



AGENDA REPORT


TO: Jestin D. Johnson
City Administrator

FROM: Josh Rowan
Director, Oakland
Department of
Transportation

SUBJECT: Parking Enforcement Operations

DATE: December 17, 2024

City Administrator Approval


Jestin Johnson (Dec 30, 2024 13:29 PST)

Date: Dec 30, 2024

RECOMMENDATION

Staff Recommends That The City Council Receive An Informational Report Regarding Department Of Transportation Parking Enforcement Operations And Parking Revenues.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Oakland's Parking Enforcement Unit (PEU), which has been organized within the Oakland Department of Transportation (OakDOT) since the department was established in 2017, is responsible for enforcing parking regulations that promote the safe and shared use of the City's parking supply and public rights of way. This report responds to a series of questions concerned with the relationship between parking enforcement and parking revenues. The analysis indicates that current staffing challenges may be costing the City more than \$6 million annually. The report concludes with a series of policy recommendations that address those challenges.

BACKGROUND / LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

In 1996, the City Council adopted a resolution supporting public transit and alternative modes, known as Oakland's Transit First Policy (Resolution No. 73036 CMS). This policy favors transit and alternative modes over private vehicles to reduce congestion and improve air quality, improve safety for people walking and bicycling, decrease parking demand, reduce individual transportation costs, and provide a balanced transportation system that supports many modes, making communities more livable.

In 2013, the City Council adopted a set of Parking Principles ([Resolution No. 84664 CMS](#)), meant to guide the active management of the parking system, including goals of achieving 85% on-street parking occupancy in meter zones bolstering the economic vitality of neighborhood commercial areas, and encouraging the use of off-street parking lots and garages.

In 2016, the [OakDOT Strategic Plan](#) was published, including goals for improving transportation choices and minimizing parking demand, congestion, and pollution (Vibrant Sustainable Infrastructure #13), and managing public parking to balance the diverse needs of Oakland's visitors, merchants, commuters and residents (Vibrant Sustainable Infrastructure #14).

In 2017, the Oakland Department of Transportation (OakDOT) was launched, including Parking Enforcement which was formerly organized within the Oakland Police Department (OPD) and before that in the Finance Department. All parking operations would eventually be organized within OakDOT.

In summer 2021, City Council adopted the Fiscal Year 2021-2023 Budget, including the reorganization of operations from several departments into OakDOT's Parking and Mobility Division (PMD): from Finance in Fiscal Year 2021-2022, the Parking Citation Assistance Center and Parking Meter Collections; and from Oakland Police Department (OPD) in Fiscal Year 2022-2023, the Abandoned Auto, Scofflaw, and Vehicle Encampment operations.

ANALYSIS AND POLICY ALTERNATIVES

The PEU promotes the safe, efficient, and shared use of the parking supply by seeking to improve compliance with local and state parking codes through the issuance of citations. Parking Control Technicians (PCTs) issue citations to vehicles that are out of compliance with these parking regulations on streets and in public parking facilities. The unit also provides a dispatch function, responding to requests from the public submitted through the [City's 311 system](#) or by telephone directly to the PEU unit. In December 2019, four Parking Enforcement vehicles were equipped with automated license plate reading (ALPR) cameras, allowing PCTs to more efficiently enforce time-based parking restrictions, residential parking permit (RPP) areas, and "pay-by-plate" metered parking.

The following analysis responds to a series of frequently asked questions in order to understand the relationship between parking enforcement and revenues from parking operations.

Effectively promoting parking compliance while generating revenues is complicated by abandoned vehicles, homeless encampments, vandalism of meters and signs, safety concerns, cost saving measures and staffing challenges. The analysis informs recommendations for dealing with both recurring and anticipated staffing challenges.

What is the staffing level of Parking Control Technicians? How many budgeted positions are currently filled?

The Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Midcycle Budget includes fifty-four (54) Parking Control Technicians (PCT) positions, four (4) Parking Enforcement Supervisor I (PES I) positions, and one (1) Parking Enforcement Supervisor II (PES II) position for the PEU.

The PCT positions include fifty-one (51) full-time positions, one (1) permanent part-time position, and two (2) temporary part-time positions. One full-time PCT position is frozen. Of the fifty-four (54) PCT positions, forty-five (45) are currently filled, this after the PEU welcomed seven (7) new hires in early December, making the current vacancy rate 15.0% (eight out of fifty-three funded positions). A new round of hiring interviews will take place in January with the aim of bringing on a new cohort of PCTs in late February or March.

