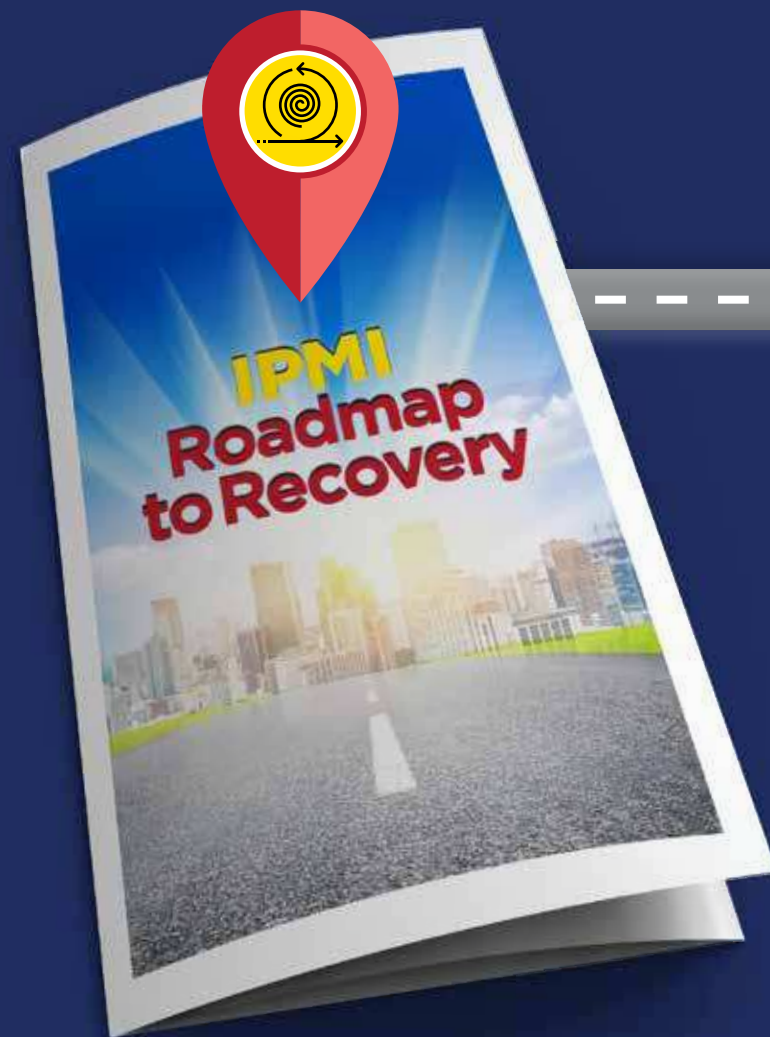# IPMI
Roadmap to Recovery

2020

**Considerations
parking and mobility organizations
should address during the re-opening process.**

BY BRETT WOOD, CAPP, PE

A S WE HAVE ALL BEEN NAVIGATING THROUGH THE CHANGES to work, home, and life in general, we've been trying to answer the question of what next? While no one really has the definitive answer, we do have a network of colleagues around us that have created opportunities to collaborate and move forward together. From partnerships to meet the rapidly changing needs at the curbs, IPMI-led meetings to discuss the effects, and the heavily used IPMI Forum and COVID Information Clearinghouse, the parking and mobility industry has come together to provide guidance, creative ideas, and words of encouragement to support one another.

This piece aims to codify some of the conversations around key areas cities, communities, and campuses need to consider on the Roadmap to Recovery. Much of the input for this series comes from conversations with IPMI's Big Cities Working Group, but the concepts should be applicable to anyone in the industry.

Defining the Roadmap

Recovery and re-opening are going to look different everywhere as communities and campuses find solid footing. Some may already be opened back up at the time this is published. Some may be wrestling with steps along the way. Wherever you are in your re-opening and recovery, it is good to have a plan that outlines the how, why, and what, and creates opportunities to transparently relate your goals back to the community around you. Your plan should include decisions and approaches to staffing and their safety, how operational practices are revived, steps for engaging and expanding responsibilities, and capital needs to support cleanliness, changing policies, and new practices.

First and foremost, decisions on health, safety, and cleanliness are largely out of our hands. We need to collaborate with local, state, and federal experts to define when we re-open, what that looks like, and how to create the safest environment for our staff and the public. When it comes to parking and mobility—our area of expertise—we should provide guidance on returning to regular practice, adapting old practices, and creating strategies to make parking and mobility work in concert with the community's new goals. We will need to help push back on any desires to eliminate parking and mobility management strategies—such as paid parking and enforcement—that were designed to make the communities work efficiently.

