



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Council Members

CC: Marc A. Ott, City Manager
Robert Goode, P.E., Assistant City Manager

FROM: Robert Spillar, P.E., Director, Austin Transportation Department

DATE: May 29, 2015

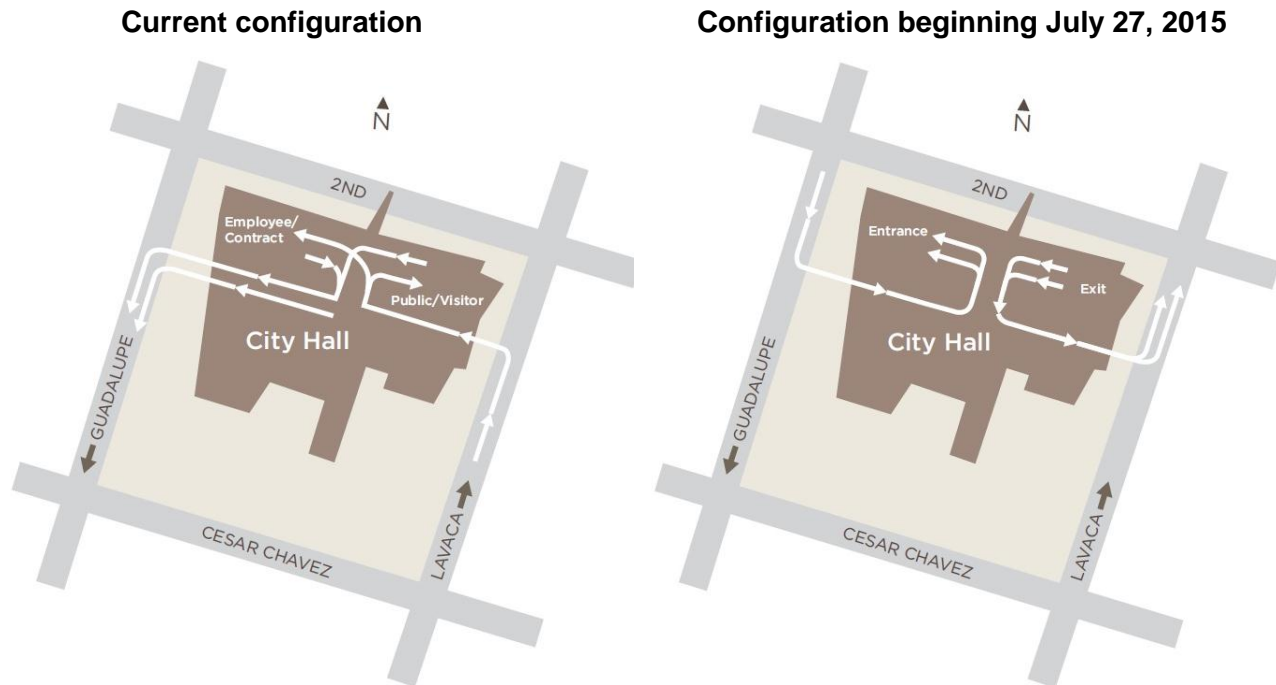
SUBJECT: Austin City Hall garage entrance/exit reversal and parking rate increases

In July 2015, the Austin Transportation Department will begin the process of reconfiguring the entrance and exit of the Austin City Hall parking garage, including replacement/relocation of gates, signage, markings, access technology and pay stations. These changes will be completed July 26. Additionally, the parking rates for the public, valet access, validations, and contract parking will increase on July 1 within the fee structure previously approved by Council.

These changes will improve operations of the parking facility and increase accessibility of parking to City of Austin customers as well as visitors, residents and employees. These improvements are also anticipated to reduce congestion associated with garage access.

Entrance/Exit Reversal

Beginning July 27, 2015, people parking at the Austin City Hall garage will enter the garage from Guadalupe Street and exit the garage on Lavaca Street; this configuration is the opposite of what currently exists. Additionally, there will no longer be separated parking for City of Austin employees/contract parkers and public parking. Once inside the parking structure, all people will proceed into the parking area through the current employee/contract side of the garage, and exit the parking area from the current public side. Reserved parking on the basement level of the garage will remain the same for Austin City Council members and the City Manager's Office.



The current configuration of the garage has caused several operational challenges. First and foremost, the public side of the garage is often at capacity, resulting in a lack of parking for customers visiting City Hall for business with the City, and limiting the availability of parking for downtown employees, residents and visitors. Presently, a garage attendant manually opens the P3 level of the garage for overflow parking, and closes it off again when the parking demand decreases.

