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New Research Reveals Local Government Officials Need to Get Up to Speed on Parking.

DALLAS, Texas - June 2, 2013 - A new survey of city and county officials shows that more than half are unaware of new parking technologies that can help alleviate traffic congestion, promote sustainability, and increase revenues, but they are eager to bridge that knowledge gap.

Conducted by American City & County magazine with the International Parking Institute (IPI), the survey asked local government decision-makers, about their jurisdictions' parking challenges and knowledge of latest parking innovations.

Findings were presented at IPI's Municipality Smart Parking Symposium at the 2014 IPI Conference & Expo in Dallas, Texas, this week. The annual conference is the world's largest gathering of parking experts.

The survey revealed a significant need and desire for basic knowledge and guidance on parking. Most respondents were not familiar with today's parking technology and how it can benefit their municipalities.

Forty-four percent expressed dissatisfaction with their use of technology, and 55 percent said their city or county did not use any of 13 technologies listed in the survey. These included pay-by-mobile parking options; meters that accept credit cards; wayfinding and guidance systems that indicate space availability; systems that enhance traffic management through use of data collection and wireless technology; and sustainable solutions such as electric vehicle (EV) charging stations, solar panels, and motion-sensor lighting.

Surprisingly few cities and counties have undertaken a critical examination of their own parking operations. Just 30 percent had conducted a parking study in the last five years; 12 percent had never conducted a study; and 22 percent did not know if or when a study might have been conducted.

The study confirms what the parking industry, which has undergone a revolution in technology in the past few years, has long known. IPI's Emerging Trends in Parking Survey, research conducted annually among parking professionals, consistently identifies local government officials, along with urban planners and architects, as groups most in need of education about parking.

"There is a real disconnect here," explains Bill Wolpin, associate publisher and editorial director of American City and County. "Local government officials recognize the importance of parking to vital downtowns, resident and tourist satisfaction, reduced traffic congestion, and more liveable, walkable cities, but more than half are not aware of new technology and new approaches to parking that would offer assistance."

The study revealed a particular interest on the part of cities to incorporate sustainability initiatives, which nearly 70 percent of respondents cited as being important. Sustainability is also enhanced with new technology that makes it possible to find parking faster, thereby reducing emissions and

fuel consumption.

“We will be working to bridge the gap between what city officials know about parking and the solutions parking professionals bring to the table,” says Shawn Conrad, executive director of IPI. Conrad was encouraged that more than half the city officials surveyed indicated strong interest in “developing a strategic plan for parking,” and that “collaboration between parking professionals and municipal decision-makers” was ranked among the top traffic-related trends having an impact on government.”

[Download the complete survey here.](#)

BY HELEN SULLIVAN, INTERNATIONAL PARKING INSTITUTE / JUNE 5, 2014

The International Parking Institute is the largest trade association representing parking professionals and the parking industry. www.parking.org

This story was originally published by FutureStructure.

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