

CITY OF HOUSTON

Annise D. Parker
City Controller

Steve Schoonover
City Auditor



GENERAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT UNDERGROUND PARKING FACILITIES PERFORMANCE AUDIT

Report No. 2010-04





OFFICE OF THE CITY CONTROLLER
CITY OF HOUSTON
TEXAS

ANNISE D. PARKER

November 5, 2009

The Honorable Bill White, Mayor
City of Houston, Texas

SUBJECT: General Services Department – Underground Parking Facilities
Performance Audit - Report No. 2010-04

Dear Mayor White:

In accordance with the City's contract with MFR, P.C. (MFR), MFR has completed a Performance Audit of the General Services Department's (GSD) Underground Parking Facilities. GSD oversees the operation of the City Hall Annex parking garage and the garage at 611 Walker. The Annex garage contained 479 parking spaces and is used primarily by City employees and City Council Member's staff who office in City Hall and the City Hall Annex. The 611 Walker garage contained 225 parking spaces and is used primarily by employees of the City who office in the Bob Lanier Public Works Building.

The audit objectives included determining whether the mission statement and/or goals were being met; assessing management's operational practices, resources, and processes; providing recommendations for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of underground parking facilities to improve the quality of the processes; and assessing contractor and management performance by conducting a customer satisfaction survey.

The report, attached for your review, concluded that in general, GSD was meeting its mission and goals. Also, GSD's management of the underground parking facilities was adequate; however, MFR noted two issues of an operational nature that were brought to management's attention pertaining to documentation of routine maintenance and assigning reserved parking spaces for City employees. The report also includes the results of a customer satisfaction survey conducted during the engagement (Exhibit A).

During the audit, MFR noted observations associated with public safety and security. In accordance with Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards (GAGAS), MFR did not disclose these observations in this report. Concerns were included in a separate confidential Limited Use Report in accordance with GAGAS that was communicated to the appropriate City officials responsible for underground parking facilities security.

The observations and recommendations identified during the performance audit are included in the body of the report. Draft copies of the matters contained in the report were provided to Department officials. The Views of Responsible Officials as to actions being taken are appended to the report as Exhibit B.

Page 2

We commend Department management for their timely efforts to take action to remedy the deficiencies identified by MFR. We also appreciate the cooperation extended to the MFR engagement team by Department personnel during the course of the audit.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Annise D. Parker". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Annise D. Parker
City Controller

xc: City Council Members
Anthony Hall, Chief Administrative Officer
Michael Moore, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
Issa Dadoush, Director, General Services Department
Michelle Mitchell, Director, Finance Department



Accountants & Consultants
One Riverway, Suite 1900
Houston, TX 77056 USA

t: (713) 622-1120
f: (713) 961-0625
www.mfrpc.com

October 23, 2009

Controller Annise D. Parker
Office of the City Controller
City of Houston
901 Bagby, 8th Floor
Houston, TX 77002

Re: General Services Department - Underground Parking Facilities Performance Audit

Dear Controller Parker:

MFR, P.C. (MFR) has completed the performance audit of the City of Houston's (the City) General Services Department (GSD) Underground Parking Facilities as outlined in our engagement letter dated February 1, 2008 under Contract No. 56546, approved by City Council Ordinance No. 04-1296.

The purpose of our audit engagement was to:

- Determine whether the mission statement and/or goals were being met,
- Examine and assess management's operational practices (e.g. security, safety, parking rules, maintenance, etc.), resources (e.g. qualifications, training, etc.), technology tools, management controls, and processes as they relate to the administration of underground parking facilities - City Hall Annex Parking Garage and the Bob Lanier Public Works Building Underground Parking Garage,
- Determine the extent that the related contractors were complying with the City's contract terms,
- Provide recommendations for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of underground parking facilities to improve the quality of the processes, and
- Assess contractor and management performance by conducting customer satisfaction surveys.

The scope for our detailed testing of our GSD Underground Parking Facilities Performance Audit covered the period January 1, 2004 through late 2008.

MFR prepared an additional security related report in accordance with Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards (GAGAS). GAGAS requires that the auditor not disclose to the public certain circumstances that are associated with public safety and security concerns. The confidential report with our observation and recommendation has been communicated to the appropriate City Officials responsible for Underground Parking Facilities security.

The observations and recommendations included in this report is the only matter that came to our attention based on the procedures performed.

Because of inherent limitations in controls, errors or fraud may occur and not be detected. Furthermore, the projection of any conclusions, based on our findings, to future periods is subject to the risk that the validity of such conclusions may be altered because of changes made to the system or controls, the failure to make needed changes to the system or controls, or deterioration in the degree of effectiveness of the controls.

This report is intended solely for the information and use of the GSD Management (who are responsible for the oversight of the GSD underground parking facilities) as well as the Office of the City Controller. This report is not intended to be used for any other purpose.

MFR is pleased to have been given the opportunity to work on this engagement and we appreciate the cooperation received from your office and the GSD Management.

Very truly yours,

MFR, P.C.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. David Ahola".

J. David Ahola
Principal, Internal Audit


JDA/ea



**GENERAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT
UNDERGROUND PARKING FACILITIES
PERFORMANCE AUDIT**

INDEX

	<u>Page</u>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	
Background	1
Objectives and Scope	1
Overall Conclusion and Assessment	1
Customer Satisfaction Survey Excerpt for City Hall Annex	2
OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	
Detailed Background	4
Audit Methodology	5
Observations and Recommendations	
Reserved Parking and Routine Maintenance Process and Procedures	6
Exhibit A – Customer Satisfaction Survey Report	
Exhibit B – Views of Responsible Officials	





GENERAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT UNDERGROUND PARKING FACILITIES PERFORMANCE AUDIT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

The City of Houston (the City) General Services Department (GSD) oversees the operation of the City Hall Annex Underground Parking Garage (the Annex Garage) and Bob Lanier Public Works Building Underground Parking Garage located at 611 Walker (the 611 Walker Garage). The Annex Garage contained 479 parking spaces, and was used primarily by the City employees and City Council Member's staff who office in City Hall and the City Hall Annex. The 611 Walker Garage contained 225 parking spaces, and was used primarily by employees of the City who office in 611 Walker.

Objectives and Scope

The objectives of the GSD underground parking facilities performance audit were as follows:

- Determine whether the mission statement and/or goals were being met,
- Examine and assess management's operational practices (e.g. security, safety, parking rules, maintenance, etc.), resources (e.g. qualifications, training, etc.), technology tools, management controls, and processes as they related to the administration of underground parking facilities,
- Determine the extent that the related contractors were complying with the City's contract terms,
- Provide recommendations for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of underground parking facilities to improve the quality of the processes, and
- Assess contractor and management performance by conducting customer satisfaction surveys.

The scope of the GSD underground parking facilities performance audit was for the period January 1, 2004 through June 19, 2008.

Overall Conclusion and Assessment

In general, GSD was meeting its mission, goals, and objectives. Patrons utilizing the Annex Garage have generally been pleased. Based on our audit results, GSD's management of the underground parking facilities was adequate; however, MFR noted two issues of an operational nature that were brought to the attention of GSD Management and are as follows:

- The Annex Garage did not have documented daily, weekly, or monthly checklist or process for routine maintenance, and
- The Annex Garage did not have a documented process for assigning reserved parking spaces to City employees.



GENERAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT UNDERGROUND PARKING FACILITIES PERFORMANCE AUDIT

Customer Satisfaction Survey Excerpt for City Hall Annex

Decision Information Resources, Inc. (DIR), an MFR subcontractor, conducted one customer satisfaction survey that included the underground parking facilities for both the Theatre District and City Hall Annex.

The results of the customer satisfaction survey that related to the **City Hall Annex** parking facility included the following:

- Eighty-six percent of respondents reported that they did not have trouble entering or exiting the garage with their electronic access card.
- Respondents were asked a series of questions to determine their perception of the parking logistics, cleanliness, and security within the garage. Respondents were most satisfied (either *very satisfied* or *satisfied*) with the parking garage overall (96%), the location of the garage (92%), the condition of the garage (92%), their feelings of personal safety in and around the parking garage (92%), the ease of finding a parking space upon arrival (88%), and the helpfulness of security guards (66%).
- Sixty-six percent of the respondents were either *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with the method used to communicate the parking rules. Twenty-two percent of respondents felt that the method used to communicate the parking rules was *not applicable* to them.
- Fifty-six percent of the respondents were either *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with the enforcement of the parking rules. Fourteen percent were either *dissatisfied* or *very dissatisfied*. Eighteen percent of respondents felt that the enforcement of the parking rules was *not applicable* to them.
- Comments made by the respondents regarding the parking rules included the following:
 - Parking rules should be posted in the garage.
 - Parking rule violators should receive warning notices.
 - Parking rules should be enforced fairly.
 - Not fair to hold contracted parking spaces for City Hall meetings.
 - Cars should park head in (violation without notice or warning).
 - Cars are parked on ends where no space is available on City Council days.
 - Unauthorized parkers in garage on City Council session days.



OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS





**GENERAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT
UNDERGROUND PARKING FACILITIES
PERFORMANCE AUDIT**

OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Detailed Background

Annex Garage and 611 Walker Garage

GSD oversaw operation of two underground parking garages: the Annex Garage and the 611 Walker Garage. In a memo dated November 16, 2007, GSD assumed responsibility for all maintenance and security responsibilities for the Annex Garage, effective July 1, 2007, from the Convention & Entertainment Facilities Department (CEFD). The Annex Garage contained 479 parking spaces, and was used primarily by City employees and City Council Member's staff who office in City Hall and the City Hall Annex. Occasionally, special event parking was scheduled and the Annex Garage was made available during evenings and weekends.

Parking in the Annex Garage was allocated to various City departments based upon square footage occupied by the respective department as compared to total square footage of the City Hall Annex building. The respective City departments had designated an employee who administered parking within their department. The designated employee contacted GSD when the department had additions, deletions, or special requests.

The 611 Walker Garage contained 225 parking spaces, and was used primarily by City employees who office in 611 Walker. Parking was allocated to approximately 13 City departments located in 611 Walker, based upon square footage occupied by the respective department to total square footage of 611 Walker. The City employee identification badge was used to access the parking facility. City employees who worked in 611 Walker and who had varying schedules including late night or weekend shifts, typically parked at other locations such as the new Hobby Center Garage or at a surface lot at the start of their scheduled work day. During the regular week days employees with varying work schedules would move their vehicles from the other location to the 611 Walker Garage at approximately 5:00 P.M. This process allowed those who left work late at night to have their vehicles close by rather than many blocks away, which reduced a potential security risk.



GENERAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT UNDERGROUND PARKING FACILITIES PERFORMANCE AUDIT

Audit Methodology

MFR performed both the planning and fieldwork phases of the GSD underground parking facilities audit in conjunction with the CEFD underground parking facilities portion of the engagement. As part of the planning phase, MFR performed a risk assessment. The results of which indicated that most of our audit resources should be assigned to the CEFD underground parking facilities which is four times larger than the GSD underground parking facilities based on the number of parking spaces.

MFR noted during its interviews with the GSD personnel that Securitas Security Services USA, Inc. provided security services for both underground parking and building security for City Hall, City Hall Annex, and 611 Walker. Also GSD monitored activity in the garages, buildings, and stairwells for City Hall, City Hall Annex, and 611 Walker with a series of cameras. Based on interviews and observations MFR determined that the processes as they relate to the administration of the underground parking garages at both the City Hall Annex and 611 Walker were low risk and hence performed minimal transaction testing during the fieldwork phase.

To accomplish the scope and objectives of this performance audit, MFR team requested and reviewed the following:

- GSD Mission Statement and Goals,
- Latest Organizational Chart,
- Budget information,
- GSD policies and procedures related to underground parking,
- Information on various technology tools used within the facility, and
- Listings of individuals with a contract for parking at the underground parking facility.

MFR also:

- Interviewed key personnel related to the underground parking facility,
- Observed operations within the underground parking facility,
- Reviewed budget information,
- Assessed GSD Management practices related to security,
- Reviewed information on various technology tools used by the facility management,
- Received listings of individuals with a contract for parking at the underground parking facility,
- Contracted with a sub-contractor to conduct a Customer Satisfaction Survey, and
- Discussed the issues identified during the audit with GSD Management.

During our observation related to the testing of the City Hall Annex flood gate we noted that CEFD was responsible for maintaining the flood gate. The testing results are noted in our CEFD underground parking facilities performance audit report.



**GENERAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT
UNDERGROUND PARKING FACILITIES
PERFORMANCE AUDIT**

OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Reserved Parking and Routine Maintenance Process and Procedures

Observations

Certain portions of the GSD process were documented via emails and on electronic spreadsheets. However, there was no formal manual and/or flowchart that documented processes for assigning reserved parking spaces to City employees and for conducting routine maintenance.

Recommendations

GSD should consider formally documenting the process for assigning reserved parking spaces to City employees to improve the system of internal control related to parking. Furthermore, the process related to routine maintenance of the parking garage should be documented and supplemented with a checklist that includes daily housekeeping and maintenance similar to what CEFD uses. GSD should periodically review the controls for adequacy and make changes as appropriate.



EXHIBIT A
CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY REPORT





Decision Information Resources, Inc.

Results from the Customer Satisfaction Survey for the City of Houston Annex and Theater Underground Parking

July 2008

Submitted to:

Dave Ecklund
Director, Internal Assurance
Mir, Fox, & Rodriguez, P.C.
One Riverway, Suite 1900
Houston, TX 77056

Submitted by:

Pam Wells
Vice President
Decision Information Resources, Inc.
2600 Southwest Freeway, Suite 900
Houston, TX 77098

Author:

Carla T. Prince
Senior Research Associate

Contents

Introduction	1
Background.....	1
Methods	1
I. Survey Findings from Respondents Using the Theater Underground Parking	2
Characteristics of the Respondents Using the Theater Underground Parking.....	2
Respondents’ Experiences in Paying for Their Parking	3
Payment.....	3
Satisfaction with Cost of Contract	3
Satisfaction with Ease of Renewing Parking Contract	4
Respondents’ Experiences with Electronic Access Card	5
Respondents’ Perceptions of Parking Logistics, Cleanliness, and Security	5
Respondents’ Knowledge of the Parking Rules	7
Respondents’ Experiences with Parking Garage Maintenance Personnel.....	9
II. Survey Findings from Respondents Using the City of Houston Annex Parking	11
Characteristics of the Respondents Using the City of Houston Annex Parking.....	11
Respondents’ Experiences in Paying for their Parking	11
Payment.....	11
Satisfaction with Cost of Contract	12
Satisfaction with Ease of Renewing Parking Contract	13
Respondents’ Experiences Using the Electronic Access Card	13
Respondents’ Perceptions of Parking Logistics, Cleanliness, and Security	13
Parking Rules.....	14
Respondents’ Experiences with Parking Garage Maintenance Personnel.....	16
Conclusion	17
Appendix. Customer Satisfaction Survey for the City of Houston Underground Parking .	18