By comingling all parking, the City of Austin maximizes the space available to customers while also preserving space for contract parking and City Hall employees through advanced technology. To ensure there is always space for employees and contract parkers, when the garage reaches capacity or when employee and contract parking is impacted, a garage staff member will begin checking identification in the tunnel portion of the garage, and turning away those without a City Hall garage access card or City identification card. New parking technology that will be installed in July will alert the parking attendants to when the garage has reached the point at which parking for employees and contract parking needs to be preserved.

Requiring people to exit the garage onto Lavaca Street instead of Guadalupe Street is anticipated to alleviate some of the congestion occurring within the garage during the afternoon peak travel period. According to vehicle volume counts taken by the Austin Transportation Department, there 2,000 fewer vehicles traveling on Lavaca than Guadalupe each weekday between 4 pm and 7 pm. This provides an opportunity to shift demand away from Guadalupe by requiring people to exit onto Lavaca where generally speaking, there is less demand at the end of the workday.

The reversal of entrance and exits provides people with the same options for commuting home as they currently have. Travelers can loop around City Hall by turning left on 2nd Street or 3rd Street if they want to go south on 1st Street or West towards Lamar and MoPac; they can turn right onto 2nd Street, 4th Street, 5th Street or 15th Street to go towards I-35 and Congress Avenue; or they can proceed north on Lavaca to leave the Central Business District.

The Transportation Department believes that this reconfiguration will increase mobility and parking accessibility in Downtown and improve overall operation and management of the downtown parking system.

Parking Rates

In line with the fee structure in the Council approved budget for the City Hall garage (FY 14) the parking rates at the City Hall garage will be increased on July 1, 2015. All non-employee contract parking, valet, validations for more than 2 hours, and public parking will all be impacted.

The parking rates are as follows:

		Current	Proposed	Average Downtown Garage Rate (Market)
Daily Rate Monday – Sunday 5 am – 5 pm	0 – ½ Hour	Free	Free	\$3.00
	1 Hour	\$4.00	\$5.00	\$6.00
	1 ½ Hours	\$6.00	\$7.50	\$9.00
	2 Hours	\$8.00	\$10.00	\$12.00
	3 Hours	\$12.00	\$15.00	\$18.00
	3 Hours +	\$13.00	\$17.00	\$18.00
Validation for 2 + hours* <small>*not applicable to people at City Hall for City of Austin business</small>		\$5.00	\$7.00	
Monthly Valet		\$60.00	\$70.00	
Nightly Rate Monday - Sunday 5 pm – 5 am		\$8.00	\$10.00	\$10.00
Special Event Rate		\$8.00	\$15.00	\$18.00
Monthly Contract		\$125.00	\$150.00	\$163.00

Currently, designated 2nd Street businesses can validate City Hall garage parking slips for up to two hours of free parking for customers. If someone spends more than two hours in the garage, the person is supposed to pay a \$5 flat rate for the time beyond the two hour validation, however, this policy has not been enforced in the past. Beginning July 1, the flat rate for time spent in the garage beyond the two-hour validation period will go up from \$5 to \$7 and this policy will be enforced. This will not impact people using the garage for City of Austin business including but not limited to visiting Council offices, meetings of the Austin City Council, Council Committees, Boards and Commissions or meetings with staff at City Hall. Parking for the purposes of business at City Hall will continue to be free by validation.

By increasing the rate, the City of Austin remains highly competitive with the Downtown market. The City Hall parking rates are about 20 percent below market value on average.

Fees generated from the garage are used for garage and building maintenance and operations at City Hall.

Communications

To inform stakeholders about these changes, the Austin Transportation Department will launch a comprehensive communication plan June 1. Communications will include multiple notifications to City of Austin employees, 2nd Street businesses and customers, City of Austin customers, current contract parkers, local valet companies, local media and Downtown Austin residents and employees. In addition to distribution of information via fliers and email notification, once the reconfiguration is complete, a staff person will be stationed at the entrance and exit of the garage to help direct people wishing to park in the garage.

As always, the Austin Transportation Department encourages City Hall and Downtown Austin visitors and employees to use the nearby Capital Metro bus routes, pedestrian and bike facilities, carpool/vanpool and other [travel demand methods](#) to get to and from City Hall.

If you have any additional questions about the changes that will take place in July, please contact Cheyenne Krause at (512) 974-7907 or Cheyenne.Krause@austintexas.gov.