



## Traffic Engineering and Parking Divisions

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March 4, 2009

TO: Transit and Parking Commission

FROM: Bill Knobeloch, Parking Operations Manager

SUBJECT: **SPECIAL EVENT PARKING**  
 City of Madison Parking Utility

### History

In 2004 David Dryer presented a report (Attachment 1) to the Transit and Parking Commission outlining the issues facing the Parking Utility with special events (SE). They are essentially the same issues today:

- Reduce exiting times of customers following special events.
- Distribute parking demand to other locations.
- Generate additional funds for present & future projects.
- Mitigate the impact to non-special event attendees as much as possible.

This report described exit times of over an hour at facilities with 3-4 exits without a pay-on-entry (POE) system. The pollution linked to 500 idling vehicles with cold engines is significant. This is totally unacceptable to the thousands of customers that come downtown for special events. We have the same equipment/limitations as in 2004 and these estimated exit times have not changed. This is a \$3.5M revenue system and not likely to be changed soon. It should be noted that special event attendees would come to the area to park regardless of the special event fee. If no additional fee were charged, the special event attendees would likely fill our facilities earlier making those stalls unavailable for others at any price.

The potential to divert non-special event attendees to alternative facilities that are less expensive and less crowded was also described. These parking areas may not be as convenient. This can help the customer and the Utility if the cost of parking is the critical issue in selecting appropriate parking for a downtown visit. Customers need to know the location of these alternative parking areas.

### Revenue Generation

The revenue from special events was about \$300K in 2004. This has now increased to \$700K. If this revenue were decreased, it would need to be made up in another manner. Plan "B" in the proposed rate schedule indicates one method to make up revenue lost by decreasing the POE fee. Plan "B" reduces the special event fee to \$3 and makes up the lost revenue through an increase in enforcement hours (to 7 PM rather than the current 6 PM) and an increase in the evening/weekend maximum from \$4 to \$5. It should also be noted that at some special event price-point and a presumed length of stay, the Utility would generate more revenue without a pay-on-entry operation. Example #1: With a proposed GE rate of \$1.40/hour and a POE rate of \$3 and a length of stay of

3.5 hours, the hourly rate would generate \$4.90 and the POE rate would generate \$3 so the Utility would lose \$1.90/SE attendee. Example # 2: With an hourly rate at Overture of \$ .70 and an expected stay of 3.5 hours with a \$3 POE fee, the hourly rate would generate \$2.45 vs. the \$3 POE fee the Utility would generate an additional \$ .55/SE attendee. Of course the revenue generation is a separate issue from the other issues: exit delays, demand redistribution and impact on non-special event attendees.

Without a significant revenue stream the Parking Utility would not be able to finance the replacement of parking structures and customers would gradually lose this parking capacity (about 60% of the parking inventory is in parking garages). An analysis of parkers immediately after the 2006 fee increase from \$3 to \$4 showed an increase in the number of special event entries. This number decreased the following year as the economy started to falter and the Parking Utility adjusted its outlook on special event classification. In recent months fine arts of all kinds have had a more difficult time in attracting attendees nationwide due to the poor economy. Competitive special event fees are \$15 for UW owned/operated lots (\$20 in some private lots) and \$5 for Alliant Center. Alliant Center has 5,800 stalls available – 300 more than our entire system including ramps/lots & on-street metered stalls. The special event fee for most private facilities during large events like Art Fair is \$5 or more now.

#### **Criteria used to trigger a Special Event**

Criteria for SE parking was approved at the August 13, 2002 TPC meeting. Special event parking is used when the attendance count (not vehicle count) is over 800 at the Overture Center or over 1,000 at Kohl Center Events. The required count is higher for the Kohl Center events because the University provides alternative parking for some of their attendees. We know that some attendees avoid the higher UW fee by parking in our facilities. The SE parking will not be used for Overture Center events if most attendees will be arriving by bus or foot (public school children for instance). Very large events like Art Fair and Taste of Madison will trigger special events at most/all facilities.

#### **Special event staging**

Normal staging includes two hours before the event start time for regular POE and up to 15 minutes after for events with a specific time. Parkers come in very early to some events like Art Fair. We start the POE earlier to capture the revenue. We don't have cashiers on exits with some major Special Events. If we have multiple large events, we may end up running additional hours as POE but this is rare. We try to select which facilities will be impacted and adjust it over time. For a Kohl Center event we typically run a POE at Campus and Overture garages only. A large Overture attendance projection will typically trigger a POE only at Overture and State Street Capitol garages.

