

PUBLIC COMMENTS – Downtown Parking Plan

Subject: A fair practical parking plan for downtown

A fair practical parking plan for downtown

Any arbitrary regulation by government is seen as unfair. Clear criteria are needed.

Any plan seen as arbitrary meter placement will not only appear unfair but may be perceived as lacking the planning required to work well. Can there be clear criteria that are reason and data based so that it can be perceived as fair and also work to fulfill the aims of the parking plan? I think there has been an attempt at that but it has not been made clear enough to those affected.

Whether stated or not the parking plans considered so far have been based on usage of the area where meters are planned to be placed. Areas with the least (at least perceived) traffic have been considered for longer metered parking. Those areas with more traffic (at least perceived) have been considered for shorter term meters or two hour free parking with forced car movement after that period.

I would think the information collected as to how much parking usage there is on a street is not simply a guess. If there is hard data to work with or rational estimates than a definite criteria for the meter placement can be stated and will not appear or be unfair to any particular street or business.

For any criteria the intent has to be clear. To restate what I understand the intent is, is to raise money for more parking while providing more turnover of parking for high traffic areas.

One of the larger problems with the free parking has been people that work downtown taking parking spaces by parking on the street and moving their car every two hours. With two hour meters that is made easier because they only have to feed the meter rather than moving their car. Meters would greatly intensify that problem.

The criteria for meters or free parking space relates to required usage and turnover. If an area gets just a few cars/customers a day there is no need to place two hour meters to assure high parking turnover. If an area is getting a large volume of traffic ten hour meters would clearly not be the solution.

Here are possible clear criteria. This would be based on the needed usage or estimated needed usage of a parking space. The number of turnovers of the space is just for example.

20 different cars parking per day: Limited to two hour parking with car movement "required". (non-metered parking)

10 different cars parking per day: Two hour meters

5 different cars parking per day: Four hour meters

1-0 different cars parking per day: Ten hour meters

If the spaces in front of a business are not being used then it would be foolish and unfair to treat them the same as high volume use areas. And if the spaces are being used a lot then it would be foolish and unfair to treat them as low volume use. If

spaces are not being used then a business owner can not claim unfair treatment by metering. If a space is being used a lot then a business owner needs the parking turnover.

What is needed are 'clear criteria' with 'clear aims' based on reliable data so that both practicality and fairness are 'clear'.

Further notes:

I suspect 6th and 7th. Street between Saint Joseph and Kansas City would be the same usage as Saint Joseph and Main.

The greatest, least expensive impact on downtown parking would be practical well visible signs showing that there is free parking in the ramp and some parking lots on weekends and nights. During those periods it is common to see the lots and ramp nearly empty with almost no parking available on the streets. A banner on the 5th. Street side of the ramp and signs on main street and 6th. Street would "drastically" change the number of on street parking spaces available during those periods. That is one step which would offend no one and make a "real" difference now. Is there something stopping that? Do we have simply common sense efficiency?

Parking conditions will be accepted by the public if it is perceived there is a choice. If I can walk a little to save some money or pay for parking rather than move my car every two hours I get a choice.

The parking plan has to balance the components of raising revenue, correcting the parking problems while not affecting the customer base. It is the tendency to disregard other components after a revenue source has been established. It needs to be clear that revenue from parking is to correct parking availability and flow (including new ramps) and not used when it does not fulfill that purpose.

James Taylor

cc: City council members and selected downtown business owners

Subject: No to parking meters

I want to let you know that I count myself among those opposed to the installation of any new parking meters in the downtown core. I have met and spoken with dozens of other downtown business owners who agree that the installation of meters anywhere between 5th and 8th street, and between Rapid Street and Kansas City Street, will not solve any current parking issues, and will in fact create problems we don't have now.

Namely; those business owners, employees and residents of downtown Rapid City, who currently choose to park on downtown streets during business hours will be further empowered to do so by the installation of these meters. How much easier it will be to just put money into the meter than to have to move their vehicle every two hours!

We have alternative suggestions, such as a graduated fines for repeated abuses and changes to some of the meters which already exist from 2 hours to 4 hours.