Figures

Figure 1. Satisfaction with Cost of Parking Contract	4
Figure 2. Satisfaction with Ease of Renewing Parking Contract.....	4
Figure 3. Respondents Reporting to Be <i>Very Satisfied</i> or <i>Satisfied</i> with Parking Logistics, Cleanliness, and Security in the Parking Garage	6
Figure 4. Respondents Reporting <i>Dissatisfied</i> or <i>Very Dissatisfied</i> with Parking Logistics, Cleanliness, and Security in the Parking Garage	7
Figure 5. Satisfaction with the Method Used to Communicate Parking Rules	8
Figure 6. Satisfaction with the Enforcement of Parking Rules.....	9
Figure 7. Satisfaction with Cost of Parking Contract	12
Figure 8. Satisfaction with Ease of Renewing Parking Contract.....	13

Figure 9. Respondents Reporting to Be <i>Satisfied</i> or <i>Very Satisfied</i> with Parking Logistics, Cleanliness, and Security	14
Figure 10. Satisfaction with the Method Used to Communicate Parking Rules	15
Figure 11. Satisfaction with the Enforcement of Parking Rules.....	16

Tables

Table 1. Characteristics of Survey Respondents	2
Table 2. Consider Using One or More of the Following Methods to Pay for Parking.....	3
Table 3. Trouble Entering or Exiting the Garage with Electronic Access Card.....	5
Table 4. Problems Entering and Exiting the Garage with Electronic Access Card.....	5
Table 5. Knowledge of Parking Rules	7
Table 6. Interaction or Encounter with Maintenance Personnel in Parking Garage.....	9
Table 7. Characteristics of Survey Respondents Using City of Houston Annex Parking	11
Table 8. Consider Using One or More of the Following Methods to Pay for Parking.....	12
Table 9. Trouble Entering or Exiting the Garage with Electronic Access Card.....	13
Table 10. Knowledge of Parking Rules	15
Table 11. Have Interacted with or Encountered Maintenance Personnel in Parking Garage...	16

Introduction

This section describes the background of the survey and the methods used.

Background

Decision Information Resources, Inc. (DIR) was subcontracted by Mir, Fox & Rodriguez, P.C. (MFR) to conduct a customer-satisfaction survey for the City of Houston Underground Parking facilities. Specifically, DIR was asked to assess the satisfaction of garage customers with the Theater Underground and City Hall Annex facilities.

This report presents a brief narrative of findings and conclusions from a Web survey of contract parkers assigned to either the City Hall Annex or Theater Underground parking garages. It also presents tables for interpretation of data about the following topics:

- Method of payment
- Rating of the contract renewal process
- Perceptions of the overall experience with entering and exiting the garage
- Rating of the overall satisfaction with parking logistics, cleanliness, and security
- Perceptions of how to improve garage security
- Rating of the overall satisfaction with the rules for parking
- Perceptions of the fairness of the enforcement of the parking rules
- Perceptions of the customers' interactions with garage personnel
- Client demographics

Methods

DIR developed a Web survey in consultation with MFR. DIR hosted the Web survey and agreed to conduct follow-up phone calls to increase the survey responses, if necessary. DIR collected data in two cohorts from June 3, 2008, to July 17, 2008.

MFR provided a sample for the City Hall Annex parking garage customers on June 2, 2008. Data for the City Hall Annex cohort was collected by Web survey from June 3–June 25, 2008.

Due to corporate restrictions, DIR and MFR agreed to provide an email invitation to the Theater Underground cohort, allowing each corporation to distribute the invitation through their internal email system. MFR provided each corporation with a list of sample members selected to receive the email invitation. Data collection for the Theater Underground Parking garage customer survey began on July 15, 2008. Due to the overwhelming response to the survey, our goal was achieved within two days. Data collection ended on July 17, 2008.

DIR completed a total of 159 surveys for the Theater Underground Parking and 50 surveys for the City of Houston Annex. Because of a survey question asking for confirmation of which parking garage respondents use, 141 surveys for the Theater Underground and 50 surveys for the City of Houston Annex were analyzed for this report. To review a copy of the survey instrument, see the appendix.

This report presents findings from both reports conducted by DIR. The first section presents findings from the respondents who park in the Theatre Underground parking, and the next section presents findings from the survey of respondents who park in the City of Houston Annex parking.

Each section presents findings about

- Characteristics of the respondents to the Parking Customer Satisfaction Survey
- Respondents' experiences in paying for their downtown parking
- Respondents' experiences in using their electronic access cards
- Respondents' perceptions of the parking logistics, cleanliness, and security
- Respondents' knowledge of the parking rules for the parking garage where they park
- Respondents' experiences with the parking garage maintenance personnel

I. Survey Findings from Respondents Using the Theater Underground Parking

The following section presents findings from respondents using the Theater Underground Parking.

Characteristics of the Respondents Using the Theater Underground Parking

Data were collected from survey respondents on respondents' primary job position and gender. The respondents' characteristics are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Characteristics of Survey Respondents

Primary Job or Position	Number	%
President or CEO	7	5
Managerial	109	77
Technical/support staff	12	9
Administrative staff	11	8
Other	2	2
Gender		
Male	72	51
Female	69	49

We derived the following conclusions about respondent characteristics:

- The majority of respondents hold managerial positions.
- Fifty-one percent of survey respondents were male.

Respondents’ Experiences in Paying for Their Parking

Respondents were asked a series of questions regarding their experience in paying for their parking assignments. These questions included how they pay for their parking, whether they would consider other methods of payment, and how satisfied they are with aspects of the parking garage. The findings from these questions are illustrated in the following tables and figures.

Payment

The majority of respondents selected “other” when asked how they paid for their parking. The majority of those who indicated “other” specified that their employer pays for their parking. And although the majority indicated that their parking is paid by their employer, when asked if they would consider either freestanding pay stations or online or Web-based payments, 40 percent of the respondents said that they would use free standing pay stations, and 53 percent of the respondents would use online or Web-based payments (see Table 2).