**TPC resolution # 33** issued in 2004 (Attachment 2) calls for the following action:

- All customers are subject to the same Special Event rate: This has been done.
- The Parking Utility will advertise the availability of standard rate facilities during POE events: This has been done but could be done much better.
- The Parking Utility will create a SE email group to provide advance warning to interested parties that POE events are taking place at specific facilities: This has been done.
- Dates and times of the special events are to be listed on the Parking Utility's web site at least 3 days in advance: This has been done but sometimes event organizers give us less than 3 days advance notice. The count can go up or down.
- Coupons issued by the Parking Utility may be used to pay for part or all of the SE parking rate. These coupons will be given to the cashier when the patron enters the parking facility. They cannot be given to a cashier when they exit a facility for a cash refund because they would delay others and cause cash accountability problems. Sometimes there are no cashiers at exits following special events.

### Special events in Feb 2009

A good example of special event staging during very large multiple events occurred on Saturday, February 14, 2009. There were eleven known events in downtown Madison:

|                                       |                                  |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Madison Winter Festival               | 6:00 AM – 9:45 PM                |
| Kids in the Rotunda                   | 9:30 AM – 11:00 AM               |
| Celebrating Youth @ Monona Terrace    | 11:00 AM – 5:00 PM               |
| Jesus Christ Superstar                | 2:00 PM Sell-out crowd 2,100     |
| Madison Ballet                        | 2:00 PM Estimated attendance 400 |
| Valentine's Day Dance @ Senior Center | 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM                |
| Madison Ballet                        | 7:30 PM Estimated attendance 600 |
| Jesus Christ Superstar                | 8:00 PM Sell-out crowd 2,100     |
| UW vs. Ohio State Men's Basketball    | 8:00 PM Sell-out crowd 18,000    |

We staged these events according to the criteria approved by the TPC in 2004 and ran a POE operation from Noon to 2:05 PM at Overture and State Street Capitol garages, and then again from 5:30 PM to 8:05 PM at Overture, State Street Capitol and Campus garage to cover the Overture Center and Kohl Center events. From 2:05 PM to 5:30 PM, there were no POE operations and parkers continued to pull/vend hourly entry tickets. The counters at Overture and State Street Capitol for February 14 were analyzed to see the results. Overture garage did not fill during the afternoon shows but came within 60 stalls of filling around 2:30 PM. Overture did fill around 9 PM and remained full until 10 PM – one hour of full operation on 02/14/09. State Street Capitol filled up at both the afternoon show (from 2 PM – 3 PM) and then again for the evening events (from 8 PM – 9:30 PM) – 2.5 hrs of full operation on 02/14/09. By 5:30 PM, Overture had 167 vehicles and State Street Capitol had 362 vehicles, way below capacity.

The Kohl Center and Overture have been fairly good at keeping us posted on the expected attendance but they could have an unexpected attendance change and notify us of that fact a day or two before the event. We base the original SE calendar on their original estimates but update it on a continuous basis as new information reaches our desk.

### Future

There is no way of running special events that will please all users. We tried allowing customers to identify themselves as SE attendees and that didn't work. We analyzed the financial impact of starting the SE one hour before the event starts and it eliminated nearly all of the financial gain. We will work with the major event sponsors (Overture, UW Athletics, Monona Terrace, Community event sponsors) and with business groups such as BID and DMI to create additional ideas to better handle special events. These ideas will be returned to the TPC for their consideration.

It is clear the Parking Utility needs to do a better job at identifying facilities without special event pricing. This will be a win-win for our customers and the Utility. We will work with Traffic Engineering and others to improve this signage and share the results with TPC.



## Parking Division

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DATE: December 8, 2004

TO: Transit and Parking Commission

FROM: David C. Dryer, P.E., Interim Parking Manager

SUBJECT: **Special Event (Pay on Entry) Report**

At the November TPC meeting, a number of questions were raised concerning coupons and the Parking Utility's Special Event policies and statistics. A special event (SE) is any event where large number of vehicles park in city facilities and may exit at the same time. During some of these events, the Parking Utility uses a Pay on Entry (POE) system where a cashier collects a flat fee on entry and the customer is allowed to exit without another transaction. This report explains the policy, summarizes the statistics and includes a recommendation for future special events and coupon use.

### **Purpose of a Special Event, Pay on Entry event**

- Reduce exiting times of customers
- Distributes parking demand to other locations
- Generates additional funds

Without a POE system, the delay to exit city facilities would be in excess of an hour. Utility equipment/staff can process approximately 2 transactions per minute per exit using the current spitter ticket technology. There are 3 or 4 exits per facility hence a maximum of 8 vehicles per minute can be processed. Fewer available exits mean less exit capacity. We typically have 400-500 vehicles exiting a facility when the patrons of a major event exit at the same time. It would take over an hour ( $500/8=62$ ) to exit most of the vehicles in a given facility at maximum efficiency. Fifteen minutes is considered tolerable to most customers. An hour (or more) exit time is not acceptable and could result in confrontations between parkers and parking personnel as well as resulting in poor air quality within the ramp. This will impact both customers and employees. Long exit times may impact attendance at large downtown events and patronage of downtown stores, restaurants and other facilities. Sitting in the ramp for an additional hour is not a viable option to some customers after an event when people are eager to go home.