The remainder of the information in this article is meant to provide some guidance on elements to consider initially. As more and more of our partner programs open up, we hope to share additional data with the industry to strengthen the response and dial in the guidance further. For more information, stay tuned to the IPMI Forum, IPMI's COVID Information Clearinghouse, and future publications.

Staffing and Office Operations

Many of IPMI's member organizations ceased consistent operations in March and April in response to stay-at-home orders throughout the country. In some places, this meant repurposing frontline staff to other positions. In others, it meant furloughing staff until normal operations resumed. As your program re-opens, here are a few key elements to consider.

- Staffing decisions will need to be made as demand dictates. It might not be readily apparent from the beginning of re-opening how long that may take and where that may occur, so consistent observations and discussions with leadership should drive those decisions.
- It may be prudent to phase in or stagger staffing to maintain proper social distancing guidelines. Open and meaningful discussions with your staff can help evaluate the readiness and desire to return and develop staffing plans that allow for safe and efficient re-entry into the community.
- Staff returns may allow for a slight repurposing of roles. Several IPMI member organizations have transitioned frontline staff into maintenance and cleanliness roles in preparation for the return from quarantine. This could allow staff the opportunity to return to work and could be the time to tackle some of those projects on the bottom of your to-do list while we have some time.
- Once your staff returns, there will be a few things to consider from a COVID-19 standpoint—do we test/monitor employees and how do we keep them socially distant? For both, you should look to your local, state, and federal partners for guidance on how to optimize procedures. You should also discuss with your staff and have them help define

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practices that support their level of comfort. Spending time preparing before higher levels of staffing return can provide more efficient re-entry into the office environment.

- Our operations will definitely need to rethink internal space in offices and facilities. To achieve proper social distancing, you may need to remove or reduce adjacent cashiering, customer service, and office stations to create space. Many of our members have transitioned some or many staff to remote work or work-from-home arrangements; leaders should strategically consider if these arrangements continue, as they not only allow for social distancing but in some cases, productivity gains and reduced need for office space in the longer term.

Maintenance and Cleanliness

As staff comes back to work, it is critical to develop cleaning protocols for offices, shared spaces, locker rooms, vehicles, and shared equipment. Programs should work with local, state, and federal guidance to define ongoing (hourly, daily, weekly, monthly) cleaning protocols. For some programs, an initial deep clean (based on CDC guidelines) might provide a sense of comfort as programs ramp back up. Programs will need to weigh the cost of those services and the benefits they bring to staff morale.

Beyond new approaches to maintenance and cleanliness in the office, your programs should focus on cleaning, sanitizing, and developing maintenance plans to help the public interact with your facilities and technology. IPMI member organizations have shared guidance on cleaning parking lots, garages, and even the technology associated with revenue control. Some member agencies are debating the merits of cleaning individual parking meters, which could immediately become contaminated again with use after cleaning. Instead, many organizations are promoting self-sanitization with the use of gloves and hand sanitizer by the patron. Additionally, advocating the use of mobile payment technologies for those that can use them helps to limit the number of touch points.

If your program hasn't been focused on data-driven policies and practices that flex as demand dictates, now is the time.

Marketing and Outreach

One opportunity we have in front of us is the ability to message the objectives of our re-opening and use tools and partnerships to help inform our patrons of the safe way to return to parking. Several of IPMI's member organizations have begun implementing marketing campaigns focused on welcoming back their communities, including a mixture of vouchers for free parking transactions, validations for business, or commitments to give back to the community through initial revenue shares or donations. Many of these programs are being tied to the reintroduction of paid parking or enforcement and help strengthen the connection between efficient parking management and vibrant communities. These marketing campaigns can be strengthened by engaging with your community's business improvement or downtown groups to reach their constituents and promote a cohesive message. Other marketing elements to consider are cleanliness, ability to social distance, and other reassurances to patrons concerned about safety.

Another primary marketing campaign to consider is to push for usage of mobile or contactless payments for customers. If you already have a mobile app, re-educating people on the benefits of touchless payments can help reduce interactions between patrons and equipment. This effort can also lead to alternative payment patterns in the future which could alleviate or alter future capital investment decisions. One primary concern is that a move toward all-mobile pay could lead to equity concerns for those without mobile phones or those that are unbanked.

You will need to have discussions with city and program leadership to ensure that decisions today do not exclude patrons in the future.

