



Charter, Code and Policies

City of Portland

GENERAL INFORMATION: 503-823-4000 EMAIL: cityinfo@portlandoregon.gov
More Contact Info (<http://www.portlandoregon.gov/citycode/article/15472>)

TRN-3.102 - Parking Meter District Policy

[edit content](#)

PARKING METER DISTRICT POLICY

Binding City Policy

BCP-TRN-3.102

PURPOSE

WHEREAS, the Portland Office of Transportation (PDOT) proposed an increase in parking meter rates as part of the budget process for the 1995-96 Fiscal Year; and

WHEREAS, PDOT held a series of discussion with interested parties in early 1995; and

WHEREAS, it was recognized that the city did not have clear policies and procedures for considering changes in meter rates and allocating meter resources. In addition, the City lacked clear policy and procedures for establishing new meter districts; and

WHEREAS, during budget deliberations the Council directed PDOT to develop clear policies and procedures regarding parking meter districts, rates and revenue allocation and to bring a policy back to Council for consideration; and

WHEREAS, the Parking Meter District Policy Steering Committee was formed and began work on the policy in May 1995. The Committee consisted of representatives of downtown business and community interests as well as representatives from other commercial districts and neighborhoods within the City; and

WHEREAS, in September 1995, the Committee produced a public review draft of the policy which was mailed to an extensive list of interested organizations and individuals; and

WHEREAS, the Committee made final changes to the policy in response to input from the public review process and approved forwarding the policy to the City Council for final consideration.

POLICY

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Portland, a municipal corporation of the State of Oregon , that the Parking Meter District Policy is hereby adopted.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Council directs the Portland Office of Transportation to abide by this policy in matters concerning parking meter districts and rates in managing the on-street parking system within the City.

HISTORY

Resolution No. 35486 adopted by City Council January 24, 1996.
Filed for inclusion in PPD December 5, 2003.

(Re-indexed by City Auditor September 2005 - formerly indexed as BCP-TRN-3.28)

CITY OF PORTLAND

PARKING METER DISTRICT POLICY

January 1996

Introduction

This policy is intended to give City Council direction and guidance to the Portland Office of Transportation on the management of the on-street parking system in commercial districts of the City. This policy addresses parking meter rates, fines and parking enforcement in existing meter districts, the formation of new parking meter districts, and the allocation of revenues derived from parking meter systems.

Policy direction for the management of the on-street parking system is provided in existing policy documents such as the Downtown Parking and Circulation Policy, the Downtown Parking Management Plan and in the recently adopted Central City Transportation Management Plan (CCTMP). Parking management is integral to the management of the overall transportation system and is a key tool used by the City to achieve broader transportation policy objectives.

The CCTMP focuses on a number of goals that have specific application to this policy: improving air quality, increasing the use of transit, biking, walking, and carpooling as alternatives to single-occupant vehicles; improving access and circulation with consideration of all transportation modes; preserving pedestrian and urban design elements; minimizing parking demand without impacting development; minimizing and mitigating the effects of high-density development on adjacent neighborhoods. The central theme of the CCTMP is "Assuring Livability with Growth" which articulates the need to create a balanced package of strategies to achieve transportation and development goals. These strategies are interrelated and each element depends on the others for successful results.

In response to these broader goals, the on-street parking system in commercial districts is managed to support the economic vitality of the district by encouraging parking turnover, improving circulation, encouraging use of off-street parking, maintaining air quality, and promoting the use of alternative modes by managing the supply and price of on-street commuter parking. In managing the on-street parking system priority is given to short-term parking, followed by carpools and the remaining supply is managed for long-term use. Minimizing impacts on surrounding neighborhoods to protect neighborhood livability is a key objective of the City's on-street parking management policies.

Parking meters are used in dense commercial districts of the City to better manage the on-street parking system to meet the customer parking needs of adjacent businesses. The primary purpose for installing parking meters in a district is to improve the functioning of the parking and transportation systems. On-street parking in less dense commercial districts is managed with signage which limits the time a vehicle can park. It is difficult to effectively enforce these time limits due to the amount of staff time required to document violations. Parking meters are a more efficient and effective technique for achieving turnover of parking spaces, and are, therefore, the preferred techniques for managing on-street technique for managing on-street parking in dense commercial areas.

