

When you are a commuter school with close to 6,000 students, ease and availability of parking is crucial to the daily functioning of your university.

## Business Impact



Operational Efficiency



Cost Optimization



Sustainability



Revenue

## Business Description

This suburban university in the Pacific Northwest serves traditional and non-traditional (returning) students, offering degree programs to both full- and part-time students. Of the 5,700 students who attend school here, only about 6% live on campus; more than 5,300 students commute. In addition, the school has more than 700 faculty and staff members.

The school only has two parking garages and four surface lots with a total of 2,400 parking spots to serve all these commuters. As a result, drivers were spending up to 30 minutes looking for an available space. This meant students, faculty and staff had to allow an additional half an hour just to find parking, or they risked running late.

In addition to the frustration and stress this caused, cruising for parking spots was causing carbon to build up in the garages. As an energy-conscious school, the administrators wanted to address this problem.

Like many suburban campuses, the school had few options available to increase the amount of parking. Bounded by a freeway to the south, housing to the west and wetlands to the north and east, there was no real opportunity to expand the school's footprint. And, adding floors to existing parking structures would be a major capital investment.

Associate Vice  
Chancellor for Facilities  
Services and Campus  
Operations

"It was mainly about efficiency and getting prior knowledge about what is happening in the garage itself, floor-by-floor, so that they could move through the garage, and in and out of the garage, in a more orderly fashion, and increasing our churn (when somebody pulled out, someone else pulled in)."

Associate Vice  
Chancellor for Facilities  
Services and Campus  
Operations

"Otherwise (without Parking Sense), they may just go ahead and say, 'The heck with it, I'm going to go ahead and ride the bus,' or 'I'm going to go ahead and be dropped off,' or 'I'll just use Uber,' and we miss out on that revenue."

Associate Vice  
Chancellor for Facilities  
Services and Campus  
Operations

"We purchased signage from them that says "yes" and "no" so that... if there are no spots, it will say "no" so that they can continue going up."

If the university didn't improve on-campus parking, frustrated commuters would start opting to ride the bus, use Uber or have a friend or family member drop them off rather than deal with the hassle of finding a spot. The university's reputation and not to mention parking revenue would take a hit. The university decided its best option was to optimize the use of existing parking resources.

## Critical Business Issues

- Maximize the efficiency (and use) of existing on-campus parking facilities
- Increase parking revenue
- Reduce carbon footprint of parking garages
- Improve day-to-day experience of students, faculty and staff

## Results

This public university has award-winning architecture, state-of-the-art technology and beautiful surroundings. It proudly serves a diverse population of students – many of whom are the first in their families to attend college. Access to excellence is a defining goal for the school. Unfortunately, access to parking was an ongoing problem for students, faculty and staff.

With a campus hemmed in all sides by either highway, protected wetlands or housing, there was no land available to purchase for additional parking. And, the cost of adding floors to existing garages would be significant. But, with only 2,400 parking spaces on campus for the 5,700 students plus the 700 faculty and staff members that commute, parking definitely had to be addressed.

The university was implementing an energy conservation project when it decided to tackle the parking issue, so carbon reduction

Associate Vice  
Chancellor for Facilities  
Services and Campus  
Operations

"I really like the technology. I looked at a couple of other products, and this one seemed to fit the bill... I had an energy savings project that I was doing already... It reduced our carbon by reducing the idling that was inside the garages. I knew looking at the product it was going to move people quicker through the garage."

Associate Vice  
Chancellor for Facilities  
Services and Campus  
Operations

"The things that drew me to Parking Sense were the availability of the exterior signage and the mobile app."

became an additional goal for the parking project. Parking Sense presented the ideal solution to effectively address both issues. The app enables drivers to see where parking is available ahead of time so they can plan accordingly, reducing stress *and* congestion in the garages. But, importantly, the system works even for those who don't use the app because signs on each level indicate whether spots are available with a simple "yes" or "no." And, green lights above open spaces enable drivers to quickly see where spots are available.

The Parking Sense solution, with its app, color-coded spots and signage, has enabled the campus to optimize the use of the 1,000 spaces in the two parking garages by ensuring that all available spots are filled. This has reduced the need for additional parking spaces. It has also reduced the garages' carbon footprint by eliminating congestion. Rather than spending up to 30 minutes circling the garages looking for spots, drivers now spend a maximum of five minutes finding parking. This not only benefits the environment, it's improved the daily experience of students, faculty and staff who commute here.

In the future, the school plans to gather more granular data on the use of specific spaces such as EV and ADA spots for further optimization.

## Metrics

- Maximized efficiency of two parking garages, ensuring all spots are filled.
- Increased revenue by ensuring maximum occupancy of garages and decreasing need for people to use alternative means to travel to campus.
- Decreased carbon footprint of two garages.
- Improved daily experience for students, faculty and staff.