Office of the City Auditor

Performance Audit Report
Parking Enforcement Unit
Citation Void Process

Executive Summary

CITY OF OAKLAND

OVERVIEW

The City issues an average of 327,000 parking citations annually, generating nearly $25.5 million per year. Parking citations need to be voided at times, including to correct errors made by the Parking Technicians. Over a nearly 4-year period, the City gave up more than $2 million due to voided parking citations.

OBJECTIVES

Our audit objectives were to: (1) determine whether there were controls in place to ensure that voids of parking citations were valid, properly authorized, and processed accurately, and (2) that Parking Enforcement policies and procedures were followed.

KEY FINDINGS

The findings from the audit include:

Finding 1: Management has not established an acceptable error or exception rate for parking citations.

Finding 2: The overuse of the 'Driver Arrived' and 'ZVOIDZ' practices has resulted in significant lost revenue.

Finding 3: Management has not leveraged the investment in the eTIMS® system, nor fully benefitted from this technology.

Finding 4: eTIMS® System access controls are not monitored.

Finding 5: Lack of management oversight of Parking Enforcement.

RECOMMENDATIONS To address the audit's findings, the report includes seven recommendations.

1. Develop metrics and benchmarking to establish an expected rate of errors that is reasonable, considering the technology available through the eTIMS® system, the workload of Oakland's Parking Technicians and other relevant factors.

2. Eliminate the Driver Arrived program, as all City meters were updated to include a grace period; thereby ensuring revenues due to the City are collected and to prevent overstays of parkers that limit the availability of parking spaces for others.

3. Determine the appropriate use of ZVOIDZ, update all related written procedures and provide training to ensure this practice is used as intended by management.

4. Work with the eTIMS® vendor to leverage existing features and reporting modules to identify the most useful reports for managing the Parking Enforcement Unit.

5. Develop specific criteria for those assigned eTIMS® access rights, so that employees have the necessary tools to perform their duties, but access is limited based on need. Regularly review the access permissions.

6. Update and distribute policies and procedures at least annually and whenever there is a significant process change to ensure compliance with regulations and internal protocols. Clearly define the criteria and processes for approving void requests.

7. Develop a training program so that 1) a structured curriculum is designed for Parking Technicians, supervisors, and managers to include relevant regulations and practices; 2) the training manual includes specific and 'real-life' examples of scenarios encountered in the field, and 3) there is a robust instructional manual for the mobile hand-held devices.

WHY THIS AUDIT MATTERS

This audit identifies opportunities to maximize City revenue, reduce administrative costs and promote the City's goal of actively managing the on- and off-street parking supply to the benefit of Oakland residents, commuters, and visitors.

Over the past several years, Oakland has experienced an uptick in its economy – employment is on the rise and each year, more people are moving into the City. Meanwhile, the inventory of public parking spaces has decreased in many commercial districts, resulting in more parkers competing for fewer and fewer parking spaces.

Actively managing the City's parking supply means pricing parking and promoting turnover to ensure availability of scarce parking spaces; that City parking is effectively shared and that everyone has an opportunity to benefit from these public assets.