

SACRAMENTO

# CASE STUDY

Smart Meters Bring  
Creative Solutions





## Investing in Growth

Sacramento, California's state capital and sixth largest city, was deeply in need of a parking technology upgrade. As California's oldest city, it was one of the first to adopt coin operated meters in the 1950s. With an assortment of over 4,000 parking meters between 20 and 50 years old, Sacramento's parking system offered few options to visitors and residents. Meters accepted either coins or city-issued debit cards which could only be obtained through a visit to City Hall. In areas where payment by credit card was required, the City had installed pay stations that serviced 12 parking spots each. However, customers had trouble determining which pay station to use, contributing to a confusing payment system.

Likewise, Sacramento's single-space meters were prone to coin jams, but offered no real-time fault alerts, resulting in non-functional meters and lost revenue. "The only time we heard about coin jams or meters that needed to be collected was if a customer called to complain, or if somebody happened to notice it while they were out on a maintenance route," says Mike King, Parking Technology and Infrastructure Manager for the City of Sacramento.

In 2012, City Council adopted the idea of modernizing. "Modernization means investing in the tools necessary to do our jobs," says Matt Eierman, City of Sacramento Parking Manager. The parking modernization project began when the city issued an RFP for new parking meters. "We were looking for a vendor who could partner with us, not just provide equipment and services," says King. "A partner who could bring solutions to us now and into the future."

## Smart Meters Improve Security and Function

After a competitive bid process, IPS Group, Inc. was awarded the contract to provide a parking modernization solution to the City of Sacramento. "In addition to meters that surpassed the specifications outlined in the RFP, IPS brought a wealth of services to the table such as pay-by-phone capability, a back office system to allow us to track much more than just revenue collected, a collections system that would allow us to truly modernize our collections process, and an electronic lock system that would provide a much tighter revenue control system," says King.

Specifically, the IPS meters revolutionized many of the City's key processes. IPS meters share real-time revenue data with the coin collections system and the back office Data Management System (DMS), improving the meter audit process. Management staff can view revenue by individual meter, street, block, or neighborhood to determine which meters and regions are performing well and adjust rates accordingly. Likewise, electronic locks were crucial to maintaining meter security as many of the meter coin vaults were 30 to 40 years old. With up to



40 years of staff and management turnover, current officials could not accurately account for the number of keys issued or to whom. If a key was ever stolen or lost, management would re-key every associated meter. To cut down on potential loss of revenue, IPS offered Medeco electronic locks on all smart meters. Electronic locks control access to meters by providing an audit trail—tracking when a meter is accessed and by whom.

Likewise, IPS provided enhanced customer convenience paired with data security. “We wanted a whole host of different solutions and conveniences for our constituency,” says Eierman. “It was important that the credit card data traveling across the network was indeed secure. We were excited when we saw the IPS meter. It delivered everything it promised.”

## Results

With a new, powerful data management tool, the City of Sacramento enjoyed the IPS meter’s easy programming and status tracking features. “I really value the DMS from IPS because it provides a wealth of information at my fingertips,” says King. For example, revenue reports by week, month, and year; real-time status alerts; and payment information useful to adjudication. “We have a lot of flexibility and control in rate configurations—specifically, the option to allow customers to prepay before the start of enforcement,” continues King. “I also appreciate that the DMS provides me aggregate and rollup information regarding various areas of town.”

With 99% meter uptime, Sacramento now boasts a reliable and efficient parking program. “Now we’re able to have a creative outline that allows us to look at our parking meters and design a public administrative program that really serves the needs of the businesses,” says Eierman.

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## Looking Ahead

The City of Sacramento views parking modernization as an ongoing creative process. “We’re in the midst of a renaissance here in Sacramento. We have dedicated ourselves to modernizing and investing in ourselves and we are doing that right now,” says Eierman. The City’s roadmap includes integrating vehicle detection sensors, wayfinding capabilities, enforcement equipment such as license plate recognition technology, new garage equipment, and enhanced back office systems. “With the integrations possible through the IPS system, we expect to be able to leverage our data to form policies in the City of Sacramento,” says King.

With the City committed to continued growth, IPS Group is there to help. “What we were really looking for in a vendor was help and direction on how to grow our system and our infrastructure and make sure we’re doing it right. IPS has experience in many different cities to share with us,” continues Eierman. “IPS is more than just a vendor. They’re a partner.”



## In the First 8 Months of Installation:

- Parking revenue increased by **20%**
- Uptime improved to **99.8%**
- **3,800 payments** made by phone
- Credit card usage is **53%**





## ABOUT IPS GROUP, INC.

IPS Group, Inc. is headquartered in San Diego, CA (USA), with offices in Canada, the Netherlands and Italy ([www.ipsgroupinc.com](http://www.ipsgroupinc.com)). IPS is a design, engineering and manufacturing company focused on low power wireless telecommunications, payment processing systems and parking technologies and has been delivering world-class solutions to the telecommunications and parking industries for over 20 years. The company offers a complementary PROVEN product suite, comprised of multi-space pay stations, pay station upgrade kits, single-space meters, vehicle detection sensors, smart cash collection systems, web-based reporting and remote management software with advanced data analytics. IPS is delivering the Internet of Things (IoT) and Intelligent Parking Systems to transportation and parking operations all over the world.

Call for an on-site demo: 877.630.6638 | [ipsgroupinc.com](http://ipsgroupinc.com)



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