President for Hartford, Conn.-based LAZ Parking, which manages the garages.

Garage advertising has particular appeal to automobile-related businesses ranging from manufacturers to insurance companies to car care products. But the venues already are attracting other kinds of advertisers including the South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism, which has installed scores of eye-catching vinyl advertisements on floors, walls and ceilings featuring warm weather scenarios aimed at winter weary Chicagoans under the them "Time to Thaw."

"We expect more than 600,000 people a day will see our invitation to visit South Carolina," says Chad Prosser, director of the South Carolina agency. "We think that our Time To Thaw message, delivered in these unique and memorable ways, will resonate with most of those people."

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JVH comments on Parking News every day at PT Blog – log on at www.parkingtoday.com. Each month, there are at least 40 other comments like these, posted daily.

They are getting there!!!

The Athens, OH, City Council is discussing the removal or reduction of parking requirements for new development and possibly for existing stores in its downtown area.

The deal is this – When you have parking requirements for businesses and apartment/condo development, you usually end up with more space than needed. This means the apartments cost more, housing costs go up, and people have to pay more for shelter.

In emerging downtowns, the problem is different. You have an empty building that was a hardware store. A restaurant wants to move in. It can't because the hardware store has only 10 parking spaces in the back and the code says restaurants need 25. So the store sits empty. This goes on in towns and cities across the fruited plain.

Stores empty because there's "not enough parking." Of course that's absurd. Downtown Athens has a plethora of parking. I have seen shopping area after shopping area that has plenty of parking; it's just a bit difficult to find. Proper signage and perhaps a few traffic directors during peak times and the problem is solved

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The alternative is on-street valet. The valet company finds nooks and crannies to place the cars, and folks simply drop off their Belchfire 8s with the valets and go about their shopping or eating or whatever. Works great in city after city.

Stopping development because the business that wants to go in needs "more" parking that is available is absurd. If a business is successful, they will find a way to park the cars.

Way to go, Athens. Keep it up. Go Bobcats.

Surf's up

Here's the deal – Surfers in the Waikiki area of Honolulu are complaining that the local authorities are going to start charging for parking along the beach.

I just loved their quote:

Melissa Ling-Ing said she has difficulty finding parking to go surfing off the Ala Wai Boat Harbor, noting that a state proposal to add more paid-parking stalls would further limit public access to the shoreline.

"It's a real inconvenience," said Ling-Ing, spokeswoman for Common Ground Hawaii. "We're opposed to it because it will deny us beach access."

HUH? How does charging for parking deny them beach access? The money is going to maintain the harbor, but since the surfers ride the waves outside the harbor, they feel they shouldn't have to pay to park.

They are complaining that there's not enough spaces for them to use, and they want more free parking, not less. The problem seems to be that non-beachgoers are using the spaces. Charging to park would stop that and give the surfers enough space to park.

How do people decide there is a certain inalienable right to free parking? The spaces have to be paved, lighted, patrolled by the police and the rest. Should all that be free? I'm sure the surfers have complained that there are too many potholes, or that there aren't enough cops when you need them. But they shouldn't have to pay for that.

It boggles the mind.

Not a lot of money in the maintenance fund

A parking deck in St. Paul, MN, is in danger of collapse. Emergency crews have shored it up, and the city has given the owner 30 days to effect permanent repairs.

Here's the thing – All garages age. Most will have problems particularly where there is ice, cold, salt and the other effects of severe weather. What to do, what to do?

When a garage is constructed, a plan for maintenance should be put in place. That means drains have to be regularly cleaned, floors need to be washed, that it needs to be inspected, and usually about every 10 or 15 years, the decking needs to be replaced. Yes, that's right: Millions need to be spent on maintenance and repair.

To do that, a maintenance fund needs to be set up and every year hundreds of thousands of dollars put into that fund, so when the work needs to be done down the road, the money will be there. When I asked Dale Denda, parking statistics guru, how often these funds are set up and funded, he just laughed. "Almost never."

Most owners don't think of garages as needing maintenance. They are steel and concrete. What can go wrong?

Continued on Page 46



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Laugh ... I Thought

BY PETER GUEST

PIE SPEAKER

Peter Guest will be speaking at the Parking Industry Exhibition in Chicago. His topic will be a discussion of arguably the largest parking system installation on earth, the one being currently installed in Abu Dhabi.

On April 1 (appropriately All Fools' Day), a new system of parking enforcement goes into effect in the UK. A lot of changes allow municipalities to do things such as ticket people making a banned turn.

But the biggest change for parkers is that the previous "one size fits all" penalty charge is being replaced by a two-level



system where charges will be reduced by 20% for "lesser" offenses such as overstaying at a meter and increased by 20% for more serious offenses such as parking in a no-parking zone. Predictably, cities are lobbying the government because of the money they will lose on the 20% reduction, and motorist groups are claiming that it's all a trick to make more money because of the 20% increase in costs.

