

The Pittsburgh Parking Authority

Operating at the forefront of parking innovation

Background

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, the industrial “Steel City” that sits at the confluence of the Allegheny, Monongahela, and Ohio rivers, serves as home to over 300,000 residents. Since the closure of the city’s steel mills in the 1980s, Pittsburgh has gone through a transformation as it has welcomed new industries, including advanced manufacturing, information technology, finance, healthcare, and energy.

The City of Pittsburgh has established itself as a leader in innovation with its parking program. In 2012, the Pittsburgh Parking Authority (PPA) replaced its legacy parking equipment with modern multi-space, pay-by-plate meters. In 2015, the PPA added mobile parking payments to the program with its launch of the Go Mobile PGH app, powered by ParkMobile, which customers can use to park at any of the city’s 32 surface lots or 11,000 on-street, metered spaces.

Evaluating mobile parking apps




The Pittsburgh Parking Authority always had an interest in transitioning the city’s parking to a pay-by-phone model, so after receiving inquiries from residents requesting the service and seeing the model operate well in other cities, the organization issued an RFP nation-wide. The PPA received proposals from the top vendors in the industry to evaluate, and after careful consideration, selected ParkMobile due to numerous factors, including the company’s already-established presence in the region. “We wanted to partner with a vendor who already had a marketplace,” says David G. Onorato, Executive Director of Pittsburgh Parking Authority.

Implementing ParkMobile in Pittsburgh

Before launch, a few months of preparation were required to fully integrate the ParkMobile app with Pittsburgh’s meters and enforcement technology. By integrating all of the city’s parking systems, operators could easily access data in one place without having to jump from software to software, making processes more efficient. The ParkMobile team worked closely with the PPA to create the stickers and signage needed to help inform customers about the city’s new mobile parking payment option.



**Pittsburgh, PA
by the numbers**

-  **94%**
Increase in transactions from 2016 to 2018
-  **48%**
Utilization rate
-  **230**
On-street parking spaces

Additionally, ParkMobile brand ambassadors engaged with the city's local businesses and major universities, including the University of Pittsburgh and Carnegie Mellon, to increase awareness of the app. In less than 60 days from the start of the city's partnership with ParkMobile, the Go Mobile PGH app went live.

Roll-out and response

Because Pittsburgh customers were already familiar with pay-by-plate technology, adding a mobile payment option resulted in a seamless transition. "Once customers use the app, they stick with it," says Onorato. With ParkMobile, customers only need to enter their license plate numbers once when they set up their account, as opposed to having to reenter every time at the meter, providing a better overall parking experience.

"The new program required little change from an operational perspective and was easy to manage once installed," says Onorato. Since enabling mobile payments with the Go Mobile PGH app, customer compliance has improved significantly, and parking revenue has rocketed. By simply improving efficiencies through technology, Pittsburgh's parking revenue has increased by \$13 million since 2012 – without having to add more parking inventory.

Looking forward

"Since its launch, ParkMobile has really taken off in Pittsburgh," says Matt Jendrzewski, Meter Services Manager. From 2017 to 2018, the app's average monthly utilization rate versus the meter increased from 34% to 42% year-over-year, and by January 2019, the city hit close to 50% utilization. The app has gained its popularity primarily through word-of-mouth. People who use the app and like

"Our selection of ParkMobile has proven to be a successful partnership from both operational and end-user aspects, with 50% of our on-street parking going through the phone app."

David G. Onorato, CAPP

Public Parking Authority of Pittsburgh

it usually tell others about it. Additionally, the staff members at the Pittsburgh Parking Authority's office have become great brand ambassadors for the app. They encourage all customers who call in with questions or visit to the office to download the app.

"We believe meters will eventually be eliminated by attrition as more customers adopt the ParkMobile app," says Onorato. With nearly half of parking transactions being conducted through ParkMobile, the PPA hopes to slowly move toward mobile-only parking payment in the future. Soon, the city will be eliminating all coin-based payments and paper receipts at the meters to encourage greater adoption of the app.

