




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: **Downtown Parking Meter Rate Increase**

As authorized by the Austin City Council during the Fiscal Year 2015-16 City budget, the Austin Transportation Department (ATD) will raise rates this year for on-street, City-owned, metered parking spaces in the downtown area. Effective May 2, rates will increase from \$1 per hour to \$1.20 per hour for parking spaces located between Lamar Boulevard, I-35, Lady Bird Lake and 10th Street.

ATD intends for the rate increase to encourage turnover for downtown parking spaces in order to give more people the opportunity to park in the area and visit nearby businesses and destinations. Revenue from the 20 cent increase will go toward improving congestion and safety for all road users in the city.

Background

ATD uses metered parking to encourage turnover in certain areas. A May 2015 parking survey conducted by ATD for the core downtown district (between Lamar Boulevard, I-35, Cesar Chavez Street and 10th Street) showed that metered parking is occupied 90 percent of the time during regular hours. As a result, City Council authorized ATD to raise downtown parking meter rates in September 2015 and directed it to initiate a stakeholder communication process. The last time the City of Austin raised on-street parking rates in the downtown area was in Fiscal Year 2003-04.

Process

Between December 2015 and January 2016, ATD met with various downtown stakeholders to inform them about the impending 20 cent rate increase. These meetings included conversations with:

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

An ATD stakeholder survey administered as part of these discussions found that most respondents believe there is either not enough on-street parking downtown for employees and customers or that parking availability depends upon time of day. The two most popular suggestions for increasing parking availability were to install more wayfinding elements and raise hourly meter rates by an additional \$1, which would result in a \$2 per hour rate.

ATD plans to mitigate the potential impacts of the rate increase 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.

Next Steps

Future updates about this initiative will be provided to the public through press releases, social media posts, newsletters and media availability sessions.