We suspect that occupancy improves at nearby facilities when POE systems are implemented. For instance, occupancy at Capitol Square North may improve when the POE system is implemented at State Street Capitol and Overture Center. This may be because potential parkers (like MATC students) are trying to avoid the \$3 POE fee or just because the other facilities fill up and they need to park somewhere. If potential parkers don't know of lower cost alternatives, then this benefit is minimal. It is difficult to verify the impact of POE events on

nearby facilities since there are a number of variables at work including day of week, time of day and other unrelated events.

We estimate the POE system generates \$300,000 annually in additional revenues (beyond the weekend or nightly maximum rate). These revenues are used to finance future building, operations and maintenance needs. If the POE system were eliminated, the Utility would need to generate similar revenues by other means.

### **Criteria used to trigger a Special Event**

Criteria for SE parking was approved at the Aug. 13, 2002 TPC meeting (attached). Special Event parking is used when the attendance count (not vehicle count) is over 800 at the Overture Center or over 1,000 at Kohl Center events. The required count is higher for the Kohl Center because the University provides alternative parking for their attendees. The SE parking will not be used for Overture Center events if most attendees will be arriving by bus or foot (UW/public school crowd). Other events that will draw over 1,000 people such as New Year's Eve, Art Fair, St. Patrick's Parade, Concerts on the Square, UW football game and Taste of Madison will also trigger a SE.

### **Statistics**

The number of SE has increased in tandem with the number of Kohl Center and Overture Center events. The Kohl Center opened in 1998 and has increased the number of large events held there. Statistics before 1998 are not comparable. During Kohl Center events the POE system is operative at the State Street Campus facility and sometimes at the Overture Center facility. The Overture Center opened in 2004 and will increase its capacity and number of events in 2005-2006. The seating capacity of the Overture complex is expected to increase by 779 seats during this time. During Overture Center events the POE system is operative only at the State Street Capitol and the Overture Center facilities. In 1999 there were 192 SE, and in 2004 we expect in excess of 220 SE.

Attached is a sample of the list of 157 special events held in 2004 from 1/3/04 through 10/16/04. Thirty-three (21%) of these events were UW basketball and hockey games. One hundred and eleven (71%) were stage shows, most at the Overture Center. Thirteen (8%) were events such as Concerts on the Square and Art Fair. The number of non-UW/Overture events has remained fairly stable.

As noted by a commissioner at the last TPC meeting, a number of SE occur on the same day. So far in 2004 we have had 22 days with multiple events. On May 15, for example, there were four special events. If time permits, we will open the facility back to spitter ticket use between special events. Per the attached 2004 SE summary, SE were held on 119 days out of 288 calendar days (41%).

### **Legal Perspective**

Asst. City Attorney Anne Zellhoefer was asked for her opinion on Parking Utility rate setting.

#### "Avoidance of \$3.00 Pay on Entry Fee

The TPC has the authority pursuant to Sec. 8.14(2)(c), MGO, to set fees and charges for the parking ramps. The TPC should determine by policy whether shorter-term parkers should have the option of taking a spitter ticket or not. If the option is to be made allowable, notice of such option in fees should be posted in a conspicuous place at or near the ramp entrance, in accordance with Sec. 8.14. If the TPC wishes to permit parkers to bypass the \$3.00 fee in lieu of the hourly rate, the practice should be specifically authorized by the TPC and set according to reasonable guidelines for the cashiers to follow."

While apparently it is legal to have a dual rate structure, Parking staff do not recommend you do so.

### **Senior Center Event**

The Senior Center buys coupons to distribute to its customers. To date, they have received 250 coupons. Coupon sponsors do not pay for the coupons until they are used. From Sept. 2003 through Aug. 2004, Senior Center customers have used 95 coupons (see attached). That's about eight per month or four per Sunday meal, assuming two events per month. This figure corresponds fairly well with the Senior Center Director's estimate of 10–15 people per Sunday meal if the average vehicle contained three people. There is no way to quantify the number of seniors that bypassed the Sunday meal program due to the parking charge. During the 2004 study period there were 41 Sundays: 17 had special events declared at the Overture Center ramp (41%) and 24 had no POE event at the Overture Center ramp. Most of these events were staged at the Overture Center, while three of the events were large downtown events (Taste, Art Fair & St. Pat's Day Parade). None of the events were UW sports. The Senior Center hasn't been billed for any of the coupons used since the Utility typically waits until 100 coupons are redeemed before billing a sponsor. This keeps our administrative expenses lower. Parking personnel have provided monthly calendars of scheduled SE in the past. The former Parking Utility Manager allowed Senior Center participants (and others) to pull a spitter ticket during SE, avoiding the \$3 POE fee. This practice has been discontinued.