When considering PCT staffing levels, however, it is important to consider more than the number of budgeted positions and vacancy rates. Other important factors include:

- *Over-time*. Since the PEU returned to work after the COVID shelter in place order was lifted in April 2020, PCTs have been offered and often volunteer to do two days of back-fill and public-safety overtime shifts per week.
- *Long-term absences*. There are currently eight (8) PCTs out on extended leave.
- *Acting roles*. As many as fifteen (15) PCTs have been acting in roles in support of OakDOT's Vehicle Enforcement Unit (VEU), which took over abandoned auto operations from OPD in January 2023. A new VEU technician classification called "Parking Control Technician II" (PCT II) was approved by the Civil Service Board in November. Staff expects the hiring of permanent PCT IIs to be complete in mid-2025.

Combining vacancies, long-term absences, and acting assignments, as few as twenty (20) technicians are available to patrol and issue citations on any given day, although average staff levels are higher because of the consistent use of overtime.

How much revenue is generated when the PEU is fully staffed versus now when it is understaffed?

The relationship between parking enforcement operations and revenue generation is direct: revenue from citation fines and penalties depends on citation issuance; when more citations are issued, more revenue is collected; when fewer citations are issued, less revenue is collected. Changes in citation issuance show up in the collection of parking fines and penalties after a couple of months.

Additionally, consistent enforcement indirectly impacts other revenue sources, including on-street parking meters and paid off-street parking revenues and taxes. When parkers notice a lack of enforcement for meter payments they are less likely to pay the meter fee. Here, the analysis focuses on direct revenue from citation fines and penalties.

Beyond staffing levels and the number of PCTs that are issuing citations, other important factors to consider include:

- *Demand for parking enforcement services*. Over the past several years, parking enforcement operations have grown to include enforcement of off-street parking facilities, which transitioned from gated to gateless operations beginning in December 2020, regular Sunday enforcement shifts in support of public safety, and seven-day enforcement of the parking meter zone around Lake Merritt. As Oakland's neighborhoods and commercial districts continue to grow and develop, the demand for parking enforcement services will continue to grow.
- *Compliance and Non-Compliance*. If all vehicles were compliant, and effectively following all parking regulations, there would be no need to issue parking citations. Consistent enforcement in a given area promotes compliance. However, it is also the case that when enforcement decreases, noncompliance tends to return. Unlike automated enforcement systems (e.g., red light and speed camera systems) that are always enforcing a given location, PCTs patrol streets on only an occasional basis. It is,

therefore, reasonable to assume that the majority of illegal parking behavior does not result in a citation.

Recognizing these factors, the following analysis looks at parking operations over an extended period of time. Accordingly, we analyzed **highs** and **lows** in citation issuance (see **Attachment A**) and revenue collection (see **Attachment B**) over a period of seven years, ignoring results from the year immediately following the COVID shelter in place order in March 2020. Revenue figures used in this analysis were sourced by the City’s citation system vendor and represent gross revenues as they include parking fines and penalties due to the City as well as collection fees payable to the county (\$13 per citation collected), the Department of Motor Vehicles, the Franchise Tax Board and the City’s citation system vendor. The analysis uses these revenue figures to serve as proxies for what a fully staffed (“Highs”) and an understaffed (“Lows”) PEU helps to generate in citation fines, penalties, and fees.

Table 1 below shows the highest and the lowest citation issuance by month over the past seven years (excluding the Covid year from March 2020 through February 2021):

Table 1

Fiscal Years 2017 – 2024	High	Low
July	32,997	17,062
August	29,615	18,067
September	28,433	17,823
October	31,248	19,017
November	29,035	18,757
December	30,391	17,002
January	34,081	19,624
February	33,802	16,905
March	35,280	18,550
April	31,123	22,157
May	29,859	22,516
June	30,675	25,646
Annual totals	376,539	233,126

Looking at **Table 1**, citation issuance varies significantly by month: there is a difference of over 20% or nearly 7,000 citations between the March high (35,280) and September high (28,433); similarly, there is a difference of nearly 35% or over 8,700 citations between the February low (16,905) and June low (25,646). For this reason, it is important that the analysis look at results on an annual basis, which shows that there is an estimated difference of nearly 40% or over 143,400 citations between a fully staffed PEU (376,539) and understaffed PEU (233,126).