Practice and Policy

One of the biggest aspects of re-opening will be reinstating or adapting existing policies and operational practices. The next feature of this series will focus more in depth on considerations for data-driven decision making and transparent communications with your community. A few initial considerations include:

- The decision to start charging for parking and enforcing again will likely require a strategic combination of political support, re-education, and a balance of data analytics and community outreach. It is critical we don't wait too long to re-engage, or we run the risk of diminishing positive parking management strategies from before the quarantine.
- We may need to consider altering our approach to monthly parkers if office workers remain remote workers. Flexible permits or redesigning our systems to promote daily pay-as-you-go parking could support new commute patterns. We need to think outside the box to support our changing customers' needs.
- Our approach to curb management likely needs to change as demands change. Monitoring and understanding data can help us define advancements to commercial loading, deliveries, curbside takeout, and the effects on parking. Now is the time to push for monetization of all curb activities to help balance the load of who is paying for curb management.
- Consider developing a wish list of capital or support investments now. Even with revenues down, if you can show a business case for investments to support customer service, safety and social distancing, and revenue generation, you can probably add the tools to your program.

As you begin (or continue) down the path to re-opening, we hope that these considerations and ideas can provide some guidance or help to stir conversations in your community. We anticipate that these conversations will continue to take place in

places like the IPMI Forum, so stay engaged there as we post more information to help solidify these plans. And remember—we are all in this together and will rise up together!

Re-Instituting Paid Parking and Enforcement

One of the primary responses to the initial stay-at-home orders across the country was the reduction in enforcement and revenue collection for parking, primarily in the on-street environment. Some of these decisions were made to support changing resident and business needs. Some of the decisions were made to protect staff for the parking and mobility programs. Some were highly advertised or publicized while others were simply actions taken by the parking and mobility program without much fanfare. In any event, returning to normal levels of paid parking and enforcement needs to take into consideration a number of factors.

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IPMI Launches 2020 Industry Response & Recovery Benchmark Survey

IPMI will collect and aggregate data to benchmark and share the effects of, and industry response to, the COVID-19 crisis. The survey will take less than 10 minutes to complete, and will share how you have been affected and how we are planning for the future.

Survey results will serve as an essential element of our Roadmap to Recovery initiative, and a guiding document to determine how this initiative can best support our members and the industry in the next six to 18 months.

Critical questions (in multiple choice format) address:

■ Date affected by stay-at-home, lockdown, or other restrictive measures; date of re-opening or loosened restrictions.

■ Ways your organization has been affected by the COVID-19 crisis.

■ Measures your organization has implemented for safety and wellness programs as a result of the COVID-19 crisis.

■ New programs your organization has implemented as a direct result of the COVID-19 crisis.

■ Initiatives your organization is currently planning to address in the near-term (next six months).

■ Your organization's prediction on anticipated parking demand (based on pre-COVID-19 levels).

■ Opportunity to share additional detail on your experience and to tell us what will be most useful to you as an IPMI member.

All data will be held with the highest confidentiality, and will only be released in aggregate.

Complete the survey before July 30, 2020 and be entered in a raffle to win a free membership for your organization for an entire year! Click here to participate.

Questions? Contact Rachel Yoka at yoka@parking-mobility.org.

Getting Programs Back on Track

As programs begin to open up in concert with their communities, it's important to re-establish parking management in a way that continues to support business and residential needs while also reconfirming the purpose for parking management—to provide adequate and equitable access to community businesses and amenities. This may include going back to the rates established before the quarantine with a little more leniency on enforcement at the beginning. Or it could include lower initial parking rates with a keen eye on behavior and patterns and the ability to accelerate rate changes as demand returns.

The Seattle DOT Curbside Management team is taking the second approach. With a decade of experience with their performance-based pricing program (with prices as high as $5 per hour and rates structured by time of day and location), the team at SDOT is planning to employ a similar demand-responsive approach to the return to work. Initially, all parking areas will be set at $0.50 per hour and staff will review demand patterns with visual observations and transaction data to adjust pricing during the first few months.

Whatever approach your program takes, it's important to focus on the reason to implement paid parking and enforcement. This will likely take a delicate balance of community engagement to help business owners navigate the new normal and help design policy and practice that act in concert with reopening initiatives. Even if your program reduces parking rates or allows for free parking initially, it will be important to continue the conversation with the community to ensure that prices are re-instituted to support demand management and equitable access.

Evaluating Data and Trends

The best way to approach phased reinstatement of parking management tools is through data review and analytics that can more clearly convey the need to move to the next phase of the program. Traditionally, most programs have observed these metrics on a periodic basis to make decisions about adapting policy or practice. In this instance, it may be appropriate to begin to look at this data more frequently so that the reinstatement of good parking management practices does not lag behind the return of commercial and office activity. A few key data points to consider evaluating:

■ Parking demand—a review of occupancy and growth in occupancy can help to predict when to implement subsequent phases of policy, rate, and programmatic changes.