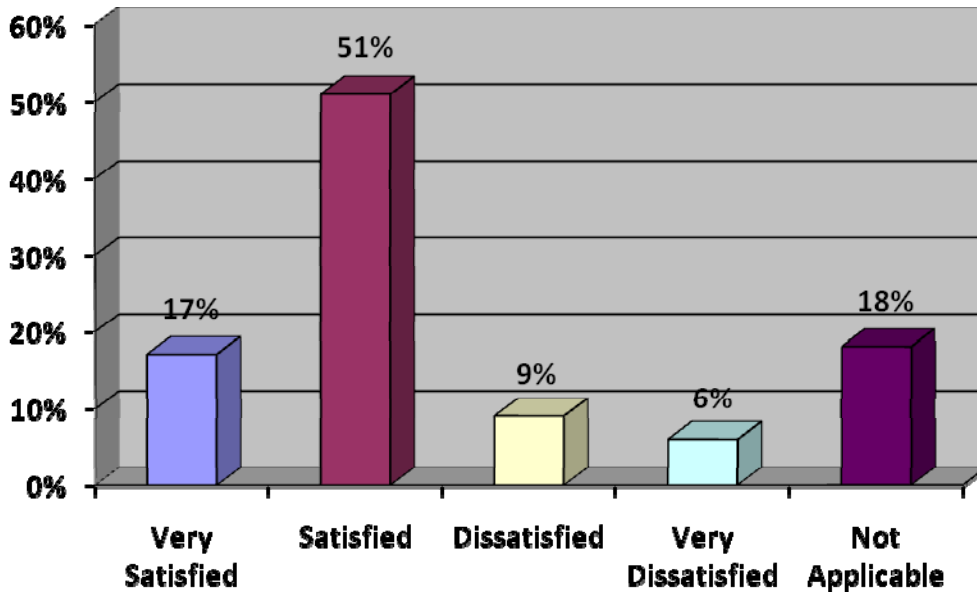
Table 2. Consider Using One or More of the Following Methods to Pay for Parking

Payment Method	Yes (%)	No (%)
Free standing pay stations	42	58
Online or web-based payments	55	45

Satisfaction with Cost of Parking Contract

The majority of respondents (68 percent) were either *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with the cost of their parking contract. At least 18 percent of the respondents said that their satisfaction with the cost of their parking contract was *not applicable*—possibly because employers paid for the parking of most respondents (see Figure 1).

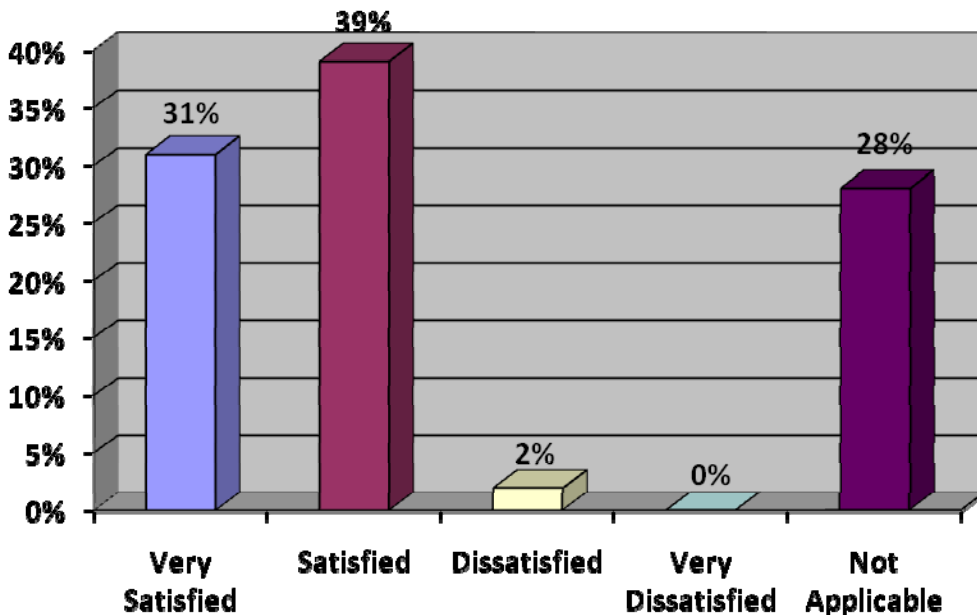
Figure 1. Satisfaction with Cost of Parking Contract



Satisfaction with Ease of Renewing Parking Contract

Seventy percent of respondents indicated that they were *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with the ease of renewing their parking contract. Again, because employers paid for the employees' contract, 28 percent stated that this was *not applicable* to them (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Satisfaction with Ease of Renewing Parking Contract



Respondents' Experiences with Electronic Access Card

The majority of respondents (55 percent) reported that they did not have trouble entering or exiting the garage with their electronic access card. However, it is important to note that 45 percent of surveyed respondents said that they had experienced problems using the access card (see Table 3). Table 4 lists the problems incurred.

Table 3. Trouble Entering or Exiting the Garage with Electronic Access Card

	Number	%
Yes	64	45
No	77	55

Table 4 lists the main problems that respondents had upon entering and exiting the parking garage. The largest number reported that the card would not read (15 percent), followed by gate slow to open (9 percent), and gate would not open (8 percent).

Table 4. Problems Entering and Exiting the Garage with Electronic Access Card

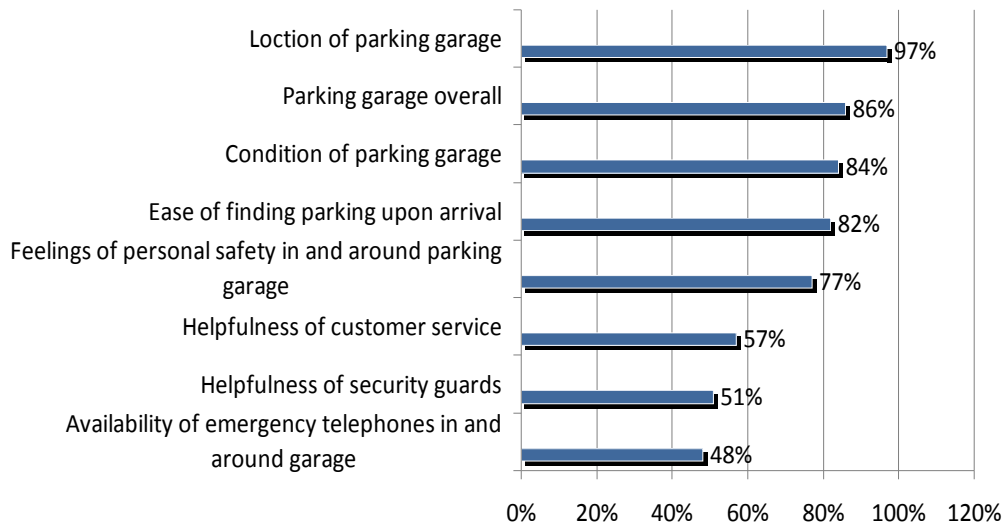
	Number	%
Card would not read	23	15
Gate slow to respond	15	9
Gate would not open	12	8
Required multiple swipes	10	6
Card slow to read	4	3
Card cancelled in error	4	3

Respondents' Perceptions of Parking Logistics, Cleanliness, and Security

Respondents were asked a series of questions to determine their perception of the parking logistics, cleanliness, and security within the garage. Figure 3 shows the combined results for those respondents stating *very satisfied* or *satisfied* for each category.