Table 2 below shows the highest and the lowest collection of citation fines, penalties, and fees by month over the past seven years (excluding March 2020 through February 2021):

Table 2 – Gross Parking Revenues By Month

Fiscal Years 2017 – 2024	High	Low
July	\$1,930,046	\$1,019,901
August	\$1,801,770	\$1,053,705
September	\$1,926,526	\$1,084,151
October	\$2,112,443	\$1,139,679
November	\$1,952,055	\$1,140,419
December	\$2,018,966	\$991,998
January	\$2,265,747	\$1,145,204
February	\$2,287,071	\$964,733
March	\$2,350,924	\$1,094,858
April	\$2,057,044	\$1,303,716
May	\$1,847,393	\$1,271,323
June	\$1,942,505	\$1,203,084
Annual totals	\$24,492,490	\$13,412,771

Looking at **Table 2**, gross revenues from fines, penalties, collection fees, and mandated revenue shares with the County vary significantly by month: there is a difference of nearly 25% or \$550,000 between the March high (\$2,350,924) and August high (\$1,801,770); similarly, there is a difference of over 26% or nearly \$340,000 between the April low (\$1,303,716) and the February low (\$964,733). Again, for this reason, it is important that the analysis looks at the results on an annual basis, which shows a difference of nearly 45% or over \$11 million between a fully staffed PEU (\$24,492,490) and an understaffed PEU (\$13,412,771).

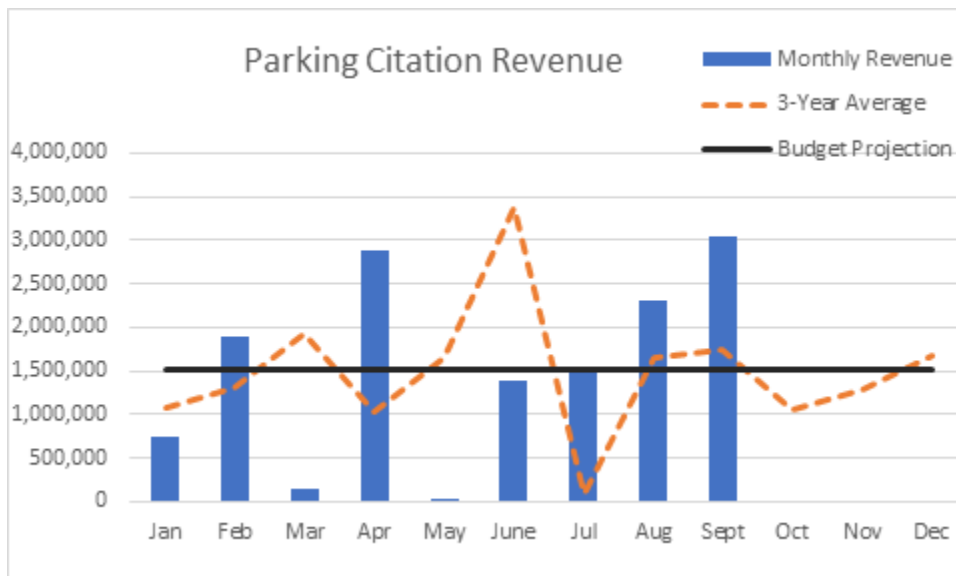
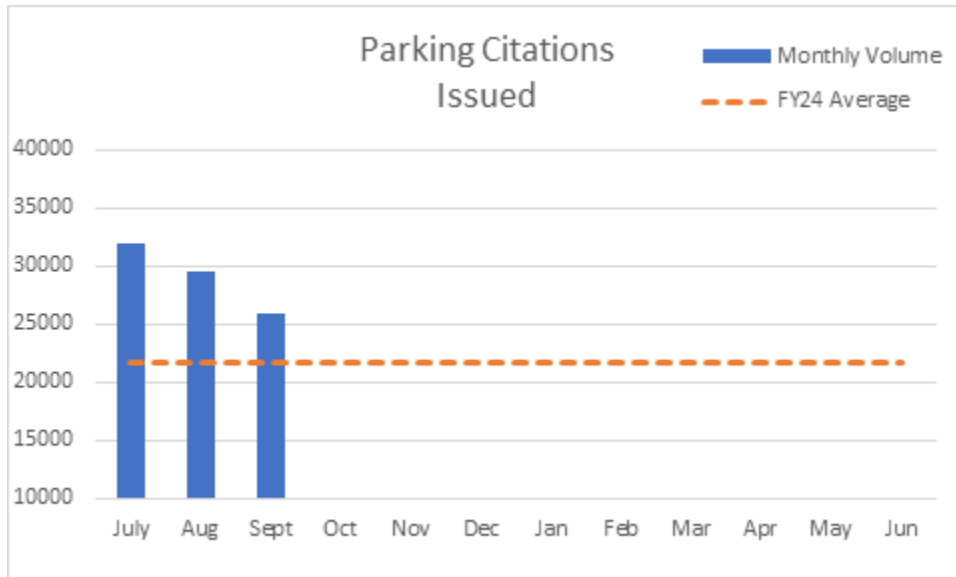
The preceding analysis is based on actual results, during which the PEU never actually operated at full capacity or peak performance for an entire year. Recognizing this, the analysis can be extended by annualizing the highest monthly figures for citation issuance and collections, which happens to be the month of March in both cases: 35,280 citations issued and \$2,350,924 in gross revenues. If the PEU remained fully staffed for a full year, which would assume the necessary resources to overcome all current staffing challenges, it is reasonable to assume that it could issue approximately 425,000 citations and generate over \$28,000,000 in gross revenue. Subtracting fees and County revenue shares that together average about fifteen percent (15%) of gross, the City would net approximately \$23,800,000, which is \$6 million more than the FY2024-2025 Budget target of \$17,748,029.