Changes in meter district rates and operations, and the installation of new parking meter systems, are sensitive issues for commercial districts and nearby neighborhoods. Therefore, it is critically important that the City establish clear policies and procedures to govern how meter systems are managed and to ensure that area business, residential and community interests are fully involved in the process to establish new meter districts or change meter rates in existing meter districts.

This policy on parking meter districts builds on existing City transportation, environmental, economic development and community livability policies and establishes clear management objectives to guide the management and operations of parking meter districts. The policy also contains detailed evaluation factors which will be used in analyzing meter district operations and in making recommendations on changes to meter rates, enforcement practices and operating conditions. The policy also establishes a parallel set of objectives and evaluation factors for new parking meter districts.

A public involvement process to be used by the City on matters relating to parking meter districts is being established in this policy. The intent of this section of the policy is to ensure that all affected and interested parties have a full opportunity to provide input and evaluate options for achieving the policy and management objectives established for parking meter districts. A process flow chart is attached which outlines how the process is intended to work.

The final element of the policy provides guidelines for the allocation of revenue generated by parking meters and addresses issues such as funding priorities and the distribution of resources between district and citywide transportation services. Managing the on-street parking system with meters results in a significant source of revenue for the transportation system. This ability to produce revenue is a secondary consideration and should not conflict with the primary purpose for having parking meters, i.e., to support the economic vitality of the district.

Notwithstanding, the City may initiate consideration of a meter rate increase primarily for revenue raising purposes. In doing so, the City will adhere to the process established in this policy and evaluate the proposed rate increase in accordance with the meter district objectives and evaluation factors of the policy. Particularly in this situation, careful consideration of the impacts meter rates have on commercial districts must be integral to the rate setting process to ensure a proper balance is struck between revenue generation and supporting the economic health of commercial districts.

Parking Management and Meter Rate setting For Existing Meter Districts

Parking meter system operations need to be reviewed periodically to ensure that the transportation and parking objectives are being met. In order to carry out this review, each budget cycle the Portland Office of Transportation (PDOT) shall organize an advisory committee with representation from recognized business associations and neighborhood associations, key business, residential and community interests in the meter district, a representative from PDOT's citizen advisory committee and a representative from the Office of Finance and Administration.

The purpose of this committee is to advise the City Council on the application of meter district policies and objectives using the evaluation factors established in this policy. As part of this periodic assessment, other options for achieving the objectives such as changing meter time limits, adjusting the hours of enforcement, or changing fines for parking violations should be considered, in addition to considering a meter rate change.

Parking meter districts are to be managed in accordance with the following objectives.

- A. Support the economic vitality of the district. Decisions on meters and meter rates should not result in economic harm to the district.
- B. Achieve the transportation and parking management goals established for the meter district. In meeting this objective, consider options such as improving enforcement practices, changing fines for violations, changing days and hours of enforcement, in addition to adjusting meter rates.
- C. Encourage and promote use of transit service, carpools, bicycle and pedestrian modes as alternatives to auto use for trips into and within the district.
- D. Ensure the on-going maintenance and operating costs of the meter system are funded.
- E. Allocate meter system revenue fairly and in accordance with the Revenue Allocation section of this policy.

The following evaluation factors are to be considered when evaluating whether an increase in meter rates for existing meter districts is appropriate. It is recognized that many of the factors to be considered can not be objectively or statistically measured. Deliberations on parking meter system changes will involve some level of subjective judgment supported, to a reasonable extent, by data gathered on the evaluation factors.

Evaluation Factors for Existing Meter Districts

Transportation System Factors

1. Parking space turnover trends and statistics.
2. On-street and off-street parking space capacity and occupancy.
3. Traffic congestion and circulation; traffic safety.
4. Parking violation trends and fine levels.
5. Existing and potential transit service use; pedestrian and bicycle amenities and access; carpool availability and use; commuter parking impacts.

