




## 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:** April 14, 2016

**SUBJECT:** **Proposed Extension of Downtown Parking Meter Hours on Wednesdays**

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In an effort to improve parking availability, the Austin Transportation Department (ATD) is proposing to extend parking hours for on-street, City-owned, metered parking spaces in the downtown area to include Wednesday evenings from 6 p.m. to midnight. The change would apply to spaces located between Lamar Boulevard, I-35, Lady Bird Lake and 10<sup>th</sup> Street and would be in addition to the 20 cent increase planned for May 2016 (see Downtown Parking Meter Rate Increase memo).

ATD intends for the change, should it receive Austin City Council approval, to increase parking turnover, which would give more people the opportunity to park downtown and visit area businesses and destinations. Revenue from the proposed additional parking hours will go toward improving congestion and safety for all road users in the city.

### Background

A parking survey that ATD conducted of the core downtown district (between Lamar Boulevard, I-35, Cesar Chavez Street and 10<sup>th</sup> Street) in 2015 indicated that an average of 75 percent of all spaces were occupied on Wednesday evenings.

ATD provided a memo to City Council in March 2012 indicating that turnover on Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings from 5 p.m. until midnight increased after the City extended parking hours in 2011 to include Thursday and Friday from 6 p.m. to midnight and Saturday from 11 a.m. to midnight. Staff estimates that 6,000 more vehicles had access to on-street parking per night than previously recorded and concludes that drivers were roughly three times more likely to find available on-street parking due to managed meters.

Moreover, staff concludes that the change did not appear to negatively impact downtown businesses, as area sales tax and mixed beverage tax receipts increased by 9.7 and 16.3 percent, respectively, between the final tax quarter of 2010 and the final tax quarter of 2011.

### Process

Between December 2015 and January 2016, ATD met with various downtown stakeholders to discuss the proposed Wednesday evening parking hours. These meetings included conversations with:

- Austin Chamber of Commerce
- Austin Restaurant Association
- Downtown Austin Alliance
- Building Owners & Managers Association

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that enhances the environment and economic strength of the region.*

- UT Parking & Transportation Services
- Austin Hotel & Lodging Association
- Red River Cultural District
- ATX Safer Streets
- Stratus Properties
- ACL Live
- W Hotel
- AMLI Downtown
- Downtown Austin Neighborhood Association
- Old Austin Neighborhood Association
- LAZ Parking
- ABM Parking
- SP+ Parking
- Austin Music People
- Ridescout

ATD plans to mitigate the potential impacts of its Wednesday evening parking proposal on service and entertainment industry employees by offering affordable, monthly evening parking rates at the Waller Creek Center garage facility, located at 625 E. 10th Street. Starting May 2, staff plans for the garage to be available on a first-come, first-served basis Monday through Sunday from 6 p.m. to 5 a.m. to Red River Cultural District service and entertainment industry businesses and employees for \$35 per pass per month. ATD will expand this opportunity to other late-night business and employees in downtown based on demand.

ATD has asked participating stakeholders to submit letters indicating their opinions on the proposed Wednesday evening parking meter hours. Additionally, staff asked for community feedback on the issue during the February “Parking and Transit” installment of the City’s Conversation Corps program.

### **Next Steps**

ATD staff will brief and seek feedback from the Urban Transportation Commission and seek City Council approval prior to implementing the Wednesday night extended hours. ATD intends to accomplish this through the Council Fee Review as part of the Fiscal Year 2016-17 budget process. The extended fee is proposed for tentative implementation on Oct. 1, 2016.