

FINAL REPORT – CASE NO. 04-07 CENTRAL PARKING DISTRICT

SUMMARY:

Citizens complained that the Central Parking District was not fair in assigning parking spaces. Some applicants for parking were assigned spaces rather quickly while others waited months, even years for desirable parking. The complaints further allege that the Supervisor of the Central Parking District appeared to show favoritism or bias in assignments and was unprofessional in dealing with clients. The 2007-2008 Civil Grand Jury found that there was no written parking assignment process in place, resulting in people being assigned parking spaces out of sequence, for no justifiable reasons.

REASON FOR INVESTIGATION:

The Grand Jury received several complaints regarding a pattern of favoritism and mismanagement in the assignment of parking spaces in the parking garages managed by the City of Stockton. The complaints alleged that although when applying for parking spaces they were told that it was on a first-come, first-served basis, the spaces were not issued in that manner. Furthermore, the complainants alleged that they were never contacted when their names came up on the list and that they were treated rudely by the manager when inquiring about their place on the list.

BACKGROUND:

The City of Stockton Central Parking District (CPD) manages over 4000 parking spaces included in fifteen surfaced parking lots, five city-owned parking garages and one County-owned parking garage in downtown Stockton. Approximately 3200 spaces have been set aside for parking patrons who choose to purchase monthly parking passes. Individual applications are made at the CPD office. Although some of the parking spaces are available immediately, they are not necessarily in the most desirable locations near work sites. The more desirable spaces require that the applicants be placed on a waiting list.

The CPD, which is under the auspices of the Stockton Redevelopment Agency, has one Manager, one Assistant Manager and one clerk who have the responsibility of managing the operation and the distribution of parking spaces. There are about 35 parking attendants at the various garages and lots.

METHOD OF INVESTIGATION:

Documents Reviewed:

- Request for Monthly Parking and Waiting List Guidelines
- Monthly Parking Application
- Request for Waiting List
- Map of downtown parking garages and lots
- Last two financial audits of CPD
- Market Street waiting list for last four years
- Market Street deleted list for last four years
- Manual waiting list covering 2003 to 2005
- Minutes of last two CPD Board minutes-2/7/07 and 4/4/07
- Job description-Parking District Supervisor
- Job description- Park Attendant Supervisor
- List of last 10 people assigned to Market Street Garage
- City of Stockton-CPD-Parking space utilization
- Complainant's monthly parking request form
- Complainant's waiting list form

Interviews Conducted:

- Complainants
- Witness
- Director of the Downtown Redevelopment Agency
- Supervisor, Central Parking District
- Parking Attendant Supervisor

Sites Visited:

- Central Parking District Office
- City of Stockton web site

FINDINGS:

1. Published policy and procedures do not exist for the city's Parking District.
2. No policies and procedures document is available to describe the duties and responsibilities of the CPD employees.
3. No policies and procedures document is available to describe the process used to assign parking spaces. Some individuals were given parking spaces out of sequence for no justifiable reason.

4. CPD waiting lists are maintained within a non-secure Excel spreadsheet program that can be easily manipulated by other city employees. There is no way to track changes or deletions to the list.
5. Minimal attempts were made to contact individuals on the waiting list who may have relocated positions, but still work within the specific agency.
6. The CPD seems to lack oversight from the Redevelopment Director. There are no regularly scheduled meetings between the Supervisor and Redevelopment Director to discuss matters related to the CPD.
7. The operation and activities of the CPD office appear to rest solely on the decisions of the CPD Supervisor with very little accountability to, or direction from, the Redevelopment Director.
8. There is no procedure or escalation path in place for the effective handling of any citizen complaints beyond the CPD Supervisor.
9. A map is not posted in the CPD office lobby to orient applicants as to the location of available parking areas.
10. The reconciliation of cash receipts collected by the parking garages and lots is done exclusively by the CPD Supervisor. In her absence, the cash receipts are neither reconciled nor forwarded to the City Treasurer.
11. Applicants for parking spaces are not routinely given a receipt to validate the date and time they applied to go on a waiting list.
12. Although parking spaces become available, the waiting list is updated but parking spaces are assigned only quarterly.
13. The computer system that tracks the activity of the automated parking garages is not routinely backed up. In the event of a server failure all data must be restored manually leading to long delays and possible mistakes.
14. There is no online process to allow applicants to apply for parking permits or access the status of their applications.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Develop a system of assigning parking spaces on a first-come first-served basis free from political pressure or favoritism influencing the assignments.
2. Develop a policies and procedures manual for all CPD office employees and the parking attendants.

3. Develop and publish an internal training procedure to detail how parking spaces are assigned.
4. Develop a procedure and documentation policy to ensure that all reasonable attempts are made to contact applicants on the waiting list.
5. Develop and publish a procedure for processing citizen complaints.
6. Provide cross training to insure continuous operation of CPD.
7. Develop a “checks and balances” system for the reconciling of cash receipts collected from the parking garages to include two persons and also provide for daily processing of those receipts, in the absence of the supervisor or the other person, in accordance with accepted accounting practices.
8. Develop a two-part receipt for applicants to validate the date and time of application.
9. Post a large map in the CPD office lobby to identify the location of available parking areas.
10. Update the parking assignments at least monthly.
11. Develop a backup system for the computer that tracks the automated garages. Have the IT department develop a disaster recovery procedure in the event of a catastrophic failure.
12. Insure that all programs are operated on a secure server not accessible by other departments.
13. Develop a program that allows online applications, payments, and issuance of parking passes to accommodate anticipated future growth.

RESPONSE REQUIRED:

Pursuant to Section 933.05 of the Penal Code:

The Stockton City Council shall report to the Presiding Judge of the San Joaquin County Superior Court, in writing and within 90 days of publication of this report, with a response as follows:

As to each finding in the report a response indicating one of the following:

- a. The respondent agrees with the finding.
- b. The respondent disagrees with the finding, with an explanation of the reasons therefore.

As to each recommendation, a response indicating one of the following:

- a. The recommendation has been implemented, with a summary of the action taken.
- b. The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be with a time frame for implementation.
- c. The recommendation requires further analysis, with an explanation of the scope of analysis and a time frame not to exceed (6) six months.
- d. The recommendation will not be implemented, with an explanation therefore.