

CITY COUNCIL REPORT

DATE: October 24, 2022

TO: Mayor, Vice Mayor, and Councilmembers

FROM: Gail Brockman, Parking Manager

CC: Greg Clifton, City Manger
Heidi Hansen, Interim Deputy City Manager
David McIntire, Community Investment Director
Anja Wendel, Senior Assistant City Attorney

SUBJECT: Information on purchase and planned use of an LPR (License Plate Reader) for ParkFlag

This CCR is to provide information on the planned purchase and use of a License Plate Reader (LPR) by ParkFlag to aid in enforcement and occupancy reporting. Due to individual privacy concerns received during the budget approval process, regarding the LPR, we wanted to provide further information, so you fully understand the due diligence performed.

Background:

ParkFlag currently enforces parking in the Downtown Historical District, the North End residential area and the Southside Neighborhood. The district includes both north and south sides of Rt 66, retail areas and outlying residential areas totaling approximately 64 square blocks. ParkFlag also enforces permitted parking in both City of Flagstaff and Coconino County facility lots. Not all spaces in the district are lined and marked, but our estimate for the number of spaces enforced on a regular basis is approximately 1,600. This includes the newly added spaces in the lots located on N. Cherry Avenue and W. Aspen Avenue. Some spaces are pay-to-park and others are time-limited which can be more challenging for enforcement when staffing levels are lower.

Staffing:

Per the Comprehensive Parking Management Plan, ParkFlag is intended to provide one Parking Aide per 300 spaces. These minimum staffing numbers are to ensure enforcement when parking occupancies are high in the paid parking district as well as provide robust enforcement in the Southside.

Due to the change in the hours of parking management, ParkFlag reduced its allotted number of parking Aides by one full time employee (1 FTE.) ParkFlag is now authorized for:

- 1 Parking Manager
- 1 Lead Parking Aide
- 4 Parking Aides
- An additional 1 Parking Aide will be added after the completion of the newly constructed Flagstaff Pulliam Airport parking lot and implementation of the new paid parking system.

With all staff members enforcing, not including upcoming airport management, we will be falling short of the requirements set forth by the Comprehensive Management Plan by approximately 250 spaces or one FTE.

During peak capacity hours, ParkFlag has at most three (3) employees on shift. The added parking capacity has been beneficial for both downtown employees and the public but has made it increasingly difficult to provide needed enforcement in residential zones both Downtown and in the Southside, as well as provide resident requested management in our two-hour time limited areas. Per State Law, Parking Aides are not able to enforce parking regulations unless they have passed background checks. Over the past years it has been clear that due to the background checks required to fill these positions, it can often take months to recruit and during that time it has been difficult to enforce parking regulations, and parking problems have been exacerbated. Staff can be hired without background checks as ambassadors but are unable to write citations.

Discussion:

To alleviate the pressure put on ParkFlag due to the growing needs of the program, and increased parking capacity, we requested and received approval from the Budget Team to purchase a LPR system to be mounted on our electric vehicle. The LPR will enable efficient enforcement of our city parking regulations on a consistent basis, without gaps during extended recruitment periods for Parking Aides.

Funding:

The funding for the new LPR system and the yearly subscription fees will come from existing funds in the ParkFlag budget. The system will not be funded by the ParkFlag Inventory (lockbox) funds or the general fund. As mentioned above, it has been budgeted for in this fiscal year.

Functionality:

The LPR will be mounted to ParkFlag's electric vehicle and used to manage facility lots for both the City and County, residential zones on the north and south side and time limited areas, such as the 15-minute parking near the US Post Office, 30-minute parking at the Visitor Center, and 2-hour parking on Cottage and Benton Ave in the Southside. The LPR will also assist parking aides in conducting parking occupancy counts and parking duration studies, which are both important in determining the need for future parking.

ParkFlag will not have access to Personally Identifiable Information (PII) such as the owner's name, date of birth, address, telephone number, or social security number. A License Plate Reader collects the same information that a Parking Aide collects from personal observation of parking violations but helps to further aid in areas that are harder to walk or further from the Park Flag office and creates better efficiency.

Benefits:

The purchase and use of an LPR will be beneficial to many processes at ParkFlag. By increasing efficiency, it will further increase the ability of the Parking Aides to complete time limited parking in the Southside, which is a high priority for the residents, as well as reduce the time spent to conduct parking occupancy counts. The efficiency in which Parking Aides will be able to complete the tasks will allow for more regular ambassadorship and enforcement in all areas. It will also allow ParkFlag to maintain enforcement levels at a higher standard during any future times of staff transition.

To be clear, we are first and foremost ambassadors to the City of Flagstaff and prefer education over citation. We would like to ensure everyone that this will not deter from the ambassadorship and customer service we currently provide. We will continue to manage the pay-to-park district by foot as often as possible.

Recommendation / Conclusion:

This City Council Report is for information only.