

Case Study



UNICO revitalized their parking program to meet the needs of their tenants and customers, while promoting transit use, smart growth, and green living.

Hearing from their tenants that customers were having trouble finding parking UNICO decided to revamp their parking program to provide more short-term parking, while still providing a suitable amount of long-term parking to stay competitive in the downtown market.

Need for Change:

The property managers at UNICO realized new parking policies needed to be implemented to meet their tenants' needs.

The parking needs identified were:

- Short-term parking for customers
- Stop non-tenant/non-customer parking
- Attract tenants

To meet these needs UNICO partnered with King County Metro to develop a pilot program.

An Innovative Approach:

Working with King County Metro UNICO implemented a new parking program in all five garages with a total of 1,142 stalls.

The pilot program consisted of:

- ½ month parking pass with transit pass
- Increase monthly parking costs
- Elimination of early bird parking

To be able to offer the ½ month option UNICO had to upgrade their software, a large

financial endeavor. Metro was able to help defer the cost by giving UNICO \$7,000.

Metro also offered 3-month transit passes to anyone participating in the ½ month parking program. Once the pilot program ended the customers were responsible for their own transit pass costs.

This program was designed to meet the parking needs identified by tenants.

Preparation for Pilot Program:

To prepare tenants and customers for the pilot program UNICO notified all monthly parkers a month in advance about the price increase and the new programs. UNICO also worked closely with the larger tenants in their buildings to ensure they were on board with the changes.

All garages and buildings posted signs to inform tenants and customers of the changes a month prior to the pilot program.

U-Commute Program:

UNICO also started their own building commute program to help small companies offer employees commute benefits. The U-Commute program helps companies with less

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than 20 employees purchase FlexPass and provide benefits to bike/walk commuters.

Pilot Program Results:

- During the initial 3 month pilot program UNICO had 75 people purchase the ½ month parking pass.
- Some participants switched from the monthly parking program and others normally paid each time they drove.
- Since the completion of the pilot program nearly 25 more people have purchased the ½ month pass, for a total of 100 participants.
- The people using the ½ month option are very happy with the choice they now have to control their commute. Tenants are pleased with the option.
- The program has freed up stalls for transient parking, which helps Unico recoup the cost of the systems upgrade.
- Unico had no idea how many participants to expect but are pleased with how well the program has been received.

- Unico would recommend the program to other garages, but would suggest skipping the free transit pass period as demand seems to be there either way and would cover the cost of the system upgrade sooner.
- It was important for participants to be able to choose when to park. They did not want their 11 parking days to be predetermined.
- When UNICO eliminated early bird parking the rates in surrounding buildings increased.

Lessons Learned

UNICO leadership was the key to making these programs successful and keeping tenants happy. They worked tirelessly before the pilot program to ensure their tenants were well informed and on-board with the changes.

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