




MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and City Council

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

DATE: June 3, 2020

SUBJECT: Upcoming Parking System Modifications for Service Due to COVID-19

The Austin Transportation Department (ATD) wishes to inform you that we will be implementing parking system modifications focused on convenience, accessibility, and safety. ATD has worked collaboratively with the Downtown Austin Alliance (DAA) and our private sector parking partners to expand the Affordable Parking Program to offer discounted daytime parking sessions for people needing to drive to downtown and park for employment. This action will allow ATD to make better and more varied use of on-street parking spaces to encourage availability for customers and to stimulate commercial activity.

At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, ATD installed 71 food priority pickup and drop off zones using more than 500 mostly metered parking spaces. This effort supported innovative and resilient local businesses staying open to continue providing delivery and pickup food service. With the reopening of the Texas economy, ATD has carefully considered the next steps to support local businesses and the community further. Rather than continuing to set-up additional specialty zones based on service type, ATD has determined it advantageous to unlock the entire pay-to-park system for pick up and drop off type services.

Beginning June 8, 2020, existing food priority zones will be modified to allow for up to two free 15-minute parking sessions. Under this concept, each public parking space in the City can be used for pick up and drop off services using the [Park ATX smartphone app](#). For example, by entering validation codes FREE15ATX1 and FREE15ATX2, a user could pick up take out in one location, and drop off dry cleaning in another, for no charge. These free parking sessions are valid once every 24 hours. This is to incentivize efficient system use. Any additional time past 15 minutes is considered a typical parking session and would be charged accordingly.

ATD is proposing to start with this contactless method to further reduce potential transmission points while continuing to provide ways for people to maintain social distancing guidelines. We believe that this balanced approach will provide relief for both businesses and system users during these extraordinary times, while encouraging responsible use of the on-street parking capacity.

ATD is working with our private parking partner providers such as Premier Parking, to offer affordable daytime parking opportunities in their off-street facilities. These affordable off-street spaces will be available to all downtown employees and visitors and provide an alternative to long-term use of on-street parking capacity.

We are also working with the Convention Center and other government owned parking facilities to establish affordable early bird and all-day parking opportunities as well. Currently, the Convention Center charges \$5 for an all-day parking session at their Palmer Center and downtown garage locations. We will be assisting them in communicating these opportunities to the public.

For additional details on our expanded affordable parking program, please visit our affordable parking program website at <https://www.austintexas.gov/page/affordable-parking-program> and link to promotional offers for special rates.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact Jason T. Redfern, ATD Parking Enterprise Manager, at Jason.Redfern@AustinTexas.gov or by phone at (512) 974-7020.

CC: Spencer Cronk, City Manager
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Jason JonMichael, Assistant Director, Austin Transportation Department
Jason Redfern, Parking Enterprise Division Manager