

OXFORD

CASE STUDY

Meters Increase Revenue,
Access, and Ease

OXFORD CITY HALL

1885

COURT ROOM





Doing more with Less
Oxford, Mississippi is a charming southern college town in the midst of transformation. The booming downtown area has over 300 premium parking spaces that surround restaurants, shops, businesses, and government offices. The Square is one of the main focal points in the city where year-round visitors enjoy the sights, sounds, and eats of Oxford.

In 2012, population growth from the nearby University of Mississippi, increased tourism, and strains on infrastructure demanded a smarter parking solution. Because parking spaces were limited and regulations were difficult to enforce, cars would often remain parked in the Square long past legal time limits—preventing new customers from visiting the Square. With only a three-person parking department, the City sought an efficient system to manage and enforce high-traffic regions. “City leaders and business owners have worked carefully to balance paid and free public parking options for our citizens and the hundreds of thousands of frequent visitors to our little town of 25,000. It’s a journey to learn the right balance and we are very fortunate to have these types of problems to solve,” explains Matt Davis, Director of Parking with the City of Oxford.

To solve the problem, the City considered introducing a pay-to-park system in the previously free parking area. After a several-year study, the City and the Downtown Parking Advisory Commission (DPAC) decided to implement a paid parking system using single-space parking meters. The City subsequently issued a Request for Proposals in order to identify the vendor best suited to provide the latest in smart parking technologies and comprehensive management. The City sought to improve access to the Square, increase revenue to improve parking infrastructure, and gain public support for the new paid parking initiative. After a thorough evaluation process,



the City awarded the contract to IPS Group, Inc.

Smart Parking Meters an “Overwhelming Success”
IPS worked with a local Oxford contractor to install single-space parking meters in the downtown area. The Oxford sidewalk was composed of fragile slate tiles in certain areas designated for meter installation. Because the City hoped the tiles would remain undamaged, pole installation proved to be challenging. However, the IPS team was able to construct a jig to perform precise cuts, which minimized any unnecessary damage to the sidewalk. Moreover, because the IPS meters are solar powered and wirelessly networked, no additional power or communications infrastructure was required to operate the meters. As a result, roadway disruption was minimal and the historic streetscape was preserved.

Because the Square includes businesses, restaurants, and entertainment venues, the parking profile changes hourly, shifting between patrons who visit the Square for business and patrons who visit for pleasure. The new meters support dynamic rate structures, which the City can use to adjust rates according to demand. Motorists can use a variety of payment options

such as credit/debit card, and mobile phone. “The implementation of parking meters in our downtown square has been an overwhelming success. The revenue generated has exceeded our expectations. However, more importantly they have helped create access where it was once limited,” states Mike Harris, DPAC member.

Key Results
Through IPS, the City of Oxford exceeded its goals of increasing turnover and creating a budget surplus to improve parking infrastructure. Before installing IPS meters, parking operations lost an average of \$20,000 per month. Within eight short months after installing IPS meters, the new meters generated over \$500,000 in additional revenue—the dollar amount originally estimated to be the upper limit of year one potential earnings. With a steady source of income, the City is now developing plans to improve parking infrastructure and accommodate future growth.

With IPS smart meters, enforcement operations have improved dramatically. “IPS meters are without a doubt the best thing that we’ve done for parking in the past 20 years,” states Joey East, Chief of Police of the Oxford Police Department. Because the meters are user-friendly and clearly indicate remaining time, patrons tend to self-monitor their own parking—feeding meters before they expire and moving vehicles once the time limit is reached. Because an expired meter is easy to spot, sufficient enforcement only requires one or two officers at a time. This is critically important for a police department with limited resources.

In addition, the easy-to-use Data Management System has been a valuable resource to the City. “The management system itself is great. It helps us function as a small department in a more effective way. It would be nice if we had more people, but because we’re limited, the management system helps us keep an eye on things,” states Matt Davis, Director of Parking. With Oxford’s three-person department, data must be easy to access and export, while meter operations must be easy to update and modify. The IPS Data Management System improved the City’s ability to manage citations, check revenue, analyze data, monitor parking trends, and access analytics. Preparing for a Downtown Parking Advisory Commission meeting is now as simple as printing ready-made data and analytics reports.

Likewise, public satisfaction has skyrocketed. “I feel like we’ve tried just about everything in the world. The simplicity of these meters has been remarkably effective—and well accepted...I didn’t realize just how well it was going to be accepted,” states Pat Patterson,

Mayor of the City of Oxford. The transition to a paid parking system has been seamless and well received, in part due to the increased access to the square and the IPS system’s easy-to-use design. With increased turnover and better access to restaurants and shops, local businesses are booming.



- Highlights:**
- Meter uptime improved to **99.8%**
 - Meter revenue exceeded **\$500,000** in the first eight months
 - Meters stimulated **economic growth** by increasing access to downtown businesses
 - Joey East, Chief of Police described IPS meters as, “**the best thing we’ve done for parking in the past 20 years**”





Looking ahead

With increased tourism and a growing student population, the City of Oxford underwent a period of incredible growth. As a result, strains on infrastructure demanded a smarter parking solution. However, with a three-person parking department, the City sought an efficient system to manage and enforce high-traffic regions with few resources. IPS helped the City transition to a paid parking system that garnered public support, increased revenue, and improved enforcement operations—and was easily managed by the City's small team. Increased turnover and traffic to Oxford's downtown region will continue to generate business, further contributing to the City's economic growth. Future plans include constructing parking garages with multi-space pay stations, integrating mobile payment capability into single-space meters, and utilizing sensors to gather more data.

The partnership between the City and IPS was key to the successful introduction of paid parking in Oxford. This transition garnered support from the local business community and motorists, secured increased revenue, and allowed the small team to gain control over the City's parking management. Its success can serve as a model for the public benefits of a paid parking system, and for how the IPS solution can help small cities maximize scarce resources.

About IPS Group, Inc.

San Diego-based IPS Group, Inc. is a design, engineering, and manufacturing company focused on low-power wireless telecommunications and parking technologies. IPS manufactures locally in San Diego, CA and has been delivering world-class solutions to the telecommunications and parking industries for over 20 years. The company is best known for their patented credit card-enabled, solar powered single-space parking meter and web-based management system.

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