Christine Beatty, Senior Center Director, advised us at the last meeting that the Senior Center is willing to subsidize the parking cost of their Sunday dinners if the Parking Utility can devise a system to accomplish this. Senior Center staff met with Parking staff on Dec. 2, 2004 to discuss this issue. We discussed monthly parking passes and expanded coupon use for POE events. Changing the Sunday mealtime and better knowledge of upcoming events was also discussed.

### **Recommendations**

- All customers should be subject to the same Special Event rate in effect at the time of entry.
- Advertise the availability of standard rate facilities with fliers and/or sandwich boards during POE events.
- The Parking Utility should create a SE e-mail group to provide advance warning to interested parties that POE events are taking place at specific facilities. Agencies like the Senior Center could become members of this group at their request. The decision to implement SE parking is sometimes made at the last minute after receiving final attendance estimates from the Kohl Center and Overture Center.
- Coupons may be used to pay for part/all of the SE rate. These coupons will be given to the cashier on entry to our facility.
- Meter bagging policies and fees are under review and will be addressed at a future TPC meeting. A standard fee and policy will be considered for all customers.

It is further recommended that the TPC adopt the attached TPC Resolution #33 entitled *Special Event Parking Rate and Related Coupon Use*.

### **Rationale**

The former Parking Manager allowed individuals "in the know" to pull a spitter ticket; these parkers then either paid for the actual time parked (rather than the \$3 POE fee) or exited for free during the SE "free out." Special "unadvertised deals" for select customers are unfair to customers that may be unaware of the alternative lower price, and cashiers shouldn't be put in a position of deciding who should and should not be subject to a POE rate. It is the intent of the

Parking Utility to eliminate all rate structures that do not have the approval of the TPC and cannot be accessed by any customer in the same circumstance.

While the TPC has the authority to allow a practice of dual rates, the Parking Utility does not have a system to implement it in an equitable manner. Cashiers deciding which motorists should or should not receive a spitter ticket is not a workable solution. We cannot depend on special event attendees to advise us properly of their parking intent and many will quickly learn to request the lowest rate. Reasonable guidelines for cashiers to identify special event attendees are unattainable. Sponsors like the Senior Center, MATC or merchants who wish to subsidize the parking cost of their customers may do so with the new coupon policy outlined above. Since the Senior Center, MATC and many businesses already participate in the coupon program, conversion to the POE/coupon program will be relatively easy for customers.

**RESOLUTION NO. TPC-33  
OF  
TRANSIT AND PARKING COMMISSION  
REGARDING  
SPECIAL EVENT PARKING POLICY**

**Drafted by: David C. Dryer**

**Date Presented: 12/13/2004**

**Date Adopted (as revised by the TPC): 12/13/2004**

**WHEREAS**, Special Event Parking (pay-on-entry) has been in effect since prior to 1984, with a set \$3.00 rate established for all Parking Utility facilities in 2002; and

**WHEREAS**, the purpose of Special Event Parking is to: expedite patron departure from the parking facility after the conclusion of a special event, generate additional funds for use of the Parking Utility and to more equitably distribute demand across the system; and

**WHEREAS**, coupons have been used for many years to pay for part or all of the parking fee assessed at a City of Madison parking facility; and

**WHEREAS**, there have been requests to provide a dual rate structure when a Special Event has been declared but there are problems inherent in providing an equitable dual rate structure;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Transit and Parking Commission affirms the following Special Event Parking Policy:

- All customers are subject to the same Special Event rate in effect at the time of entry.
- The Parking Utility will advertise the availability of standard rate facilities during POE events.
- The Parking Utility will create a Special Event e-mail group to provide advance warning to interested parties that POE events are taking place at specific facilities. Agencies like the Senior Center could become members of this group at their request. The decision to implement Special Event parking is sometimes made at the last minute after receiving final attendance estimates from the Kohl Center and Overture Center.
- Dates and times of the special events are to be listed on the Parking Utility's web site at least three days in advance.
- Coupons issued by the Parking Utility may be used to pay for part or all of the Special Event parking rate. These coupons will be given to the cashier when the patron enters the parking facility.

Approved this 13th day of December, 2004, by the City of Madison Transit and Parking Commission.

  
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Carl Durocher, Chair, Transit and Parking Commission