What are the revenue projections for citation fines and penalties, on-street parking meters, and off-street parking in the Fiscal Year 2024 - 2025?

The following tables and charts report adopted revenues, actual revenues for the first quarter, projected annual revenues, and percentage of target for citations, on-street meters, and off-street parking operations.

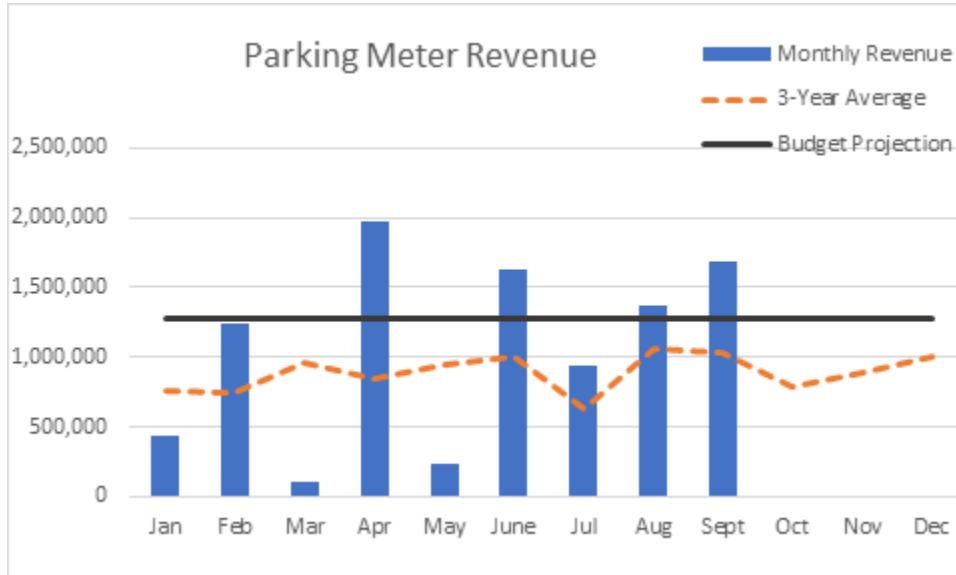
Parking Citations Fines and Penalties

Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Adopted Revenues	\$17,748,029
First Quarter Revenue:	\$4,935,710
Parking Citation Revenue Projection:	\$19,742,849
Percent of Target:	111%



