Legislation Details (With Text)

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Title:	CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL, ACCEPTANCE, REJECTION, AMENDMENT, AND/OR POSTPONEMENT OF AUTHORIZATION FOR THE PURCHASE OF UPGRADES TO THE CAMPUS CORNER PARKING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM FROM FLOWBIRD IN THE AMOUNT OF $107,506 AND BUDGET APPROPRIATION FROM THE CAPITAL FUND BALANCE AS OUTLINED IN THE STAFF REPORT		
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Attachments:	1. City Council Staff Report, 2. Campus Corner Parking Equipment Upgrades Quotation		

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
6/8/2021	1	City Council		

CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL, ACCEPTANCE, REJECTION, AMENDMENT, AND/OR POSTPONEMENT OF AUTHORIZATION FOR THE PURCHASE OF UPGRADES TO THE CAMPUS CORNER PARKING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM FROM FLOWBIRD IN THE AMOUNT OF $107,506 AND BUDGET APPROPRIATION FROM THE CAPITAL FUND BALANCE AS OUTLINED IN THE STAFF REPORT

BACKGROUND: During the fall of 2012, staff was working with the Campus Corner Merchants on an upgrade to the existing coin-only single space parking meter system. The IPS system was selected because it "checked all of the boxes" for the Campus Corner Merchants. The Campus Corner Merchants desired a system that would offer multiple payment options and would encourage turnover of the parking spaces to discourage all-day use. The IPS system offered payment by credit cards, debit cards, and coins. The system could also be expanded to provide a pay-by-cell service and a validation system whereby an area merchant could pay for their patrons parking. In addition, the IPS system boasted of an in-pavement sensor that would sense when a vehicle entered a parking space and would automatically reset the meter when a vehicle exited the space. The IPS system was operational on Campus Corner on August 1, 2013.

DISCUSSION: Over the next two years, staff, either at the Traffic Control Division or at Municipal Court, began to receive complaints regarding the meters resetting. The pavement sensors proved to be unreliable. While IPS offered other options, none were found to be effective.

In the meantime, the pay-by-cell mobile payment option was proving to be very successful in our Gray Street Municipal Parking Lot. IPS was approached about activating pay-by-cell at the Campus Corner meters and it turned out that they did not offer that service in-house; they would have to use a third party in order to make this service available. Staff reasoned that since the University of

Oklahoma (OU) was using the same parking provider as the City was using in its Gray Street Municipal Parking Lot that it only made sense to utilize the same platform for our Campus Corner single space meters (the Asp Avenue lot completed in early 2019 also utilizes this same system). This would allow any parking patron to use the same pay-by-cell system anywhere in Norman that would be a convenience to our customers.

The pay-by-cell option was made available to Campus Corner parking customers in May 2019. This, as it turned out, created a completely new series of issues. The pay-by-cell option utilized citywide was established through Parkeon (now doing business as Flowbird). The problem that arose is that Flowbird does not communicate with the IPS meters. Flowbird can allow patrons to pay for parking via their pay-by-cell app, but the City's Parking Enforcement Officers cannot see that payment was made unless they look specifically inside the Flowbird enforcement system. For years, the Parking Enforcement Officers got used to the flashing light-emitting diode (LED) lights on the IPS meters. A green flashing LED meant that a vehicle was legally parked. A red flashing LED meant that a vehicle was illegally parked (did not pay, meter expired, etc.). The Flowbird system does not communicate with the IPS meter meaning that if a patron pays for parking at a Campus Corner meter using the Flowbird app, that Flowbird is unable to change the blinking LED light from red to green. Parking Enforcement Officers continue issuing tickets for expired meters, based on the red LED lights, which are being contested because the patron paid via the Flowbird app. This creates much consternation with the Parking Enforcement Officers as well as Municipal Court. The concept of disabling the pay-by-cell option at the Campus Corner meters has been discussed but this does not seem fair to the patrons who are actively using this system for their meter payments in other areas. To make matters worse, the reliability of the IPS meters is rather poor. It is not unusual for four to six meters being sent to IPS for repairs each month. The turn-around time for IPS to get meters back to us for installation or to replenish our spares can vary greatly. In addition, the cost of repairs seems to be never ending.

Knowing the volume of complaint calls received by the Traffic Control Division as well as at Municipal Court, staff has been in contact with Flowbird to assess options for a revenue collection system in the Campus Corner area that is compatible with the existing pay-by cell option and provides a consistent approach across multiple lots in Norman. Flowbird is the sole source provider of a compatible option under Section 8-204(b)(2) of the City Code. Given that OU utilizes pay stations (kiosks) rather than parking meters for on-street parking on their campus, Flowbird recommends a combination of pay stations and parking meters as a solution for the City in the Campus Corner area. Pay stations would be utilized on Asp Avenue, on Boyd Street, on University Boulevard, on White Street, and on portions of Buchanan Avenue. The north end of Buchanan Avenue would be treated with parking meters rather than pay stations because there is really not a good location on this portion of Buchanan Avenue to locate a pay station. The quotation for the Flowbird upgrades is $107,556. All systems will function under the Flowbird umbrella.

The revenue generated from the Campus Corner parking meters has averaged $260,673.02 since 2014, which was the first full year of operation. If the COVID related year of 2020 is removed, the average has been $281,773.53.

This item is coming forward now as a companion item to the infrastructure repair contract approved by the City Council on May 25, 2021. Staff has been working for months with Council Member Hall

and the Campus Corner Merchants Association to make repairs to sidewalks, brick pavers, curbs, light poles, and other public infrastructure. With removal of the existing parking meters, now is the ideal time to combine these projects.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends authorization to purchase upgrades to the Campus Corner parking management system which will put all paid parking in the City of Norman under the Flowbird umbrella.

Staff also recommends that the necessary $107,556 be appropriated from the Capital Fund Balance (Account 50-29000) to Campus Corner Parking Meters (Account No. 50593365-46301, BG0258).