■ Dwell time—understanding how long vehicles are remaining in parking spaces, especially curbside, can help to define when it may make sense to reinstate strategies that promote turnover and balance.

■ Vehicle frequency—simple license plate surveys in high-demand areas can begin to indicate if the same

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vehicles are parking in an area consistently, which could be a sign that employees or business owners are parking in valuable on-street spaces adjacent to businesses.

■ Citation patterns—reviewing tickets issued for patterns and trends can help to identify if programmatic or operational changes need to be made.

■ Customer complaints—feedback from patrons, business owners, and employees can often provide guidance on when and how changes need to be made.

By collecting this data during initial waves of the reopening and then continuing to monitor and compare data, our programs will be more oriented to the needs of the community and the timing for advancing to subsequent phases. The data is also a critical tool to communicate with your constituents—businesses, commuters, residents—to help them understand the need for continued change within the program.

Considerations for Additional Parking Management Change

The considerations in the previous section are not specifically meant to help programs get back to where they were pre-quarantine. Now may be the time to try new approaches to how parking and mobility are managed to help accommodate shifts in demands moving forward. These shifts could include increases in telework (that reduce the traditional commute demand), increases in personal vehicle use over transit (which increase the traditional commute demands), and move to personal mobility decisions such as personal bicycles over transit (which continue to change the commute demand profile).

A few considerations to help ease back into the unknown:

1. If your program hasn't been focused on data-driven policies and practices that flex as demand dictates, now is the time. Using data available from existing parking and mobility technologies can help us identify shifts in the demand profile and support the community as people adapt to new decision making.

2. There may need to be a new approach to how

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we prioritize the curb. With an ever-increasing demand for e-commerce and personal goods delivery, we may see a fiercer battle for curb space. Add in temporary decisions to expand curb space for social distancing and the days of parking dominating the curb may be dwindling.

3. Because of this potential shift, a primary consideration for programs should be revenue diversification. Our programs are largely built on the collection of hourly and monthly parking transactions. However, as demand profiles shift, it may be necessary to think about revenue generation from all users of the curb and the parking/mobility system. Having everyone pay their fair share into the system will be much more equitable and balanced moving forward and potentially limit the risk for parking management should this situation happen again.

4. Finally, if the curb begins to see more allocation for the delivery and goods industries, there will need to be more options for parkers in off-street locations. This would include more flexible choices than just hourly or monthly. Flexible permits for part-time remote workers and incentives for hourly parkers could drive use of our off-street facilities higher and support better balance throughout our communities.

Considerations for Changes in Support of the Community

Beyond parking management, the resources we control can also be utilized in the short-term to promote a safe return to normal conditions. Across the country, cities are beginning to think of street right-of-way in new ways, supporting the safe and socially distant movement of people and supporting local business by minimizing touch points or unsafe interactions.

The most prevalent version of this change was seen in the early days of the quarantine, with the institution of curbside pickup zones for restaurants to facilitate the continued sale of food and service without inside dining capabilities. As restaurants begin to reopen, many are still utilizing the curbside pickup experience to support more robust customer choices. If these curbside pickup zones remain in effect for a temporary time frame or perhaps more permanently, they will continue to reduce available space at the curbside. Policy and practice will need to adapt to integrate them into the full suite of curbside offerings.

The next offering for restaurant reopening is the expansion of outside seating into parking lots or the curbside environment. Many communities are doing this today as initial research indicates that outside dining may not have the same risk exposure as inside dining. Communities will need to make the decision about how to address and implement outside dining, weighing the impacts to transit operations, pedestrian movements, and continued movement of vehicles.

Finally, one of the changes that has me the most excited is the concept of Slow Streets, where more space is reclaimed from fast moving vehicle traffic and restored for pedestrian and cyclist movements. In residential areas of our cities, this is an overdue change that could greatly benefit personal mobility and more healthy lifestyles. The City of Tucson, Ariz., is working through its wide network of neighborhood associations to implement, pilot, and understand the value of these slow streets, with the goal of making space more permanent moving forward. Initial returns in some of

the early neighborhoods have indicated that residents and motorists are both engaged and on board with changes moving forward.

In Closing

Things are moving very fast as we inch away from the initial phases of the COVID-19 pandemic, and there are opportunities to adapt and improve our programs, parking, and streets to better serve the communities around us. IPMI and its volunteers remain committed to helping our colleagues down this path and will continue to assemble information, case studies, and best practices in a toolbox for addressing challenges like these moving forward. Stay tuned for more information! ◆

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