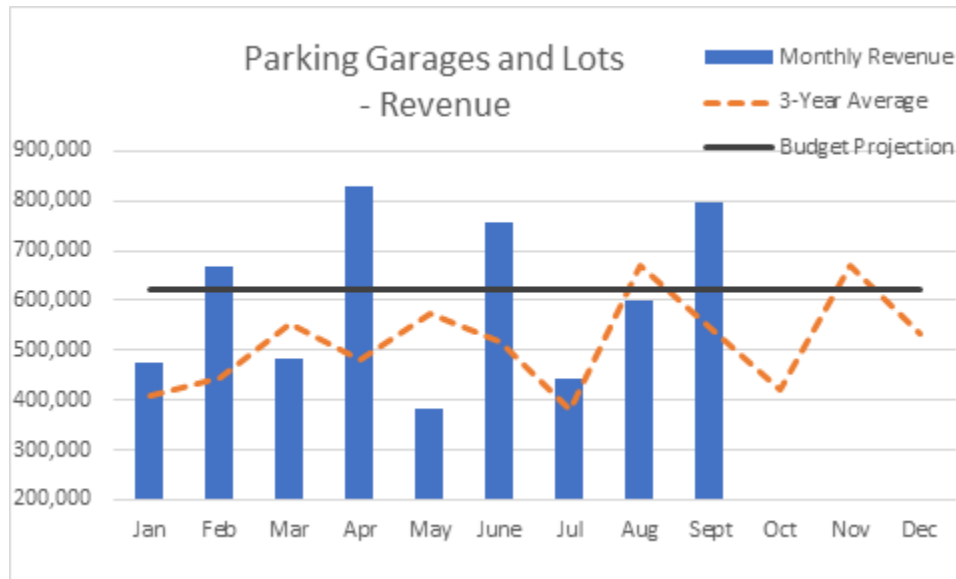
Parking Meter Revenue

Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Adopted Revenues	\$16,619,409
First Quarter Revenue:	\$3,991,060
Parking Meter Revenue Projection:	\$15,964,241
Percent of Target:	96%



Parking Garage Revenue

Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Adopted Revenues	\$7,454,793
First Quarter Revenue:	\$1,838,241
Parking Citation Revenue Projection:	\$7,352,964
Percent of Target:	98.6%



Out of the seven (7) budgeted positions in Parking Meter Repair, how many are currently filled and working, and what is being done to prioritize hiring?

The Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Mid-Cycle Budget includes five (5) Parking Meter Repair Technicians (PMRT) and one (1) Public Works Supervisor I (PWS I). Another two PMRT positions are currently frozen. Of the five budgeted PMRT positions, one (1) position is vacant, and the recruitment process is underway. OakDOT will petition the City Administration to approve the new hire once the selection is made.

Will the current staffing levels be sufficient to maximize the collection of revenues from parking operations?

No, the preceding analysis indicates that parking enforcement staffing levels are insufficient in two respects: on the one hand, even if all PCT positions fifty-four (54) were filled, long-term absences (9) and acting assignments (15) together contribute to an effective vacancy rate of nearly 45%; and, on the other hand, the demand for parking enforcement services has not been met and is only growing.

These findings lead staff to recommend the following, which individually and together support the City's priorities of holistic community safety; economic vitality; vibrant, sustainable infrastructure; and responsive, trustworthy government:

- *Add Two PCTs Graveyard Shift, 11:30 pm to 8 am.* This shift is only staffed for the enforcement of street sweeping maps, even though there is a need for overnight enforcement of regulations that support public safety, including double parking, red curbs, sidewalk parking, etc. The City should consider adding several PCTs to this shift who would be available both to rove and to fill in on the enforcement of street sweeping maps when other technicians are absent. When staffed with rovers, the PEU graveyard shift would also be able to help OPD enforce parking regulations in downtown and other late night entertainment districts.

