

## Memorandum

Date: March 10, 2012

To: City of Madison Transportation & Parking (TPC) Commissioners

From: Susan Schmitz/TPC member

RE: March 14, 2012 TPC Public Hearing and TPC vote on Parking Rate Modifications

Hello fellow TPC members. I am very sorry that I will miss the March 14, 2012 TPC meeting and the public hearing on proposed parking rate modifications. I would like to share with you my thoughts on this subject.

First of all, I would like to address the factor that we are being asked to approve the proposed modifications the same evening as the public hearing. Public hearings are one of the most important parts of our democratic process and hearing from the public is vital for good decision making. It is one thing to listen carefully to the public comments but it is another to absorb them in order to look for common themes—that takes time. I strongly suggest that you do NOT vote on the proposed increase Wednesday evening.

Secondly, (following up on my request above) I think that we will need time to work through what is being proposed. Sometimes price increases are more about timing than they are about the amount of increase and I think that is the case at this time. We are still not through the hard times that people are feeling and with many State workers using our downtown facilities, we need to be sensitive to their current situation—they have had much taken away from them and an increase at this time could work against us in the long run.

Thirdly, when asking for an increase from the public, we need more clarity on where the money is going. I noticed this in the comments that have been sent to us. People understand the need for parking increases (in theory) but when we tell them that it is to build “cash reserves” it does not settle well with them. We need to have clarity as to “what” we plan to do about the three aging ramps—will we continue to repair them? Will we raze them? Will we put the parking underground? Will we build new ramps in different locations? What will be our demand in 10-20 years? Unfortunately, we do not have answers to these questions at this time.

Lastly, I think we need time to work through these challenges before we jump to increases that are pretty much across the board. We need to separate the areas for discussion; on-street pole meters, pay-by-space meters, ramp parking, special events, downtown residents—there are different customers and expectations for each parking need.

I look forward to working with all of you to arrive at good decisions on these questions/challenges and more. I suggest that we schedule working sessions in order to do this work. It would be good for the TPC, for the City of Madison, and for the citizens of this community. Thank you all very much.