City of San Leandro, California

Leveraging technology to improve compliance and create a better experience

Background

San Leandro, California is a medium-sized suburban city with approximately 90,000 residents. It is located on the eastern shore of San Francisco Bay, between Oakland to the northwest and Hayward to the southeast. San Leandro has long been home to a large manufacturing sector, specifically to food production companies like Coca-Cola, Ghirardelli, and Mi Rancho. The city has two commuter train stations (called the BART) – one downtown and one south.

In recent years, San Leandro has been experiencing significant revitalization in the downtown area. With new plazas, shops, and eateries popping up, the city has started to focus on ensuring that downtown San Leandro has the necessary infrastructure to keep things in motion. There are approximately 3,000 paid public parking spaces available to customers, and parking permits are also available to business owners, employees, and residents who require all-day parking.

Evaluating opportunities for change

In 2016, the City of San Leandro conducted a parking study to identify opportunities for improvement that would support the steady increase in people, cars, and development downtown. A few years prior, San Leandro's all-in-one parking contractor went bankrupt, leaving the city with infrastructure on the ground that was no longer monitored.

Because the city's infrastructure was no longer monitored, rules and restrictions around parking weren't actively being enforced, and customer compliance was minimal at best. Mariana Garcia, Economic Development Project Specialist for the City of San Leandro, took on her role in July of 2017, and immediately began taking action on recommended changes from the city's parking study. Garcia wanted to implement a solution that didn't require a large investment in new infrastructure, so she turned toward parking technology that could work with what already existed.

San Leandro, CA by the numbers

900%
Increase in transactions

90,000+
Residents

3,000+
Paid public parking spaces

Implementing ParkMobile in San Leandro

With a mobile parking solution, the city could make use of old infrastructure while still providing customers with a new way to pay. Garcia's decision to choose ParkMobile against other options was driven by which solution had the largest audience and awareness locally. She wanted to choose the solution that would be the most user-friendly, the easiest to transition to, and one that would allow people to continue using the app in neighboring cities. ParkMobile has significant coverage within the East Bay area near San Leandro, so it was easy for people to get on board as many of them had the app on their phone.

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> **Mariana Garcia**
> Economic Development Project Specialist for the City of San Leandro

By February 2018, ParkMobile was integrated with all downtown parking meters and two pay stations inside of the city's four-level parking garage, which offers both hourly and all-day parking. From there, Garcia helped rebrand parking in downtown San Leandro with color-coded zones, updated marketing materials, and the launch of the ParkSL website. From February 2018 to December, monthly transactions increased over 900%.

Community engagement

Garcia was active in the community after the launch of ParkMobile. Her angle for success has always been deeply influenced by face-to-face interaction and relationship-driven management. "People like having someone they can talk to," says Garcia. "You have to know who your audience is, and you have to have the compassion to help people."

To raise awareness with customers, Garcia tabled with her team at both San Leandro's Holiday Festival and Cherry Festival, where they talked to customers about ParkMobile, hosted a raffle, and handed out freebies. Garcia wrote several blog articles for San Leandro Next, an initiative to provide news and updates on economic development and innovation in San Leandro, to both prepare and convince customers to adopt ParkMobile. For the downtown business community, Garcia introduced herself door-to-door so that owners and managers would know who to contact if they had a problem involving the new parking system.

Additionally, Garcia began attending city council meetings to discuss the residential parking permit program with residents, encouraging them to petition and apply for parking programs in their neighborhoods. With the launch of the ParkSL website, Garcia wanted to provide an easy way for people to write in if they had any comments or concerns. As the parking program grows, Garcia always wants there to be a modern, user-friendly outlet for individuals to communicate with the city.

Looking forward

Garcia still actively looks for new ways to improve both parking compliance and customer experience in downtown San Leandro. She wants to ramp up signage to better communicate to customers, and eventually, she plans to make the investment in new multi-space meters since the current infrastructure is older.

Some commuters are still parking in the city's residential areas to avoid paying for parking. To help alleviate this problem, Garcia wants to add time limitations to current paid parking zones to increase availability, establish signage to help limit drivers from parking in these areas, and continue encouraging residents to apply for designated parking areas in their neighborhoods. As population density continues to increase in the downtown San Leandro area, Garcia plans to continue active conversation between the city, businesses, and residents to ensure a successful parking program.

One thing Garcia does know is that ParkMobile has been a huge success for downtown San Leandro, and it will continue to be a part of the city's parking solution moving forward. "People love paying by phone," says Garcia. "ParkMobile has been easy for people to adopt, and everyone understands how it's benefiting the city."