- *Add Five PCTs and a Supervisor to Swing Shift, 2:00 pm to 10:30 pm.* Since 2010, this shift has been operating without a dedicated supervisor and with only five PCTs even though enforcement of both parking meters (until 6 pm city-wide and until 8 pm for the Lake Merritt meter zone) and safety related regulations are needed in residential areas and commercial districts. The City should consider restoring the swing shift supervisor and adding as many as five new PCTs. When staffed in this way, the PEU swing shift could be scheduled to be in the field on Sunday or Saturday evening and be available for special overtime shifts, which is currently not possible given there is no dedicated supervisor.
- *Add Two PCTs to Daytime Street Sweeping Shift, 8:00 am to 4:30 pm.* Enforcement of “no parking certain hours” in support of street sweeping represents approximately fifty percent (50%) of all citation issuance. It is not uncommon for a PCT on this shift to issue over one hundred citations per day. When staff are unavailable to enforce for any reason, street sweeping maps go unenforced, hundreds of citations are not written, and the street sweeping itself is less effective. The City should consider adding several additional PCT positions to this shift, which would help ensure consistent coverage of maps and the capacity to enforce other important regulations, such as red curbs and sidewalk parking when in residential areas.
- *Add Two PCTs to Daytime General Enforcement Shifts, 7:00 am to 3:30 pm and 9:00 am to 5:30 pm.* PCTs on these shifts are assigned to one or more beats and tasked with enforcing parking regulations in general, including parking meter zones and resident permit parking (RPP) areas. When these shifts are short staffed, PCTs are tasked with covering more beats, resulting in fewer passes through areas that would otherwise benefit from regular enforcement. As noted above, demand for general parking enforcement has continued to grow, including disabled placard enforcement, enforcement of City-owned garages, expanding RPP areas, the Lake Merritt parking meter zone, active enforcement of sidewalk parking City-wide, increased enforcement in the hills during red flag warning days, metered commercial loading zones, special enforcement details, and dispatch requests from the public. The City should consider adding more PCT positions in these shifts in order to keep up with the demand for parking enforcement services.
- *Unfreeze Frozen PSR Position for Parking Enforcement Dispatch Function, Weekdays 8:30 am to 5:00 pm.* Requests for parking enforcement can be made by calling the Parking Enforcement Dispatcher during regular business hours at (510) 238-3099 or through the City’s 311 request system. On weekdays, requests usually number between twenty and forty. The primary resource for this service is a Public Service Representative (PSR). As a result of the City-wide Contingency Budget going into effect in early October, the vacant PSR position supporting the dispatch service was frozen, and planning began to suspend the service with a target date of January 1, 2025.
- *Parking Meter Collection and Parking Meter Repair Units.* Since the introduction of multi-space kiosks in 2005, pay-by-phone in 2012, and credit-card enabled single-space meters in 2015, the percentage of parking meter payments made using coins has dropped from 100% to around 15%. While more and more meter payments are made using credit cards or mobile parking payment apps, the cost of procuring, maintaining, repairing, and collecting coins has remained relatively constant. The presence of coins in the parking meters makes them a target of vandalism and the Parking Meter Collectors a target of robbery and violence. Even after vacant Parking Meter Collector and Parking Meter Repair Technician positions were eliminated or frozen, it is estimated that the City

continues to spend approximately two dollars (\$2) for every one dollar (\$1) that it collects in coins. While state law currently requires the City to maintain a “physical” means of payment for metered parking, it does not specify that the City must accept coins. For these reasons, staff has in the past recommended that the City consider eliminating coin-payments entirely and redirecting some of the savings to help fund such programs such as [Universal Basic Mobility](#), which has been successfully piloted in East Oakland and now West Oakland, or no fee pre-paid debit cards for the unbanked and underbanked. So long as the City continues to accept coin payments, it should consider staffing both Parking Meter Collections and the Parking Meter Repair Units at appropriate levels: with the increase in the per hour meter rate from \$2 to \$3 and with improving enforcement of meter zones, the need for meter collection, repair, and maintenance services is also increasing. If staffing levels do not grow to meet these needs, the City should expect lost revenues as well as increased absenteeism and attrition among front-line workers who are being asked to work harder and longer to keep up with the demand.

FISCAL IMPACT

This is an informational report that considers the relationship between parking enforcement and parking revenues, but there are no direct fiscal impacts.

PUBLIC OUTREACH / INTEREST

No outreach was deemed necessary for this report beyond the standard City Council agenda noticing procedures.

COORDINATION

PEU coordinates daily with OakDOT’s Vehicle Enforcement Unit and OPW’s Street Sweeping Unit and routinely with other units and departments.

SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES

Economic: When fully staffed and after accounting for all expenses, the PEU has the potential to contribute revenues for the General Purpose Fund, provide entry level job opportunities for residents and support vibrant commercial districts.

Environmental: When vehicles adhere to parking regulations, there should be less idling and circling looking for parking and, therefore, less carbon emissions. The PEU has used Toyota Prius hybrid vehicles since 2013 and is transitioning to plug-in electric vehicles.


Race & Equity: While this informational report does not include a racial equity analysis, past efforts include the [Progressive Parking Initiative and Parking Enforcement Equity](#) analysis.

ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL

Staff Recommends That The City Council Receive An Informational Report Regarding Department of Transportation Parking Enforcement Operations.

For questions regarding this report, please contact Michael Ford, Parking & Mobility Division manager, at 510-238-7670.