Where did this system come from? Was it the result of detailed research and evaluation? Well no, actually. In London, the Borough Councils can get London-only powers, and it seems that a few years ago, after some market research, they decided that this new system of parking enforcement would be a good idea in the capital – and they changed the law. Why

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ht I'd Never Start

bother with science or numeracy when you can ask people what they want, rather than research what is needed?

So, as a result of some polling in London, the UK will shortly have a new law where frankly no one knows what will happen. Here are my predictions:

1) It will start as a mess. The law changes April 1, but at the time of this writing (late January), the government has yet to finalize the detailed rules that determine exactly what the Borough Councils, and hence their IT systems, have to do.

2) After April 1, the Councils cannot use the old systems – they are no longer legal – but some will.

3) Councils faced with a choice between writing a \$160 ticket and a \$240 ticket will concentrate on the higher-yielding ticket, and within a few days, the guys who don't want to pay for parking will migrate to not paying at a meter, knowing that the chances of getting a ticket will be lower – not quite what was hoped for.

Wal-Mart's ASDA Chain Fined

Some time ago I reported on the terrible accident at an ASDA (a major supermarket chain owned by Wal-Mart) car park. The supermarket had installed a barrier arm to stop people from misusing its car park at night. The barrier swung horizontally; one day the securing mechanism failed, and the barrier swung in front of a car and killed the driver. ASDA has been fined about \$500,000 for this. In UK terms, this is a pretty big fine, and of course, the way is now open for the man's family to pursue a claim for damages and compensation. A sad story.

Blue Badges

In the UK, we have a problem dealing with drivers and passengers with disabilities in a sensible way. We have two bits of law and they don't talk to each other.

First, we have a system whereby a driver (or passenger) who has a recognized mobility problem can get a permit, called a blue badge, which exempts them from many restrictions and charges. Car parks mark wide spaces that are reserved for blue badge holders. This is very similar to the ADA provision in the US. The second law, called the Disability Discrimination Act, makes it illegal to discriminate against anybody on the grounds of a disability. So, if I have a disability but I don't have a blue badge ...?

Planners now require that to meet DDA requirements, car parks must have the same proportion of spaces for the disabled as the proportion of disabled people in the population. However, since not all disabled people have cars, let alone a blue badge – and anyway they can park on the street for free – many of these spaces sit empty whilst other drivers search for somewhere to park. Any suggestion that this rule is inappro-

priate by, for example, a shopping mall owner is met by the suggestion that they want to discriminate.

On the other hand, the government has finally recognized that, to put it bluntly, the blue badge system has failed. Surveys suggest that more than half of all cars parked with blue badges are breaking the rules, either because the badge is forged or because a family member misuses the badge of a genuine holder to get the benefits that he or she is not entitled to.

This is illustrated by the case of solicitor Mohamed Lodhi, who used his wife's blue badge to park his car at work. The local Council filmed him misusing the badge on successive days when he parked and displayed the badge, although his wife was not in the car. He was fined \$2,000 and paid \$4,000 in costs and has to do 100 hours of community work. I suspect that once his case has

Continued on Page 46

The guys who don't want to pay for parking will migrate to not paying at a meter.

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Laugh ... I Thought I'd Never Start

from Page 45

been investigated by the Law Society, the lawyers' professional standards body, his chances of keeping his position as a lawyer will be quite low.

Do As I Say, Not As I Do (1)

Whilst on the subject of parking for the disabled, Richmond Borough Council in London seems to have a two-pronged approach to what is and what isn't allowed. Local resident Des Rock was unable to use the disabled bay that he normally parks in when he takes his disabled daughter to school. Why? Because the bay was being used by one of the Borough's own parking enforcement vehicles, which was there to – you guessed it – stop illegal parking.

Do As I Say, Not As I Do (2)

Government policy here in the UK is to discourage car use in city centres at busy times when alternatives are available. Not in Wolverhampton, apparently. Whilst the City Council tells everyone else to get on their bikes, buses and trains, it spends about \$1 million a year buying city-centre parking for its staff.

Peter Guest is Parking Today's correspondent in Europe and the Middle East. He can be reached at peterguestparking@hotmail.co.uk.

PT

PT Blog

from Page 42

When a garage is new, there is no need for maintenance. It's clean, crisp and strong. But what happens is insidious.

Like the ice that breaks up rocks on high mountains, water slowly creeps in the cracks in the concrete. If the deck coating is allowed to wear off, this happens sooner rather than later. The water, when it freezes, makes the cracks larger. Finally, the water, usually mixed with salt off the cars, reaches the rebar that holds the garage together. The rebar rusts and expands. Big chunks of concrete fall off the garage onto the hoods for Mercedes and Lexuses. (They never hit 10-year-old Hondas.)

