Anna Gilligan, Parking Operations Manager
Department of Community Development
Parking Enforcement Division

Phone: 605-394-4120
City Web: www.rcgov.org
Email: cpweb@rcgov.org

TO: Parking Advisory Board
FROM: Anna Gilligan
SUBJECT: Courtesy Button Abuse
DATE: 07/01/25

When the smart meters were installed in 2019, the City decided to include a 15-minute courtesy time as part of the system. Users who were just running in and out of a downtown location could park at a meter and press a button to get the free 15-minute credit. This would essentially allow any metered space to be used as a loading zone.

Though the 15-minute courtesy time was advertised in the press and our officers would let people know about it as they were walking around downtown, the courtesy button evolved from a perk for very short-term users into an added bonus for longer users. People who frequented downtown knew to push the button before adding time to their meter to get a little extra time. The visitors and tourists did not know about the courtesy time. Though text on the meter display advises users on how to activate the perk, the vast majority of people do not look at the meter screens.

Parking staff started to notice that several residents and employees would come out to their meter multiple times a day, pushing the courtesy button and sometimes putting in a small amount of money to get them through until parking staff was no longer in sight. Some employees got in the habit of coming out and pushing the courtesy buttons all on unpaid meters in front of their shops, wanting to save their customers from getting citations.

As time went on, this problem has grown. In May and April of 2025, we saw increases of approximately 60 percent over 2023 and 2024. In just January to May of 2025, courtesy buttons were pushed 113,016 times. If paid for, this time would generate $28,254 in revenue.

When looking through the data on the backend, most meters have a couple courtesy button "transactions" each day. A fraction of the meters show that the courtesy button is pushed much more frequently, up to 27 times a day. The officers frequently see the same people coming out to push the button as soon as they are on the block. Some of them go so far as to tell the officers that they enjoy getting outside (to push the button) or that they use pushing the button as a reason to stretch their legs.

While the courtesy button was well intentioned, the benefits it gives to the causal downtown visitor is greatly overshadowed by abuse at the hands of the employees and residents downtown.

		January	February	March	April	May	Total
# Courtesy Time	2023	20,862	18,024	20,815	17,902	19,621	97,224.00
	2024	18,562	16,960	16,888	17,043	18,983	88,436.00
	2025	18,032	15,738	19,419	28,153	31,674	113,016.00
	Percent Change 24-25	-2.86	-7.21	14.99	65.19	66.85	27.79
Total Sensor Courtesy Time (Hours)	2023	5,393.75	4,667.00	5,401.50	4,626.50	5,090.50	25,179.25
	2024	4,793.75	4,379.50	4,372.75	4,428.75	4,917.75	22,892.50
	2025	4,687.75	4,085.25	5,034.25	7,215.25	8,107.00	29,129.50

January 2025

Standard

Meter#

# of instances Courtesy Button was pressed in a month

1008	30
01/02/2025	2
01/04/2025	1
01/06/2025	3
01/07/2025	1
01/08/2025	2
01/09/2025	2
01/10/2025	3
01/11/2025	1
01/13/2025	1
01/15/2025	1
01/16/2025	3
01/18/2025	4
01/21/2025	1
01/29/2025	2
01/30/2025	1
01/31/2025	2

Improper

5005	103
01/02/2025	9
01/03/2025	3
01/04/2025	1
01/06/2025	5
01/07/2025	1
01/08/2025	1
01/09/2025	8
01/10/2025	2
01/13/2025	12
01/14/2025	6
01/15/2025	4
01/16/2025	2
01/17/2025	1
01/18/2025	1
01/21/2025	1
01/22/2025	2
01/23/2025	1
01/24/2025	2
01/25/2025	2
01/27/2025	2
01/28/2025	21
01/29/2025	11
01/30/2025	4
01/31/2025	1

February 2025

Standard

1901	39
02/01/2025	1
02/03/2025	1
02/04/2025	2
02/05/2025	2
02/06/2025	2
02/07/2025	4
02/10/2025	3
02/11/2025	2
02/13/2025	3
02/14/2025	1
02/18/2025	2
02/19/2025	1
02/20/2025	1
02/21/2025	1
02/24/2025	2
02/25/2025	2
02/26/2025	1
02/27/2025	4
02/28/2025	4

Improper

5004	260
02/01/2025	1
02/04/2025	16
02/05/2025	22
02/06/2025	23
02/07/2025	18
02/10/2025	20
02/11/2025	18
02/12/2025	18
02/13/2025	16
02/18/2025	2
02/19/2025	18
02/20/2025	21
02/21/2025	1
02/22/2025	1
02/24/2025	23
02/25/2025	23
02/26/2025	15
02/27/2025	1
02/28/2025	3

March 2025

Standard		Improper	
6009	**28**	**1560**	**90**
03/03/2025	1	03/01/2025	7
03/04/2025	2	03/03/2025	2
03/05/2025	1	03/04/2025	4
03/06/2025	1	03/05/2025	2
03/07/2025	2	03/06/2025	5
03/10/2025	1	03/07/2025	4
03/11/2025	1	03/10/2025	1
03/12/2025	1	03/11/2025	7
03/13/2025	2	03/12/2025	2
03/14/2025	1	03/13/2025	4
03/17/2025	1	03/14/2025	2
03/18/2025	1	03/15/2025	1
03/19/2025	2	03/17/2025	2
03/21/2025	2	03/18/2025	4
03/26/2025	3	03/19/2025	3
03/27/2025	2	03/20/2025	7
03/28/2025	3	03/21/2025	4
03/29/2025	1	03/22/2025	5
		03/24/2025	4
		03/25/2025	5
		03/26/2025	4
		03/27/2025	5
		03/28/2025	2
		03/29/2025	4

April 2025

Standard		Improper	
1312	**36**	**1427**	**111**
04/02/2025	1	04/01/2025	6
04/04/2025	1	04/02/2025	1
04/05/2025	1	04/04/2025	7
04/07/2025	1	04/07/2025	6
04/09/2025	1	04/08/2025	5
04/10/2025	4	04/09/2025	4
04/11/2025	1	04/11/2025	1
04/12/2025	1	04/14/2025	4
04/14/2025	1	04/15/2025	4
04/15/2025	2	04/16/2025	4
04/16/2025	2	04/17/2025	2
04/17/2025	3	04/19/2025	5
04/19/2025	2	04/21/2025	4
04/21/2025	4	04/22/2025	1
04/22/2025	2	04/23/2025	6
04/23/2025	1	04/24/2025	16
04/24/2025	1	04/25/2025	1
04/26/2025	1	04/26/2025	1
04/28/2025	1	04/28/2025	21
04/29/2025	2	04/29/2025	2
04/30/2025	3	04/30/2025	10

May 2025

Standard		Improper	
2008	**30**	**7022**	**110**
05/01/2025	1	05/01/2025	6
05/02/2025	2	05/02/2025	4
05/03/2025	1	05/03/2025	2
05/06/2025	3	05/05/2025	3
05/07/2025	4	05/06/2025	9
05/08/2025	1	05/07/2025	8
05/09/2025	1	05/08/2025	4
05/10/2025	1	05/09/2025	2
05/14/2025	2	05/10/2025	1
05/16/2025	2	05/12/2025	4
05/21/2025	2	05/13/2025	7
05/22/2025	1	05/14/2025	4
05/23/2025	2	05/15/2025	2
05/24/2025	1	05/16/2025	5
05/27/2025	3	05/17/2025	1
05/28/2025	2	05/19/2025	8