



Managing Through CRISIS



Airport parking, mobility, and transportation department professionals share their COVID-19 experiences, what they've learned, and where they go from here.

IT WASN'T LONG AFTER COVID-19 SHUTDOWNS STARTED BACK IN MARCH that news cameras began descending on airports—empty, desolate airports. Every sector of the parking industry has experienced change thanks to the pandemic, but few have been hit as hard as those in and around airports. We reached out to our airport members to share their experiences; this is what they said.



Ben Carpenter, CAPP
Manager, Landside Operations
Reno-Tahoe
International Airport

Ben is manager of landside operations at the Reno-Tahoe International Airport, overseeing all aspects of the parking and ground transportation programs. Prior to this role, he was aviation superintendent of Parking Services at Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport. He started his career in parking management in 2004, working in the San Francisco Bay Area with SP+ for more than a decade.

What's the biggest impact (thus far) to your organization and parking and transportation systems?

At the Reno-Tahoe International Airport (RNO) we are experiencing the same impact as all other airports; a serious decline in passengers that has directly correlated to a loss in parking and ground transportation (GT) customers. However, due to Reno being somewhat isolated in geography and not having any direct airport competition, (Sacramento International Airport is a two and a half hour drive away), our decline has been slightly less than the national average. But that shouldn't lessen the severity of what we are seeing.

The parking impact is obvious. As the largest non-aeronautical revenue provider to the airport, seeing the parking demand drop has translated into a significant revenue decline for RNO.

In our GT program, we have seen some of our smaller providers cease operations at the airport, as well as a large decline in trips from our larger providers such as casino shuttles, TNCs, and taxis. Thankfully, throughout this uncertainty, we have not noticed any tangible drop in customer service from our travelers relying on our GT providers. This just goes to show how good our transportation partners are.

What's on the horizon for your organization and your policies in response to the protracted nature of the pandemic?

We are hoping to expand our technology where applicable in the parking program. Our near-term goal is to implement a parking reservation system (PRS) as a customer service amenity as well as to benefit from the touchless nature of those programs. We are also closely monitoring all metrics and trends as closely as possible to determine what the next few years will look like; one of these metrics is an increase in parking as a mode choice for travelers. Our parking transactions per enplaned passenger have increased at the same time as we have seen a decrease in the same metric for TNCs and taxis. This falls in line with the theory that travelers may be more likely to choose to be in their own cars as opposed to using shared or public transportation. It is too soon to determine if this is a trend or an anomaly however. If this does turn out to be a trend that has staying power, this will directly impact how we plan to accommodate parkers in the future.

What's your longer term planning look like?

Before the pandemic began, we had a serious shortage of parking spaces, routinely averaging above 95 percent occupancy and implementing overflow parking procedures several weekends per year. For this year, we predicted that we would need overflow parking on 25 weekends with an additional four weekends needing some form of offsite parking from neighboring businesses. (Last year we used a local high school parking lot during the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays.) While nobody has a crystal ball and estimates about a full recovery time vary quite a bit, we are still looking at how to expand our parking layout for when demand gets back to pre-COVID levels.

A project that had been slated for this fiscal year was expanding our overflow parking footprint into an undeveloped lot. This would have yielded approximately 350 additional spaces that could be used for customer or employee parking. While that project is now delayed, we are still planning to move forward with it once we see the demand come back. We are also still in the development phase of a new CONRAC (consolidated rental car facility).

Share any best practices that have been standard operating procedure. Have you developed any new policies in response to the crisis?

First and foremost, we have dramatically upped our cleaning

procedures of our high touchpoint areas—entrances, exits, and pay stations. We are also in the process of looking at touchless capabilities of our PARCS system, whether it is an LPR solution, enhanced credit card in or out, or some of the other programs our PARCS partner has to offer.

Any advice for other airports as they tackle similar challenges?

One thing I am trying to do as a manager is keep employee morale as high as possible. Our parking and GT programs are run in-house, therefore our staff of parking professionals are all part of the immediate RNO family. In this time of so much craziness, it's important for managers to make sure the work environment is as positive and dare I say as fun as possible. We have several frontline staff that have been working full-time since the beginning of the pandemic, so it is immensely important that their efforts are recognized and celebrated.

Are there any silver linings?

One of the positives we have seen is our ability to tackle some long-needed maintenance projects. While I would much prefer for us to not have the ability to so easily complete these projects, finding some silver linings where possible has been a big win in a time when wins have been hard to come by.



Allen Corry, CAPP
*Assistant Vice President,
Transportation and
Parking Business Unit*
**Dallas Fort Worth
International Airport, Texas**

Allen served 30 years in the U.S. Army, and began his parking career in 1998 at the Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta, as associate director of parking and transportation for nine years. He worked for eight years as director of parking services for the Town of Greenwich, Conn., and is currently AVP of the Parking Business Unit at the Dallas Fort Worth Airport, Texas and a member of IPMI's Board of Directors..

What's the biggest impact (thus far) to your organization and parking and transportation systems? How are you and your team addressing these impacts?

Our effort to retain and protect employees while supporting the airlines as they reduce their flights due to passenger reductions caused by the pandemic. We are allowing employee personnel who can support their operation from home to do so and providing them with the communication and technology to accomplish their tasks. For those who are not able to work from home because of their position, we ensure they have the proper PPE and social distancing instructions to properly and safely conduct their tasks.