Respectfully submitted,


Josh Rowan (Dec 27, 2024 11:13 PST)

JOSH ROWAN
Director, Department of Transportation

Reviewed by:

Jamie Parks, Assistant Director
Megan Wier, Assistant Director

Prepared by:

Michael Ford, Manager
Parking & Mobility Division

Attachments (2):

- A. Citation Issuance, Fiscal Years 2018 to 2025 Year to Date
- B. Citation Fines and Penalties Collected, Fiscal Years 2018 to 2025 Year to Date

ATTACHMENT A

Citation Issuance, Fiscal Years 2018 to 2025 Year to Date

Fiscal Year	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24	24-25	High	Low
Month	No. of Tkts Issued	No. of Tkts Issued	No. of Tkts Issued	No. of Tkts Issued	No. of Tkts Issued	No. of Tkts Issued	No. of Tkts Issued		
Jul	27,788	23,136	10,657	27,523	26,909	17,062	32,997	32,997	17,062
Aug	26,547	26,552	16,065	25,802	27,412	18,067	29,615	29,615	18,067
Sept	24,367	25,239	13,561	28,433	25,199	17,823	25,925	28,433	17,823
Oct	28,836	31,248	14,973	28,382	25,627	19,017		31,248	19,017
Nov	24,470	29,035	17,701	27,597	28,130	18,757		29,035	18,757
Dec	26,937	30,391	18,558	28,538	25,245	17,002		30,391	17,002
Jan	26,617	34,081	26,180	26,572	25,024	19,624		34,081	19,624
Feb	25,313	33,802	28,737	26,880	16,905	17,463		33,802	16,905
March	26,968	20,528	35,280	32,243	18,550	26,310		35,280	18,550
April	26,379	1,833	29,442	31,123	22,157	30,513		31,123	22,157
May	23,848	8,566	28,089	28,637	22,516	29,859		29,859	22,516
June	29,134	7,744	29,005	25,646	21,069	30,675		30,675	25,646
								376,539	233,126

ATTACHMENT B

Citation Fines, Penalties And Fees Collected, Fiscal Years 2018 to 2025 Year to Date

Gross revenues collected including citation fines, penalties, collection fees and mandated County revenue share, as reported by the City's parking citation system vendor, Fiscal Years 2018 to September 2024.

Fiscal Year	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24	24-25	High	Low
	Total Fines and Penalties Paid								
Jul	\$1,930,046	\$1,619,508	\$844,783	\$1,851,332	\$1,691,060	\$1,019,901	\$1,383,621	\$1,930,046	\$1,019,901
Aug	\$1,801,770	\$1,807,234	\$1,197,629	\$1,695,055	\$1,708,647	\$1,053,705	\$1,383,621	\$1,801,770	\$1,053,705
Sept	\$1,654,424	\$1,681,359	\$976,666	\$1,926,526	\$1,631,694	\$1,084,151	\$408,087	\$1,926,526	\$1,084,151
Oct	\$1,955,008	\$2,112,443	\$1,115,625	\$1,959,053	\$1,583,277	\$1,139,679		\$2,112,443	\$1,139,679
Nov	\$1,652,036	\$1,952,055	\$932,401	\$1,842,876	\$1,841,736	\$1,140,419		\$1,952,055	\$1,140,419
Dec	\$1,780,015	\$2,018,966	\$905,502	\$1,941,724	\$1,623,812	\$991,998		\$2,018,966	\$991,998
Jan	\$1,751,980	\$2,265,747	\$1,810,756	\$1,812,288	\$1,564,180	\$1,145,204		\$2,265,747	\$1,145,204
Feb	\$1,669,100	\$2,287,071	\$1,874,669	\$1,832,136	\$1,014,218	\$964,733		\$2,287,071	\$964,733
March	\$1,751,215	\$1,468,699	\$2,350,924	\$2,186,276	\$1,094,858	\$1,398,158		\$2,350,924	\$1,094,858
April	\$1,692,219	\$169,170	\$1,963,121	\$2,057,044	\$1,303,716	\$1,580,325		\$2,057,044	\$1,303,716
May	\$1,529,923	\$827,479	\$1,847,393	\$1,843,337	\$1,271,323	\$1,427,532		\$1,847,393	\$1,271,323
June	\$1,887,416	\$712,955	\$1,942,505	\$1,626,783	\$1,203,084	\$1,343,021		\$1,942,505	\$1,203,084
Annual	\$21,055,152	\$18,922,686	\$17,761,974	\$22,574,430	\$17,531,605	\$14,288,826		\$24,492,490	\$13,412,771