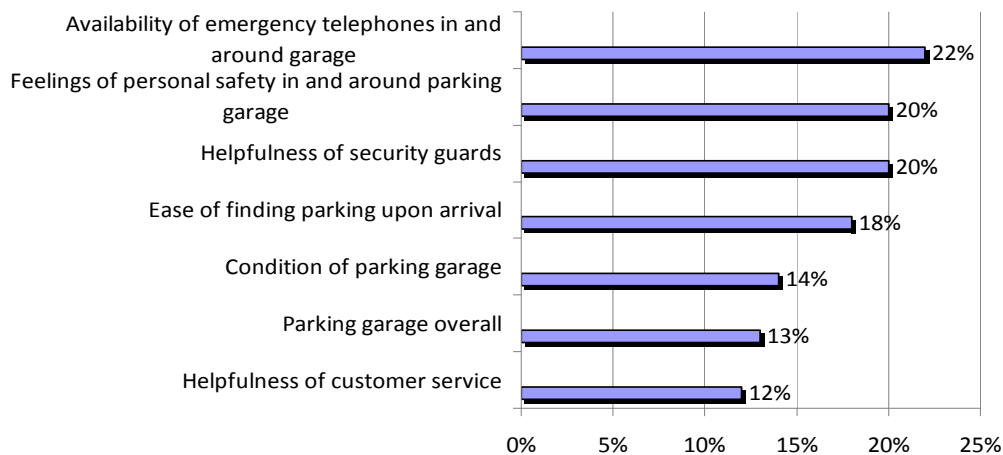
As shown in Figure 3, respondents were most satisfied (either *very satisfied* or *satisfied*) with the location of the garage (97 percent), the parking garage overall (86 percent), the condition of the garage (84 percent), the ease of finding parking upon arrival (82 percent), and their feelings of personal safety in and around the parking garage (77 percent). Respondents were *very satisfied* or *satisfied* at lower rates for helpfulness of customer service (57 percent), the helpfulness of security guards (51 percent), and the availability of emergency telephones in and around the garage (48 percent).

Figure 3. Respondents Reporting to Be *Very Satisfied* or *Satisfied* with Parking Logistics, Cleanliness, and Security in the Parking Garage



Respondents found some degree of dissatisfaction with certain aspects of their parking experiences. Respondents were either *dissatisfied* or *very dissatisfied* with the availability of emergency telephones in and around the parking garage (22 percent), the helpfulness of security guards (20 percent), feelings of personal safety in and around the parking garage (20 percent), ease of finding parking upon arrival (18 percent), the condition of the parking garage (14 percent), the parking garage overall (13 percent), and the helpfulness of customer service (12 percent). See Figure 4.

Figure 4. Respondents Reporting *Dissatisfied* or *Very Dissatisfied* with Parking Logistics, Cleanliness, and Security in the Parking Garage



Respondents gave the following recommendations for improving parking garage security:

- Prioritize repairing “emergency phones” in garage.
- Increase visibility of security
 - At stairwells to address panhandlers
 - After hours, increase patrol
- Secure stairwells to prevent panhandlers.
- Create badge access to street-level doors.
- Repair garage elevator; it shuts down when it rains.
- Require customer-service training for security.
- Create a “card access only” garage access lane.
- Improve lighting.
- Address water drainage issues—causes slippery footing “accidents.”
- Stop smoking in garage and stairwells.
- Improve traffic management during events to minimize burden on contract parkers.
- Provide space for motorcycle parking.

Respondents’ Knowledge of the Parking Rules

As indicated in Table 5, most respondents (61 percent) are knowledgeable about the parking garage rules.

Table 5. Knowledge of Parking Rules

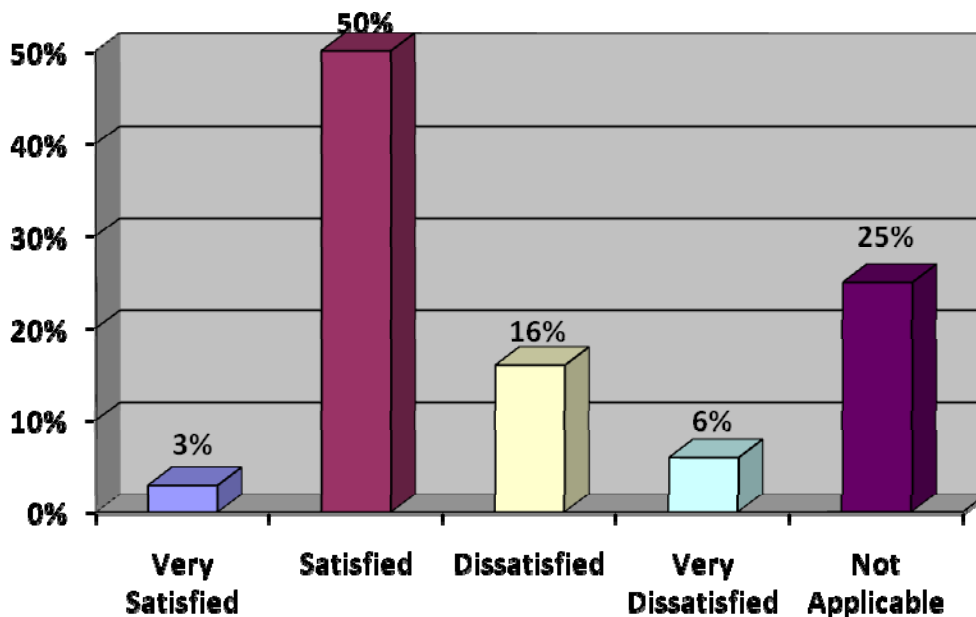
	Number	%
Yes	86	61
No	55	39

Respondents made the following comments when they were asked if the parking rules are enforced in a fair manner:

- Enforced fairly
- Not fair to hold contract spaces for mayor or city hall meetings
- Security on carts should abide by same rules
- Visitors get preferential treatment over contract parkers
- Signs that change from handicap to parking
- Unauthorized vehicles park in handicap parking spaces
- Vehicles parked in nonparking spaces
- Violations posted on windshield without prior knowledge of rules
- Only rule aware of “don’t park in the mayor’s space.”
- Rules should be updated and parkers informed

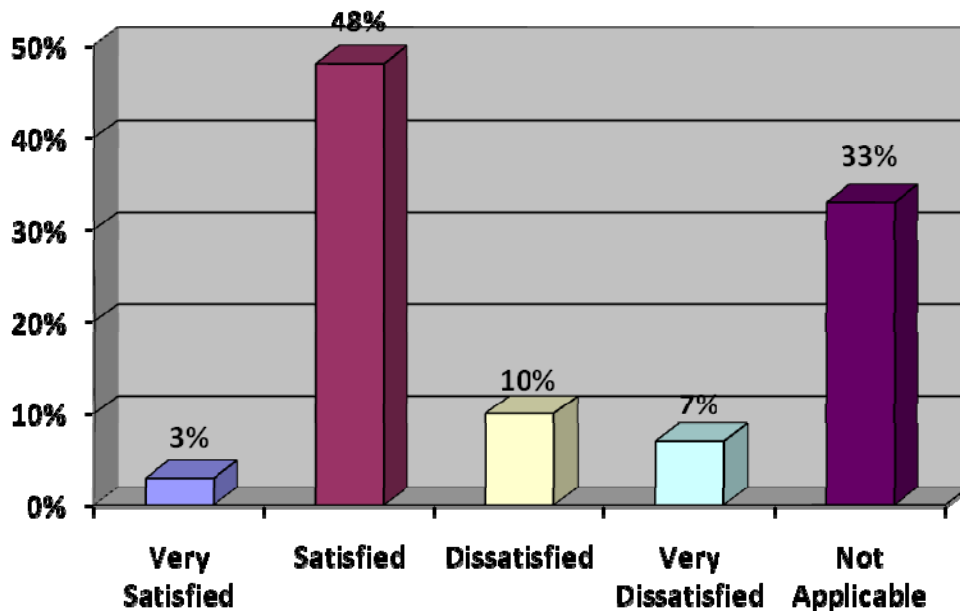
More than half of the respondents were either *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with the method used to communicate the parking rules. Twenty-two percent of respondents were either *dissatisfied* or *very dissatisfied* with the method used to communicate parking rules. One-fourth of respondents felt the method used to communicate the parking rules was *not applicable* to them. See Figure 5.

