

DRIVING BUSINESS ~ Wait! Don't Dump that Coffee!

Parking is often called the gateway or “front door” to a facility or to a destination. It is the first and last impression for visitors. When people experience clean, convenient, and well maintained parking, they are more likely to have a positive overall feeling about their visit –and they are more likely to return. A parking facility that is well maintained can have a significant impact on the local economy. It is proven that commerce develops near transportation and parking systems. As many American cities face complicated economic issues, parking serves as an asset and a driver for economic success and revitalization by providing essential infrastructure to support commerce and business, which in turn enlivens our downtown. This article is about the importance of maintaining our valuable parking facilities so that they will remain an asset for years to come.

Without routine preventive maintenance, the wear and tear on parking facilities will take their toll and the expenses for repair will be all the more costly. For example, coffee stains on concrete are just one of the maintenance issues PARK Roanoke deals with in its garages. Imagine if everyone tossed trash, cigarette butts or left over food from their vehicles onto the floor surface. Most people likely do not even think about maintenance and all it takes to operate a garage, after all, it is made out of concrete and pretty much runs itself, right? Actually, it does not. For the city’s seven garages and five surface lots, maintenance and operational costs are \$1.77 million annually – that’s about \$443 per parking space! But keeping concrete surfaces clean are not the only on-going cost for parking.

Without continued repair and maintenance, parking structures may require significant capital investment. Even though parking garages are constructed of long-lasting, durable concrete, they are exposed to the elements much like a bridge. Unlike buildings where the structural frame is typically enclosed, parking structures are exposed to weather, salt, and temperature extremes that have a detrimental effect on exposed elements such as stairs, elevators, and expansion joints. Parking garages experience more severe and harsh conditions that most other structures. Therefore, routine/preventive maintenance is critical.

Maintenance and operational expenses include staffing, electricity, painting, elevator inspections, pressure washing, water/sewer services, telephones, and equipment repair and maintenance. Graffiti removal, landscaping, filling surface cracks, snow and ice removal, and patching joints are ongoing maintenance items. Daily tasks include sweeping and removal of trash and ponded water which helps maintain the appearance and cleanliness of the facility as well as preventing deterioration. Maintenance involves replacing light bulbs, repairing facades and expansion joints, bumpers, bollards, lintels, and stair treads. There’s painting of divider lanes, turn lanes, and parking space stripes. Routine maintenance helps maintain the quality of the garage keeping it structurally sound, safe, attractive, and operational for years to come.

Who does all of this work? PARK Roanoke employs 10 maintenance workers whose job is to take care of all of these items and more on a daily and nightly basis. More importantly, who pays for this work? The revenues from daily and monthly parking rates must cover the expenses needed to operate and maintain the garages. The PARK Roanoke budget is self-supporting. By keeping costs low, the rates may also be kept low.

All PARK Roanoke facilities are *Non-Smoking*. However, cigarette butts present a large headache for maintenance crews. PARK Roanoke’s night shift maintenance team member, Ian, works hard to promote safety and maintain cleanliness in the garages. On any given night, he patrols each facility to ensure this type of environment. He looks out for patrons’ safety by making sure any “non-customers” or loiterers exit the facility. In addition to operating the scrubber and sweeper machine, he also makes sure that equipment is in good working order and performs maintenance including oil changes. The most common issue Ian deals with is an overabundance of cigarette butts. Although the PARK Roanoke garages are *Non-Smoking*, many people do not abide by the regulation. Ian loves his job and working the night shift at PARK Roanoke. However, if there is one thing he could change, it is for “people to be clean and not litter.” He says “It’s not just a garage, it’s our planet.” The wind can easily blow trash outside of the garage onto the sidewalks and streets. “If someone is littering in the garage, it has a larger impact on our community.”

Please think twice before dumping that left over coffee..... your parking surface and PARK Roanoke thanks you.
P.S. If you happen to see any of our maintenance workers, stop by and thank them for their hard work in keeping the garages clean and safe.



*The offices of PARK Roanoke are located at
117 Church Avenue, S. W., directly across the street from
The Texas Tavern.*