6. Impacts on surrounding areas.

Economic Factors

1. Trends in off-street parking rates for private and public (City-owned) short-term facilities.
2. Policy relationship to City garage parking rates.
3. Cost of other modes of travel (e.g. transit).
4. District economic conditions and expected impacts from meter rates/fines/enforcement changes.
5. Results of any surveys or focus group activities.
6. Rate comparisons to other comparable cities and Service Efforts and Accomplishments Report cities.
7. Potential economic benefits to the district from improved parking and transportation management strategies.

Financial Factors

1. Costs to operate meter district and pay for meter system capital equipment.
2. Costs to mitigate parking impacts on surrounding areas.
3. Costs of unmet district and citywide transportation needs; coordinate with citywide and multi-district transportation needs.

Parking Management and Meter Rate Setting for New Parking Meter Districts

As commercial districts outside the downtown grow and develop, parking and traffic congestion issues will likely emerge and may become acute. These problems have an impact on the economic vitality and livability of the area and will give rise to consideration of alternative measures to manage on-street parking such as parking meters. Effective parking management strategies can also reinforce efforts to encourage no-auto modes of travel. To remedy auto related problems and create balanced transportation systems in commercial districts, a comprehensive and effective transportation management plan, with a specific parking management component, will be needed.

Efficient management of the on-street parking system to meet the growing demand for short-term parking in the district becomes a priority. This need for dependable turnover of parking spaces gives rise to consideration of parking meters. In general, parking meters are the most effective way to ensure turnover to meet short-term demand. Enforcement of meter time limits is efficient and effective and the public is responsive to the time restrictions on meters. The on-street commuter parking supply can be strategically managed using supply and pricing to encourage alternative modes.

In developing district transportation and parking management plans, the evaluation of parking meters and other parking control devices is to be conducted in accordance with the transportation, economic development and neighborhood preservation objectives identified in this policy. In addition, other strategies such as permit parking systems, shared use arrangements for existing parking facilities, and new parking facility development may be considered.

In developing transportation and parking management plans for commercial districts, PDOT shall organize an advisory committee with representation from recognized business associations and neighborhood, key business, residential and community interests in the districts, a representative from PDOT's citizen advisory committee, and a representative from the Office of Finance and Administration.

In meeting this public participation mandate, the committee shall be involved in all phases of the evaluation process and in the development of parking and transportation strategies to resolve district issues and ensure the continued economic health of the district. This advisory process shall be in addition to the City Code provisions concerning the establishment of parking meter districts.

In commercial districts where parking meters are being considered, the following objectives and evaluation factors are to guide that process.

Objectives

- A. Support the economic vitality of the district. The deployment of parking meters and other parking control devices should not result in economic harm to the district.
- B. Minimize parking impacts on adjacent areas; develop plans to prevent impacts and institute measures to mitigate impacts that occur.
- C. Encourage and promote the use of transit service, carpools, bicycle and pedestrian modes as alternatives to auto use for trips into and within the district.
- D. Cover the on-going maintenance and operating costs of the meter system with district meter revenue to the extent possible, recognizing that some start-up costs may need to be covered by other sources.
- E. Allocate meter system revenue fairly between the district and citywide or multi-district transportation services and in accordance with the Revenue Allocation section of this policy.

Evaluation Factors

Transportation System Factors

1. Parking space turnover trends, statistics and complaint levels.
2. Parking meter placement.
3. On-street and off-street parking space occupancy levels.
4. Effectiveness and cost of on-street signage system.
5. Traffic congestion and circulation; traffic safety.
6. Existing and potential transit service use; pedestrian and bicycle amenities and access; carpool availability and use; commuter parking impacts.
7. Impacts on surrounding areas.

Economic Factors

1. Off-street short-term parking rates in the area.
2. District economic conditions and expected impacts from meter rates.
3. Results of any surveys or focus group activities.
4. Rate comparisons to other comparable cities and Service Efforts and Accomplishments Report cities.
5. Potential economic benefits to district from improved parking and transportation management strategies.

Financial Factors

1. Ensure that meter system operating costs and costs to finance capital equipment are covered.
2. Consider costs to mitigate parking impacts on surrounding areas.
3. Consider unmet district and citywide transportation needs; coordinate with citywide and multi-district transportation needs.