Figure 5. Satisfaction with the Method Used to Communicate Parking Rules



Fifty-one percent of the respondents were either *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with the enforcement of parking rules. Seventeen percent of respondents were either *dissatisfied* or *very dissatisfied* with the enforcement of parking rules. Surprisingly, one-third of respondents felt that the enforcement of parking rules was *not applicable* to them. See Figure 6.

Figure 6. Satisfaction with the Enforcement of Parking Rules



Respondents’ Experiences with Parking Garage Maintenance Personnel

Most respondents (69 percent) reported no interactions or encounters with maintenance personnel in the parking garage (see Table 6).

Table 6. Interaction or Encounter with Maintenance Personnel in Parking Garage

	Number	%
Yes	44	31
No	96	69

Comments made by those respondents reporting interactions or encounters with maintenance personnel in the parking garage were mostly positive. Respondents described the maintenance personnel as:

- Friendly
- Polite
- Positive
- Helpful
- Responsive

The following list gives a few respondent quotations and other comments about their interactions or encounters with maintenance personnel in the parking garage:

- “They make every effort to keep garage clean.”
- “Helpful, I had a battery that was dead and he helped me get it started.”
- Provide rides to parkers
- Give direction to office locations
- Cleaning lady is very personable and friendly

Respondents who did not feel that their interactions or encounters with the maintenance personnel were positive cited the following reasons:

- “Issue with mopping the floors during busy hours of the day. It’s dangerous and I’ve seen people slip on wet spots.”
- “My new car was hit by a security golf car. I was never reimbursed by the security company or the parking facility.”
- Indifferent not very friendly
- No signage when working on garage—inconvenient to parker

II. Survey Findings from Respondents Using the City of Houston Annex Parking

This section presents findings from respondents using the City of Houston annex parking.

Characteristics of the Respondents Using the City of Houston Annex Parking

Data were collected from survey respondents on respondents' primary job position and gender. The respondents' characteristics are presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Characteristics of Survey Respondents Using City of Houston Annex Parking

	Number	%
Primary Job or Position		
President or CEO	10	20
Managerial	25	50
Technical/support staff	2	4
Administrative staff	9	18
Other	3	6
Missing	1	2
Gender		
Male	23	46
Female	26	52
Missing	1	2

We derived the following conclusions about respondent characteristics:

- The majority of respondents hold managerial positions.
- Fifty two percent of survey respondents were female.

Respondents' Experiences in Paying for their Parking

Respondents were asked a series of questions regarding their experience in paying for their parking assignments. These questions included how they pay for their parking, whether they would consider other methods of payment, and how satisfied they are with aspects of the parking garage. The findings from these questions are illustrated in the following tables and figures.

Payment

The majority of respondents selected "other" when asked how they paid for their parking. The majority of those who indicated "other" specified that their employer pays their parking. And although the majority indicated that their parking is paid by their employer, when asked if they would consider either freestanding pay stations or online or Web-based payments, 30 percent

indicated that they would use free standing pay stations, and 36 percent would use online or Web-based payments.

Table 8. Consider Using One or More of the Following Methods to Pay for Parking

Method	Yes (%)	No (%)
Free standing pay stations*	30	36
Online or Web-based payments**	36	36
Total	66*	72**

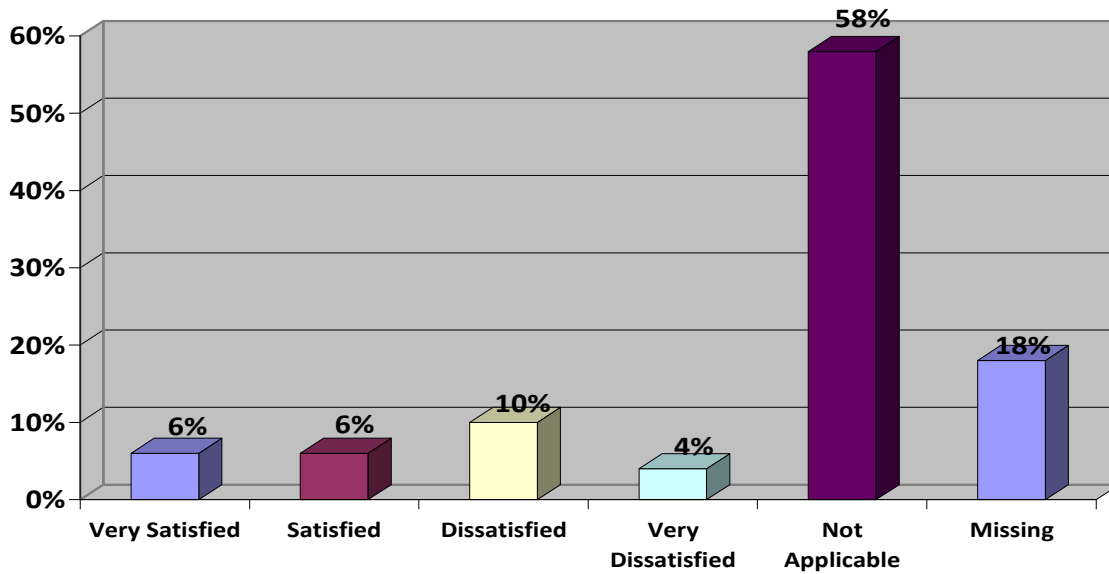
*34 percent of respondents reported missing

**28 percent of respondents reported missing

Satisfaction with Cost of Parking Contract

Nearly one-fourth of respondents were either *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with the cost of their parking contract. The majority of respondents (58 percent) said that their satisfaction with the cost of their parking contract was *not applicable*—probably because employers pay for the parking of most respondents. Another 18 percent did not answer this question most likely for the same reason (see Figure 7).

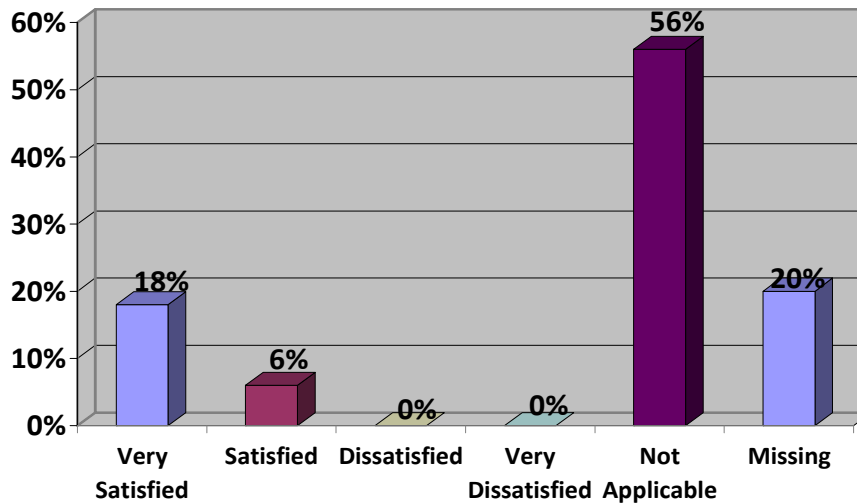
Figure 7. Satisfaction with Cost of Parking Contract



Satisfaction with Ease of Renewing Parking Contract

Twenty-four percent of respondents indicated that they were *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with the ease of renewing their parking contract. Again, because the employer pays for the employees' contract, 56 percent stated that ease of renewing was *not applicable* to them, and another 20 percent did not answer the question (see Figure 8).