What's on the horizon for your organization and your policies in response to the protracted nature of the pandemic?



Mike Maromaty, CAPP
Parking Manager
Dane County Regional Airport

Mike's parking career began immediately after receiving his management degree from Purdue. For several years, he worked for a parking operator in downtown Chicago managing a variety of location types, and for more than five years, he has managed the Parking Division at Dane County Regional Airport in Madison, Wisc.

What's the biggest impact (thus far) to your organization and parking and transportation systems? How are you and your team addressing these impacts?

The extreme decline in revenue. Despite the shortfall, we are working to maintain a positive facility image in

terms of health, safety, customer service, facility cleanliness, and completing scheduled maintenance with little customer impact.

What's on the horizon for your organization and your policies in response to the protracted nature of the pandemic?

We will continue to monitor the situation and enforce all health safety guidelines in the airport. We would like to continue to move forward with all capital improvement programs (CIP), but timing could shift for projects depending on urgency as we are in a reactive environment.

Share any best practices that have been standard operating procedure.

We have been carefully following health and safety procedures; we have decreased our number of face-to-face cash transactions through effective signage, technology, and customer service.

Any advice for other airports as they tackle similar challenges?

Continue efforts to make your patrons feel healthy, safe, and appreciated.

We have implemented "new normal" procedures, providing masks not only to employees but customers as well, mandating facial coverings, and sanitizing vehicles daily after use. All employees will have their temperature taken when they enter the workplace. Each employee has been issued a pandemic kit that includes thermometers to take their own temperature at home before they come to work every day and if they do not feel well, they are asked to stay home. We have implemented signage on buses and in terminals reminding customers to wear facial coverings, wash their hands, and social distance.

We've developed additional guidance and best practices for a safe recovery and re-opening, including establishing a flexible work schedule policy; leveraging IT for tools, training, and best practices for telecommuting; developing enhanced tools and guidance on how to manage performance for remote work; and creating an internal, dedicated COVID-19/New Normal webpage to keep employees informed.

Any advice for other airports as they tackle similar challenges?

Foremost, insist or mandate employees and customers wear facial coverings, maintain at least six feet of distance between people, and remind all to wash hands often by installing signage throughout the terminals, restrooms, and common areas. It is critical that all employees take responsibility to curb the spread of this deadly virus, both when at work and away from the airport.

Leadership can ensure that employees understand of the seriousness of the emergency and that they follow the guidance and instructions to reduce community spread. This has helped keep the number of cases down at DFW. The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated that we must be prepared for any other emergency of this nature with a protocol to address this in the future.



Frank Ragozzino

Director of Airport Operations
Philadelphia
Parking Authority



Frank has served more than 37 years at the Philadelphia Parking Authority, and started his career as a parking enforcement officer at the city's On-Street Parking Program in 1983. He has held various positions during his career in the On-Street Parking Division, PPA administration, including the last 15 years as director of airport operations.

What's the biggest impact (thus far) to your organization and parking and transportation systems? How are you and your team addressing these impacts?

We've been developing core strategies for guest and business recovery, which is an ongoing process. To date, we have cut back on operating expenses. We've accomplished this with reductions in staffing, holds on capital projects, closing our economy lot facility, and repurposing garage parking for multi-use demand (long- and short-term, employee parking, and extended stay discount) to meet the various needs of our customers.

What's on the horizon for your organization and your policies in response to the protracted nature of the pandemic? What's your longer-term planning look like?

As an organization, we will continue with our No. 1 objective: to keep our employees and customers safe. We will remain diligent by following and enforcing the number of new policies and procedures that have been implemented. Longer term, we are focused on developing strategies and programs for business recovery. Based on the airport's data we anticipate as much as three-year recovery period.

Share any best practices that have been standard operating procedure. Have you developed any new policies in response to the crisis?

In terms of employee and customer safety, the Philadelphia Parking Authority established a COVID-19 playbook to be followed by all departments and employees. Also, the airport's Division of Aviation has published and implemented new policies and procedure for their tenants, employees, and travelers.

Any advice for other airports as they tackle similar challenges?

Understand the evolving needs of your operation in these difficult times. Be supportive and flexible to meet the needs of both patrons and staff. Continue to engage and share information as an industry as we all work through these difficult times.



Matt Sherwood, CM

Revenue Strategy Program Manager
Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority

Matt is revenue strategy program manager with the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority. He is responsible for helping manage revenue and consumer strategy for the parking and ground transportation offerings for the nation's capital's airports.

What's the biggest impact (thus far) to your organization and parking and transportation systems?

As passenger activity has dropped significantly, we are challenged to adjust our operations to limit costs while still providing convenient and safe parking and transportation offerings for our passengers.

What's on the horizon for your organization and your policies in response to the protracted nature of the pandemic?

We have focused on developing a comprehensive and careful recovery plan that is extremely flexible to allow the organization the agility necessary to adapt to the current dynamic environment.

Are there any silver linings?

We see this as a unique opportunity to reset the pricing of our products to shrink the operation. It's an opportunity to move customers into our in-close facilities, which will ultimately improve the customer experience and decrease the reliance on shuttling. ♦

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