



COUNCIL AGENDA: 2-4-14  
ITEM: 6.1

# Memorandum

**TO:** HONORABLE MAYOR AND  
CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** Councilmember Ash Kalra  
Councilmember Kansen Chu

**SUBJECT:** SEE BELOW

**DATE:** January 31, 2014

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Approved  Date 1/31/14

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**SUBJECT: AGREEMENT WITH IPS GROUP, INC. FOR SMART METERS  
PARKING**

## RECOMMENDATION

Accept staff recommendation with the direction to return to Council during the budget process with potential alternatives to increasing parking meter rates to cover cost of implementation of smart parking meters.

## BACKGROUND

I would like to thank City staff for working diligently to upgrade our parking meters in a cost effective manner. There is no doubt that coin operated meters powered by 9-volt batteries is an outdated, costly, and inefficient model that is not user friendly. I am glad that City staff took the time to analyze the procurement process the City of San Rafael underwent in order to reduce the cost and time it would have taken for us to do an independent RFP process. However, I would hope that the staff is comfortable in their analysis that we are moving on to technology that is flexible and will not soon be outdated. Additionally, I urge that we quickly integrate the meters with mobile technology. It is now commonplace in many urban communities for customers to pay for, and monitor their smart meter usage via their smart phone and convenient mobile apps. This should not be a future goal that the City seeks, but rather, an urgent next step to be considered as part of smart meter deployment.

As for the suggestion that parking meter rates will need to be raised during the upcoming budget process to offset the cost of operation of the new smart meters, I would prefer to take a pause. Certainly, that could be one of the options. However, before the City Council presumes that we will raise parking meter rates, I would like to have staff bring back to the Council other potential options on the table. The options to offset costs could include any increase in revenues based upon the efficiencies of the new meters, increased enforcement penalties based upon the real time data collected by traffic enforcement officers, parking fund revenues, or any other potential suggestions for funding from City staff. Before we seek to increase parking meter rates, let us consider other options with the understanding that our parking meter rates are not in contrast to San Francisco or Oakland parking rates, but the smaller cities around us which, for the most part, still offer ample free parking to their daytime business customers.