Figure 8. Satisfaction with Ease of Renewing Parking Contract



Respondents' Experiences Using the Electronic Access Card

The majority of respondents (86 percent) reported that they did not have trouble entering or exiting the garage with their electronic access card. However, it is important to note that 12 percent of surveyed respondents said that they had problems using the access card (see Table 9). Of that 12 percent, respondents reported only two types of problems—the card was not reading, or the gate would not open.

Table 9. Trouble Entering or Exiting the Garage with Electronic Access Card

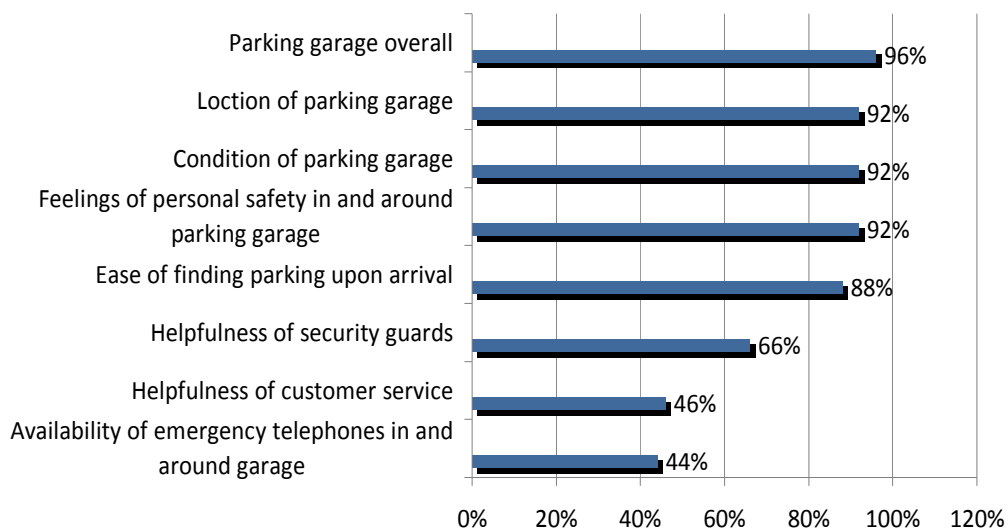
	Number	%
Yes	6	12
No	43	86
Missing	1	2

Respondents' Perceptions of Parking Logistics, Cleanliness, and Security

Respondents were asked a series of questions to determine their perception of the parking logistics, cleanliness, and security within the garage. Figure 9 shows the combined results for those respondents stating *very satisfied* or *satisfied* for each category.

Respondents were most satisfied (either *very satisfied* or *satisfied*) with the parking garage overall (96 percent), the location of the garage (92 percent), the condition of the garage (92 percent), their feelings of personal safety in and around the parking garage (92 percent), the ease of finding a parking space upon arrival (88 percent), and the helpfulness of security guards (66 percent). Respondents were *very satisfied* or *satisfied* at lower rates for the helpfulness of security guards (66 percent), helpfulness of customer service (46 percent), and the availability of emergency telephones in and around the garage (44 percent). For some of these attributes, a significant amount of respondents reported *not applicable*: the helpfulness of customer service (46 percent), the availability of emergency telephones in and around the parking garage (28 percent), and the helpfulness of security guards (14 percent).

Figure 9. Respondents Reporting to Be *Satisfied* or *Very Satisfied* with Parking Logistics, Cleanliness, and Security



Respondents gave the following recommendations for improving parking garage security:

- Increase visibility of security.
- Hire experienced security guards.
- Provide customer-service training to security guards.
- Increase security after 6 p.m.
- Add more emergency call boxes.
- Improve the lighting.
- Install monitors for cameras in garage.

Parking Rules

As indicated in Table 10, most respondents (78 percent) are knowledgeable about the parking garage rules.

Table 10. Knowledge of Parking Rules

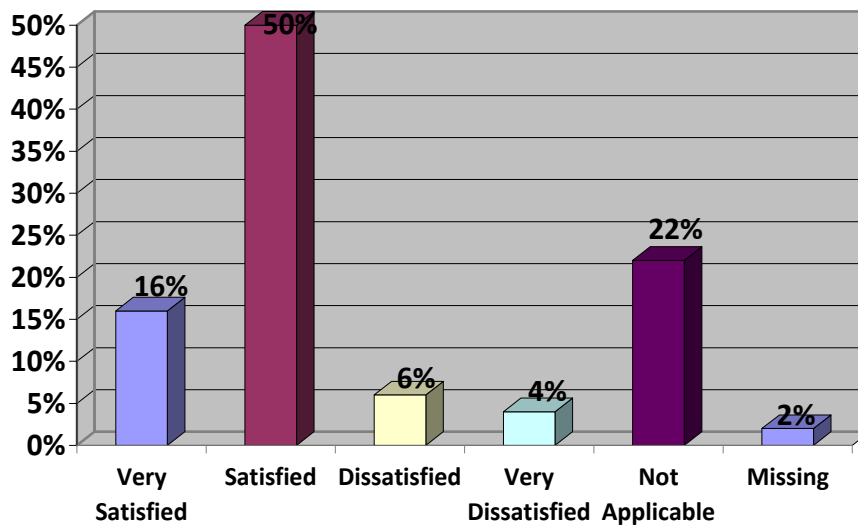
	Number	%
Yes	39	78
No	10	20
Missing	1	2

Respondents made the following recommendations regarding the enforcement of the parking rules:

- Should post rules in garage.
- Violators should receive warning notices.
- Enforced fairly.
- Not fair to hold contract spaces for mayor or city hall meetings.
- Security on carts should abide by same rules.
- Visitors get preferential treatment over contract parkers.
- Cars should park head in (violation without notice or warning).
- Cars are parked on ends where no space is available on City Council days.
- Unauthorized parkers in garage on City Council session days.

Sixty-six percent of the respondents were either *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with the method used to communicate the parking rules. Twenty-two percent of respondents felt that the method used to communicate the parking rules was *not applicable* to them. See Figure 10.

