

**CITY COUNCIL  
COMMUNICATION:**

**ITEM \_\_\_\_\_**

**OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER  
CITY OF DES MOINES, IOWA**

**99-111**

**SYNOPSIS -**

**AGENDA:**

City staff has identified locations where approximately 350 additional short-term parking meters can be installed in the core of the Central Business District without causing safety problems or significant traffic flow disruption. The Downtown Parking Committee and the Traffic Safety Committee have reviewed the proposed additional meters, and both recommend approval.

MARCH 22, 1999

**SUBJECT:**

PROPOSED ADDITIONAL  
PARKING METERS-  
CENTRAL BUSINESS  
DISTRICT

**FISCAL IMPACT -**

**TYPE:**

The estimated annual revenue from the recommended new meters, with a new rate of \$.75 per hour, is \$250,000. The estimated cost for purchase of the new meters and posts is \$80,000.

RESOLUTION  
ORDINANCE

**RECEIVE/FILE**

**RECOMMENDATION -**

**SUBMITTED BY:**

**Receive, file, and refer to Legal Department for preparation of proper legislation.**

FLOYD BENTZ, P.E.  
ACTING CITY ENGINEER

**BACKGROUND -**

Several events have occurred over the past several years that have significantly reduced the amount of available short-term parking in the central core of the downtown area. The 600-space Keck City Center Garage, located at 5th and Locust, was originally constructed to provide public parking, both all-day and short-term. However, this parking facility was sold several years ago to Principal Financial Group, who operates it for employee parking only.

The 276-space, City-owned 7th & Mulberry Garage,

constructed in 1951, has just recently been demolished due to its poor condition. The monthly parkers in this facility were moved to the 8th & Mulberry Garage, and due to exiting difficulties from this garage, it was converted to all monthly parking. In addition, a major downtown employer has contracted for 300 monthly spaces in the Locust Center Garage, which has further reduced the capacity of that facility to accommodate daily, short-term parkers.

The combination of these events has greatly reduced the availability of daily "transient" parking spaces, especially for short-term parking. The City has created a procedure to allow some validation parking at 8th & Mulberry, and has created 20 short-term parking meters in the 8th & Mulberry surface lot. However, there remains a significant shortage of short-term parking in the downtown area, especially the core area.

Staff has identified a number of locations where parking meters have not been installed on the street. Many of these locations are adjacent to major buildings, where parking meters were not installed next to the new building after it was constructed due to aesthetic reasons. There are other locations where traffic flow or other considerations caused meters to not be installed previously, but those conditions have now changed. Finally, there are other areas where safety, traffic flow, and business loading needs require that parking continue to be prohibited.

The attached table shows the proposed street locations where a total of about 350 new parking meters could be installed, without causing safety problems or significant traffic flow disruption. These locations are identified as priority one, two, or three, depending on their location relative to the area of most critical parking shortage. As noted in the table, many of the locations will require loading zones to provide for adjacent business needs and retaining certain parking restrictions to minimize traffic flow disruptions. These parking restrictions will include sections of No Parking Any Time for turn lanes and peak period (7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. and/or 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday) restrictions for safety and capacity needs.

At their March 5, 1999 meeting, the Downtown Parking

Committee reviewed the proposed new meter locations and recommended approval of the additional meters. Because these new meters would be additional parking spaces in a very high-demand area, the Committee also recommended an increase in the hourly rate for these new meters from \$.40 per hour to \$.75 per hour. It is recommended that this rate increase be phased in, with new electronic meters being installed to be set at this rate, and the existing meters remaining at \$.40 per hour until they are replaced with new electronic meters in the future. The Operating Budget for parking meters currently allows for replacement of approximately 200 meters per year, so it would take five to six years to complete replacement of all the meters in meter district one, where the new rate is recommended.

This higher rate will help to create additional turnover to make spaces available for short-term parking, and will also generate a significant amount of additional revenue to offset the cost of the additional meters and help finance future overall parking system needs. The estimated annual revenue from these additional meters is \$250,000.

The estimated cost of these new meters, including posts and installation, is \$80,000. Twenty-two of these meters have previously been installed on 2nd Avenue adjacent to the Civic Center and Library. An additional 50 meters can be installed using existing mechanical meters, with the existing \$.40 per hour rate. An additional 125 meters can be installed using existing housings and coin vaults, but new electronic meters and posts will be purchased, with a unit cost of \$200. The remaining meters (approximately 150) will require purchasing new electronic meters, housings, coin vaults, and posts, with a unit cost of \$350. These new posts and meters will be installed by City meter shop personnel. By comparison, the average cost for a parking space in a parking structure is \$10,000. To provide 350 new parking spaces in a new structure would cost \$3.5 million plus land costs.

At their March 16, 1999 meeting, the Traffic Safety Committee concurred with staff recommendations for the proposed new short-term parking meter locations.

Staff has also prepared the preliminary ordinance changes that would be needed to implement the additional meters,

with appropriate loading zones and parking restrictions. Because these changes are quite lengthy, they are on file with the City Clerk and not a part of this Council Communication.

Attachment

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