

COMMENT ORDER #6 28 September 2015

Councillor Cheung's proposal to enable citywide parking meter payments via credit cards, smartphone applications and the like has serious adverse consequences that should be properly considered.

The suggestion that such upgrades will improve space turnover is exactly opposite what will really happen. Drivers who no longer have to search for quarters will always max out the available time.

Much more importantly, people get parking tickets because they don't have enough quarters on arrival and overstay. As the kiosks at city lots demonstrate, electronic payment enables longer duration parking without the risk of a ticket.

Cambridge is hugely dependent on parking ticket revenue from meters and lots. One in three tickets issued also results in expensive penalties. An extra buck at the meter translates to huge ticket revenue reductions .

Citywide application of electronic payment will mean a substantial loss from the nine million dollars collected. Traffic&Parking is already on course to become a budget liability instead of small revenue source and the shortfall will come directly from residents.

Councillors will shortly announce raised fees for resident parking stickers. Considering that most stickers are issued free of charge already, there's little sense in charging at all especially considering that Boston has always issued for free.

Technology already in the hands of Parking Control Officers renders the whole requirement for sticker renewal unnecessary. Read the Boston Globe's front page story from Valentine's Day 2014.

Who do you think is going to pay for the lost ticket money?

GARY MELLO