

# Government of the District of Columbia

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## DC Department of Public Works

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Testimony of  
**William O. Howland, Jr.**  
Director

### **“THE OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL’S REPORT OF SPECIAL EVALUATION ON PARKING AND AUTOMATED TRAFFIC ENFORCEMENT TICKETS-PART 1: TICKET ISSUANCE PRACTICES”**

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT  
Mary M. Cheh, Chairperson

John A. Wilson Building  
Council Chamber Room 500  
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20004  
Wednesday, September 24, 2014  
11 AM

**TESTIMONY OF WILLIAM O. HOWLAND, JR., DIRECTOR  
DC DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS ON  
“THE OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL’S REPORT OF SPECIAL  
EVALUATION ON PARKING AND AUTOMATED TRAFFIC ENFORCEMENT  
TICKETS-PART 1: TICKET ISSUANCE PRACTICES”  
BEFORE THE  
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT  
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2014**

- Good morning, Chairperson Cheh, members of the Council, and staff. I am William O. Howland, Jr., Director of the Department of Public Works. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on “The Office of The Inspector General’s Report of Special Evaluation on Parking and Automated Traffic Enforcement Tickets-Part 1: Ticket Issuance Practices.”
- I would like to highlight the key points in the Department’s response to the report’s findings and recommendations and call to your attention initiatives we are taking to further improve our parking enforcement operation.
- DPW is a leader in the use of technology to improve parking enforcement. Two initiatives – the handheld instrument, introduced in 2002 to write parking tickets, and License Plate Recognition System technology, introduced in 2006 to support our booting and timed enforcement operations – have revolutionized our practices and produced more efficient enforcement.
- Before going into more detail about our innovations, I will address the points made in the OIG report.
- As the report noted, DPW is the largest ticketing agency in the District of Columbia with 195 parking enforcement officers. In FY 2013, the last fiscal year covered by the report, these officers wrote nearly 1.4 million parking tickets.
- Among the OIG’s recommendations is that DPW update its training manual and we agree. The training manual is a living document that evolves based on changes in law, policy, technology and practice.
- In fact, our manual and standard operating procedures are being updated now. The manual is a document that once it is printed, quickly becomes outdated because of the increasingly fast rate of change. Therefore, we use additional means to advise parking enforcement officers of new information and techniques such as daily roll call sessions, in-service training and one-on-one meetings.
- To clarify the OIG’s comment about the length of our training curriculum, it has been a nine-week course since 2011. Prior to 2011, it was seven weeks.

- The OIG recommended that DPW seek to revise the DCMR to clarify ticketing federal and District government and utility vehicles, and to clarify parking officers' authority to void tickets while on patrol.
- We disagree with this recommendation because our policy for ticketing those vehicles already is very clear. There are three circumstances when government vehicles will not be ticketed. Two are related to time limited enforcement – meters and RPP – and the third circumstance is when a vehicle clearly is responding to a service request.
- We treat vehicles used by Advisory Neighborhood Commissioners that display the ANC placard, as government vehicles. Vehicles driven by Councilmembers that display Council license tags are treated as Congressional vehicles; therefore, enforcement would be limited to rush hour, fire hydrants, crosswalks and loading zones.
- Nor will DPW give parking officers the authority to void tickets while on patrol. Our current policy is a substantial step towards increasing accountability and integrity in the ticket issuing system.
- An example of increased transparency in our enforcement is TicPix, which we launched in 2011 to help motorists better understand why a ticket has been issued. Motorists may go to this Website to view a parking ticket issued by DPW along with images of the violation that illustrate why the ticket was issued. We are the forerunner in this technology. I should add that not every violation can be depicted, such as excessive idling.
- While the report supports the use of TicPix, it recommends that a ticket should be dismissed due to the absence of images. We disagree with the recommendation.
- Nationwide, parking tickets are issued once a violation is observed. No jurisdiction considers a ticket to be invalid because there are no images of the violation. TicPix was instituted mainly as a courtesy to motorists. It was not intended to change the evidentiary requirements for establishing a prima facie case for a parking violation.
- Earlier in our use of TicPix, we were faced with significant data storage capacity issues based on the volume of images that could be stored. Keep in mind that millions of images are generated, starting with one image each of 1.4 million parking tickets, plus up to 4 images of each violation, which totals 7 million images. We have introduced a larger server to better handle this volume.
- Another recommendation with which we agree is that we work quickly to improve ticket writers' compliance with PEMA's requirements for capturing photographic evidence of parking violations.
- Through continuing review of business processes, training and technological improvements, DPW's Parking Enforcement Management Administration will continue to provide enforcement of on-street parking laws and regulations to promote pedestrian

and vehicular safety, improved traffic flow and increased access to short-term parking at meters and on residential streets.

- Now, Chairperson Cheh, I would like to present some of our more innovative improvements to how we enforce the District's parking regulations.
- Parking enforcement officers now are being equipped with the Samsung Galaxy Note 3, replacing the handheld instrument in use for more than a decade. We anticipate this innovation will reduce our costs while raising the quality of our ticket writing. The handheld instruments made data entry much easier for ticket writers and included a time/date stamp that cannot be manipulated. The smartphone will further improve accuracy and speed of the data entry process.
- Another step we are taking to increase accuracy of the tickets we write is to require parking officers to enter the license tag twice when they record data about the vehicle. This is similar to what we all do when we are online and asked to enter our password or e-mail address twice to ensure accuracy. Our programmers are working on code now and we anticipate introducing this requirement before the end of 2014.
- While the OIG report does address the Parkmobile technology, I believe the report does not reflect this technology's major contributions to parking enforcement. First, meter revenues are up because motorists are paying their meter fees through Parkmobile. As a result, tickets for expired meters are down.
- I would like to conclude my testimony with this fact. Monthly, we receive more than 2,000 calls for increased parking enforcement, which is a testament to the quality of our work and our customers' belief in our sound performance.
- Thank you for this opportunity to testify. I am ready to respond to your questions.