Revenue Allocation Policy

This revenue allocation policy will apply to all new meter districts and to all rate changes in existing districts that occur following passage of this policy. The intent of this section of the policy is to provide general guidelines on how meter system revenues are to be allocated by the City to support transportation and parking services.

Parking meter revenues are pledged as a back-up source of funds to insure that bond payment obligations are met for the revenue bonds issued to finance the system of City-owned parking facilities. This potential call on parking meter funds takes priority over all other uses except for the costs associated with collecting the meter funds. Although this potential use of meter funds is unlikely, the potential obligation needs to be acknowledged.

Specific allocation of new meter revenues will occur as part of the City's budget process. The allocation of additional revenue generated by a rate change in existing parking meter districts, will be discussed as part of the periodic assessment of meter district operations established earlier in this policy. The advisory committee formed as part of the periodic review process will be involved in these revenue allocation discussions. A recommended resource allocation plan shall be reported to the City Council by PDOT as part of the budget process.

The advisory committee established by this policy for new parking meter districts shall consider this revenue allocation policy as part of the deliberations on forming a new parking meter district. A recommended resource allocation plan shall be reported to the City Council by PDOT as part of the budget process.

The first priority for meter district revenues is to pay the capital and operating costs of the meter system. Capital costs of meter systems include the cost of parking meters, ancillary equipment and all cost associated with the installation of the meters. Capital costs also include the costs to upgrade or replace meters and ancillary equipment as their useful life expires. This capital equipment can be financed in accordance with the City's financial and debt management policies or may be financed within the Transportation Operating Fund through an internal loan.

Operating costs include all direct costs to operate, manage, maintain and enforce the system, plus appropriate overhead costs of PDOT and the City's General Fund. Operating costs also include initial costs to mitigate parking impacts on adjacent neighborhoods that result from having parking meters in the adjoining commercial district.

Revenues remaining after capital and operating costs are covered may be allocated to support transportation services within the meter district and citywide. A policy of fairly allocating revenues between the district and for citywide transportation services shall be maintained. As a general rule, the majority of net revenues should go to supporting transportation and parking services and programs within the meter district.

It is recognized that new meter districts may warrant a larger share of meter revenues to cover startup and transition costs, and that over time, the share to the district may diminish and the share for citywide transportation services may increase.

Revenues remaining after capital and operating costs are covered may be allocated to support district transportation and parking services including:

- A. Improvement in adjacent neighborhoods to offset the direct impacts of the meter district on the adjacent areas.
- B. Public education programs designed to improve the district by promoting no-auto modes of travel (transit, carpool, bike and walk), easing traffic and parking congestion, and promoting the benefits of nearby access to goods and services for area residents.
- C. Improvement to the pedestrian environment such street trees, park benches, and sidewalk treatments to enhance pedestrian circulation and safety within the district.
- D. Maintaining and improving the right-of-way within the meter district (signals, signs, pavement markings, street cleaning, pedestrian and bike facilities, trash receptacles).

E. Developing short-term off-street parking facilities to support economic activity in the district; promoting transit service and facilities; supporting alternatives to standard transit service to meet the specific transportation needs of the district.

F. Implement programs which reduce the demand for parking, improve economic vitality of the district and result in a balanced transportation and parking management system.

Meter system revenues which are not spent on district services are to be applied to citywide and multi-district service costs and shall be allocated within PDOT's budget through the City's budget process.

Definitions

Business Association – A group of business representatives officially recognized by the City's Office of Neighborhood Associations and organized for the purpose of considering and acting upon a broad range of issues affecting the economic health and livability of their commercial district.

Neighborhood Association – A group of people organized for the purpose of considering and acting upon any of a broad range of issues affecting the livability and quality of their neighborhood and officially recognized by the City's Office of Neighborhood Association.

Parking Meter District – An area of the City with specific boundaries which has parking meters in some of all areas where on-street parking is provided.

Short-term-parking – Parking having a duration not exceeding four hours.

PARKING METER POLICY PROCESS FLOW CHART (PDF document, 21kb)
