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NEWS RELEASE

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Smart Parking Meter Pilot Study Starts October 3

DUBUQUE, Iowa – Beginning October 3, the City of Dubuque will pilot new parking metering technology with 11 “smart” parking meters installed in three areas in downtown Dubuque. The new technology features an automatic payment option, license plate recognition, and the option for customers to pay for only the time they use at the metered space.

City staff reviewed new metering options with the goal of improving the customer experience, increasing the value proposition for businesses in Dubuque’s meter districts, and providing improved and increased data-gathering capability. Additionally, the City sought meter technology that provides real-time updating of fees, time limits, and occupancy, and reduces the City’s upfront and ongoing licensing and maintenance expenses.

Following a review of options and feedback from businesses in the meter districts, City of Dubuque Transportation Services Manager Candace Eudaley-Loebach recommended Municipal Parking Services’ Sentry product as a pilot in key downtown locations. A 30-day pilot was approved by City Council following a presentation at the Sept. 17 City Council meeting. The pilot will be completed at no cost to the City and will provide valuable data for evaluating wider use of this technology in Dubuque’s meter districts. All meter and ticket revenue collected during the pilot will belong to the City.

The pilot meters will be temporarily installed at 890 Main St. (three meters will cover six parking spaces); 285 Main St. (three meters will cover six parking spaces); and 976 Jackson St. (five meters will cover 10 parking spaces). Each meter features a large, well-lit, high-resolution, color touch screen and provides an audio response to touch screen actions. They also feature a “Help” button that triggers the meter to demonstrate and “talk” customers through the payment process in multiple languages. Additionally,

the meters include a “Call” button that can communicate with the 9-1-1 Emergency Communications Center or City parking staff.

During the pilot, meters will accept coins, credit cards, and payment through a phone-based app. The app also notifies customers of the parking session end time. The meters provide a five-minute buffer for customers to complete their transaction. Maximum meter time limits still apply. If the customer forgets to pay or stays longer than planned, the meter will show the customer the time they used and they can choose to pay for the time with coin, credit card, or the app.

The meters can provide City staff with a variety of data for improved data-based planning and management. They also recognize unused spaces and provide real-time parking availability through the meter app as well as vacancy and revenue rates by meter, block, and district.

Following the pilot, results and data will be reviewed before a final recommendation on meter replacement is developed.

The public can provide input on their experiences with the pilot meters by sending email communication to parking@cityofdubuque.org.

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