Faster and faster the garage is weakened until finally it can collapse.

Usually, the owner decides just before the collapse that something needs to be done and ponies up a few million so the concrete can be removed from the rebar, the rebar cleaned, and then new concrete poured.

At this point, I'm sure the owner wished he had put a maintenance program in place and kept the coatings on the decks properly sealed, and in the worst case, put the money aside for the repairs that were certainly coming down the road.

St. Paul – perfect weather for parking deck disaster. Is the maintenance fund in place?

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Oh please

Did you know there are places in Maryland where the parking enforcement officer must get the signature of the driver of a car when writing a parking ticket? Yep, it's true.

Let's get the scenario – Officer sees a car parked at a fire hydrant. It's an obvious violation. No question. What does he do? Knock on surrounding doors inquiring after the owner? Buy a dozen donuts and eat them while waiting for the driver to show up? Return periodically to the crime scene to hopefully be there at the same time as the driver?

It boggles the mind that the legislators in the Terrapin State could have come up with this one. Why even attempt to enforce parking laws?

It seems, however, that this applies only in certain areas of the state – most cities have laws that allow the enforcement officers to slip the citation under the windshield wiper.

What brought all this to mind? A legislator who is not a member of the "Flat Earth Society, Maryland Branch" has put forth a bill in the state legislature to allow writing of tickets without the driver being present and getting a signature. Her name is Pamela Beidle.

All hail!

The WaPo does it again ...

Architect Shannon McDonald has written a book called "The Parking Garage: Design and Evolution of a Modern

Urban Form." In full disclosure, PT's articles have been quoted in a couple of places. She also used some pictures we printed.

Judging from the correspondence we received from Shannon over the past couple of years, this has been a lot of work, and a work of love.

All that having been said, the Washington Post and its staff writer Philip Kennicott have taken out after Shannon and the parking garage industry in general. Actually, they were rather kind to the book, but didn't particularly like her speaking abilities at a presentation she made at the Library of Congress.

I think personal swipes at nonprofessional speakers is out of place in general, but Kennicott's diatribe against parking garages is simply over the top.

He criticizes garages that no longer stand, he criticizes garages that have been built for decades, and then he criticizes the industry in general for building garages at all.

It should be noted that he comments that Shannon has said that many garages are monoliths and that the industry should – and has – taken a design view of garages so that they fit more into their environment and are multi-use projects, rather than simply focused on the automobile.

However, his take that all the problems of the world are caused by garages built in city centers is nonsense. Of course the garage has evolved. Of course when garages were first built they were clumsy and difficult. Of course early designs weren't as good as current ones. That's what happens in life, Philip.

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LOOK BEFORE YOU BUY

Assess a Parking Structure

BY GREGG G. COHEN AND MICHAEL L. BRAINERD

Decisions regarding the purchase of commercial property are typically based, in part, on the findings from a pre-purchase condition assessment of the property. The assessment is undertaken by a multi-discipline team of building professionals who have the knowledge and experience to quickly identify the condition of the property and develop meaningful predictions of the scope and cost of future repair, replacement and maintenance.

Parking structures, especially those in cold climates, are exposed to more severe conditions than most other buildings. Parking structures are more similar to bridges than to buildings. Vehicles bring in rainwater, snow and de-icing salts in cold climates. Roof-level and perimeter areas of open parking structures are exposed to windblown precipitation. Open, unheated parking structures must endure large daily and seasonal temperature variations. These harsh conditions can cause leakage and deterioration of structural components and require significant ongoing maintenance and several major concrete repair and protection cycles during the life of the structure, particularly for structures built before the advent of present-day durability measures.

Pre-purchase assessment of such structures requires not only expertise in structural engineering, but also knowledge and experience with the durability of parking structures and the often-subtle indicators of deficiencies, deterioration and distress that will require significant maintenance and repair.

Parking structures are more similar to bridges than to buildings

These skills are often beyond the experience-base of the engineers and technicians that commonly provide typical building inspections. And the commonly used inspection checklists and report formats fail to highlight the crucial issues.

The scope, time and cost of condition surveys and the testing necessary to identify the condition of a parking structure and to predict its maintenance and repair needs are usually more than a potential purchaser is used to spending on a more common building. However, the cost to repair and maintain a parking structure can be significant depending on its structural type, age and exposure conditions. Consequently, a typical pre-purchase survey should be conducted in two phases.

The first phase – initial assessment – typically involves the following tasks:



- Briefly review the structural drawings, architectural drawings and specifications representing the parking structure design. The purpose of this review is to become familiar with the structural and durability features of the parking structure.
- Contact local building officials to check for outstanding code violations.
- Interview appropriate members of the garage's management staff to discuss

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