

Gaining More Control Over City Parking Revenue

In 2003, the City of Winnipeg, capital of the Canadian Province of Manitoba, had several parking facility and resource issues that created many time consuming and expensive problems, and made parking confusing for its citizens and city workers.

The entire parking organization for the city was in need of restructuring. The city's inventory of 9,000 parking spaces (on-street meter areas, surface lots, daily- and monthly-rate garages, permit areas and time restricted zones) were being managed by three separate administrative departments and eight different divisions. It was almost impossible to determine who was in control of each city asset: the city property department handled parking lots, while parking meters were handled by the city works department and parking enforcement was handled by the city police department.

The Winnipeg Parking Authority (WPA) was formed in 2004 to better meet the needs of the city's nearly 680,000 citizens. Today, this agency now serves as the city's public sector for daily and monthly parking.

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"We needed to harmonize everything. We created a single organization that works to help the city rather than get in the way of things," said David C. Hill, Chief Operating Officer of the WPA. "There was no integrated way of managing on- and off-street parking before we formed this agency. In the past, each department ran parking differently, which upset and confused customers. This caused confusion within the different departments as well."



With a unified agency in place, the next step was to automate the parking system and WPA turned to T2 Flex™ by T2 Systems to address the need. "Of what is available on the market, T2 Flex is the most adaptable and has the most to offer in meeting our future needs. The IT structure is the most compatible with the city today and will remain compatible for many years down the road."

"Before T2 Flex, everything revolved around the ticket and not the customer. Now, we have become much more customer centric. We can make decisions based on a person's behaviors, meaning we can be more lenient with our good customers who have a history of paying their tickets, and concentrate more time on modifying the behaviors of frequent offenders," said Hill.

In the past, ticket collections were handled on a "per ticket basis," where limited information was known on the offender. Now, said Hill, "we can view an account at a glance and see a person's entire history of paid or unpaid tickets. T2 Flex allows us to look at an individual's parking information at a glance. You can't do that with any other system."

Changes to the parking enforcement system have led to increases in revenue. Since importing all of



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the data into T2 Flex, WPA was able to generate a first round of statements for 81,000 unpaid citations. In two weeks, WPA had closed on more than 4,000 of these outstanding accounts. WPA will continue to send invoices each month until fees have been paid, which is estimated to take about a year.

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“People are now much more aware that tickets cannot be ignored. They no longer can merely wait for it to be lost in the system after a couple of months. Flex allows us to get much more clarity on the information we have and regain control of parking.”

Current annual revenue for WPA is \$12 million with a goal of \$15 million in five years. This extra revenue will be used to boost the level of customer service and the overall physical condition of properties, such as renovating existing parking structures. Previously, when control was given to three different departments, any money that was earned would go elsewhere and not into parking. Therefore, many parking facilities were not maintained and updated as needed.

Before using T2’s system, the city’s estimated 160,000 annual citations were manually written in the field in triplicate. It was easy for citations to be

misplaced and even easier for customers to not pay due to the lengthy, imprecise process. One copy of each citation was filed then sent to the police department where it was scanned and stored in a large image bank. Then, once the citation number was entered by hand in the system, there was no way of finding a record of the ticket without the citation number.

Now, by partnering with T2 Systems, WPA has implemented 50 new TDS Recon 200 handhelds using real-time wireless communications, as part of its new parking enforcement system. The handheld ticketwriters are fully integrated with T2 Flex, allowing field officers to lookup relevant data and write citations; with the citation information being available in the system immediately. Furthermore implementation was easy. According to Hill, WPA was able to train 12 people with no prior experience in parking in just two weeks.

WPA continues to work with T2 Systems as a partner in its endeavor to make parking in the city more customer oriented and more effective. The selection of T2 Systems and T2 Flex to make parking management easier for employees and customers is a strong first step toward those goals. The continuation of this partnership is expected to benefit the City of Winnipeg for years to come.

“The easier it becomes to pay citations, the more payments we’ll receive. T2 Flex is the primary information manager in our office. It helps us do our jobs operationally, managing sales, and measuring and addressing problems. You can’t do that efficiently in a manual world,” said Hill. “And, as far as we’re concerned, T2 is the right organization to help us do that job well.”

For more information on T2 Systems, please call (800)-434-1502 or visit www.t2systems.com.