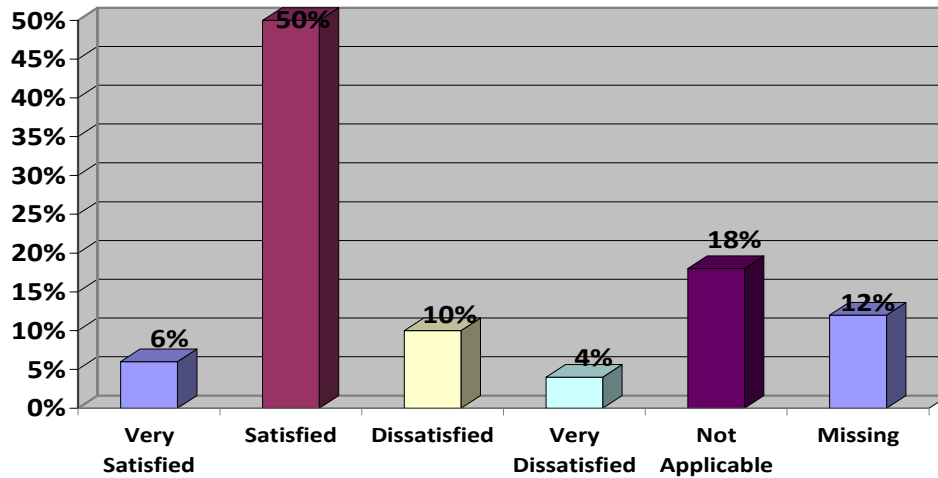
Figure 10. Satisfaction with the Method Used to Communicate Parking Rules



Fifty-six percent of the respondents were either *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with the enforcement of the parking rules. Fourteen percent were either *dissatisfied* or *very dissatisfied*. Surprisingly,

18 percent of respondents felt that the enforcement of the parking rules was *not applicable* to them. See Figure 11.

Figure 11. Satisfaction with the Enforcement of Parking Rules



Respondents’ Experiences with Parking Garage Maintenance Personnel

Table 11 shows that most respondents (56 percent) reported some type of interaction or encounter with maintenance personnel in the parking garage. However, (44 percent) reported no interactions or encounters with maintenance personnel in the parking garage.

Table 11. Have Interacted with or Encountered Maintenance Personnel in Parking Garage

	Number	%
Yes	28	56
No	22	44

Comments made by those respondents reporting interactions or encounters with maintenance personnel in the parking garage were mostly positive. The following list gives comments regarding the maintenance personnel:

- Friendly
- Polite
- Positive
- Helpful
- Responsive
- Garage always clean
- Maintenance always observed to be working
- Customer driven

Conclusion

The majority of survey respondents reported that they were satisfied with the cost of their parking contract and the ease of renewing the contract. Although most respondents did not have any problems with their electronic access cards, a significant number had minor problems using the electronic access card. We found that respondents were mostly satisfied with the parking logistics, cleanliness, and security in the parking garage. However, it is important to note that respondents indicated a need for the parking garage to be more secure and for the security guards and customer service to be more helpful.

Most respondents reported that they were knowledgeable about the parking rules and were satisfied with how the rules are communicated and enforced. Some respondents want to ensure that city officials and event visitors do not receive preferential treatment and that rules are updated and parking garage users are kept informed of all rules.

Appendix. Customer Satisfaction Survey for the City of Houston Underground Parking

Thank you for taking the time to share your perceptions about the City of Houston Parking facilities. By completing this short survey you can let us know if your parking needs and expectations are being met. Your responses are important and will help direct future improvements for contract parking. Your opinions are valuable to us.

Payment

First, we would like to learn more about the different parking payment methods you use and your satisfaction with your parking contract.

1. What method do you use to pay for parking?

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|
| a. Payroll deduction | d. Pay by phone |
| b. Pay by mail | e. Direct debit from my bank |
| c. Pay in-person | f. Other—please specify _____ |

2. Would you consider using one or more of the following methods to pay for parking?

- | | | |
|--|-----|----|
| a. Free standing pay stations (cash/credit or debit) | Yes | No |
| b. Online or web-based payments (credit or debit) | Yes | No |

3. During the past 6 months, how satisfied were you with the . . .

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Not Applicable
a. Cost of parking contract	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Ease of renewing parking contract	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Electronic Access Card

The following set of questions will assess your experience with using your electronic access parking card.

4. Have you had trouble entering or exiting the garage with your electronic access card?

Yes

No

5. **IF YES** – What type of trouble did you have entering or exiting the garage with your electronic access card?

Parking Logistics, Cleanliness, and Security

These next questions are about parking logistics, cleanliness, and security.

6. During the past 6 months, how satisfied were you with the . . .

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Not Applicable
a. Ease of finding parking upon arrival	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Location of parking garage (e.g., how convenient for your destination)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Parking garage—overall	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Helpfulness of customer service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Condition (e.g., cleanliness) of parking garage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Availability of emergency telephones in and around parking garage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Helpfulness of security guards	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. (Your) Feelings of personal safety in and around parking garage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. What recommendations do you have for improving parking garage security?

Parking Rules

Now we would like to get your opinion regarding the parking rules for your garage.

8. Do you know the parking rules for your parking garage?

Yes No

9. During the past 6 months, how satisfied were you with the . . .

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Not Applicable
a Method used by the city to communicate parking rules to you	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b Enforcement of parking rules	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Do you think the parking rules are enforced in a fair manner? Please explain your answer.

Maintenance Personnel

These next questions ask about your experience(s) or interactions with parking garage maintenance personnel.

10. During the past 6 months, have you interacted with or encountered maintenance personnel in your parking garage?

Yes

No

11. **If YES** – Was the interaction with maintenance personnel positive or negative? Please tell us why.

Location, Gender, and Vocation

These final questions are for classification purposes.

12. Where is you assigned parking garage?

a. Theater Underground Parking

b. City of Houston Annex

13. What is your gender?

a. Male

b. Female

14. Which of the following categories best describes your primary job or position?

- a. Executive
- b. Professional/Managerial
- c. IT/Technical Support
- d. Administrative Support
- e. Other—please specify _____

Thank you for your participation!



EXHIBIT B
VIEWS OF RESPONSIBLE OFFICIALS



EXHIBIT B



CITY OF HOUSTON

General Services Department

Interoffice

Correspondence

To: Annise D. Parker
City Controller

From: Issa Z. Dadoush, P.E., MBA
Director

Date: September 28, 2009

Subject: Performance Audit of General
Services Department's Underground
Parking Facilities at the City Hall
Annex and 611 Walker

MFR, P.C. completed its performance audit of the General Services Department's (GSD) Underground Parking Facilities located at the City Hall Annex and 611 Walker. We carefully reviewed their report and concur with their performance observations and recommendations. Our responses are outlined below.

1. Observation – There was no formal manual and/or flowchart that documented processes for conducting routine maintenance. **Agree**

Recommendation - GSD should consider formally documenting the process related to routine maintenance of the parking garage supplemented with a checklist that includes daily housekeeping and maintenance similar to what the Convention and Entertainment Facilities (CEFD) uses. **Concur**

Response – The Property Management Division will create a maintenance checklist.

2. Observation – There was no formal manual and/or flowchart that documented processes for assigning reserved parking spaces to City employees. **Agree**

Recommendation – GSD should consider formally documenting the process for assigning reserved parking spaces to City employees. **Concur**

Response – The Parking Management Division will develop policies and procedures for assigning reserved parking spaces.

GSD will implement the recommendations listed above. Other operational and administrative changes may be made in the future after all concerned parties have analyzed the survey results.

IZD/tle

cc: Liliana Rambo, Steve Girardi

CONTROLLER'S
2009 SEP 29 AM 10:42

**Views of Responsible
Officials**