As you know, I have been actively involved with the RCDA, Mayor Shaw's task force, Bill O'Krepkie's parking committee, the CVB, DRC, and other groups for a long time. But I must say, I have never once seen any of these groups poll downtown business owners concerning this issue. Yes, there have been emails about meetings (which always take place during business hours), but how much effort would it have taken to simply survey the downtown to see how much support was out there in the business community?

I expect you will be hearing from many others who agree with me. I hope we can kill this proposal before it is too late.

Thanks for your time.

Chris Johnson
The Clock Shop

Subject: Proposed parking meters - 3.9.09

Dear Council Members:

I'm writing on behalf of Creative Art & Frame, Black Hills Jewelers Supply and Black Hills Prospecting in regards to the proposed parking meters for downtown Rapid City. As a downtown property owner and retail merchant I am concerned about the parking plan as amended and passed by you. Please call me at 343-5678, evenings at 787-6223. You may also email me at: creativeart717@aol.com.

Thank you,

Ken Kingsbury
3/9/09



A Member-Owned, Not-For-Profit Cooperative

PO Box 1420, Rapid City, SD 57709-1420

March 9, 2009

Mayor Alan Hanks
Members of the Rapid City Council
300 Sixth Street
Rapid City SD, 57701

RE: Downtown Public Parking Plan

Dear Mayor Alan Hanks and Members of the Rapid City Council:

I am writing to express our opinion regarding the Downtown Public Parking Plan. Black Hills Federal Credit Union is in disagreement with the Downtown Public Parking Plan as presented at the special Council meeting held on February 26, 2009. As business members and property owners in the Downtown area, we have invested a great deal of resources securing parking for our members and staff. As our properties are just outside of the Central Business District (CBD), we are required by City code to purchase, maintain, and pay taxes on additional properties to meet the City's parking requirements. We were disappointed to see that the plan in its proposed form would place parking meters all around our Downtown properties, but not impose the same burden on the CBD businesses. We also anticipate the change in the downtown parking fee structure will cause us an additional burden in the policing of our parking lots for unauthorized vehicles of those who will try to avoid paying for their parking.

As stated in the 1991 Parking Plan, the most valuable parking should have the highest parking fee. The Parking Plan, as originally proposed would, in effect, have the lowest parking fee in this highest value area. The addition of parking meters in the CBD, as the amendment was proposed and approved by the Council on February 26, 2009, would value these parking spaces equally as they do the other two and four hour parking zones. While this is more logical than no parking meters, this would not resolve the parking issues created by the downtown employees. There must be a monetary incentive, and mandate, for them to park elsewhere. As unpopular as it may be, the proposed parking rates in the CBD do not support the findings of the 1991 parking study, which correctly places the highest value on these spaces. The spaces in the CBD which are the highest value should command the highest parking fee.

We understand these businesses have a vested interest in the parking and the value of their properties, as does Black Hills Federal Credit Union with regards to our properties. The Department of Equalization assesses all properties with access to Main Street and Saint Joe Street with the same per square foot value for tax assessment purposes.

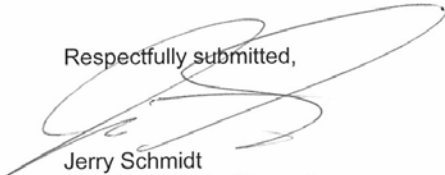
Mayor Alan Hanks
Members of the Rapid City Council
City of Rapid City
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However, those in the CBD do not need to meet the parking requirements that properties outside the CBD must meet. In essence, those businesses and organizations just outside the CBD that are already providing, at their expense, off-street parking are already paying for the parking and further subsidizing parking for the properties in the CBD. The plan to install parking meters, as proposed by the Downtown Association, would add another level of expense to all properties just outside the CBD. We feel it is only fair that this expense should also be shared by the CBD, as the addition of a parking structure will mainly benefit the CBD. To reiterate the above, those of us outside the CBD are required, at our expense, to provide parking for our customers and staff.

The Rapid City Downtown Association had a great deal of input into the development of the Parking Plan and met with many of the downtown businesses and "stakeholders," but how many of those entities that are not in the CBD were asked for their opinion? Some members of the Council supported the plan as proposed since it was "developed by the stakeholders." Black Hills Federal Credit Union owns nine properties, encompassing 40 Downtown Lots, and was never contacted or asked to provide any input during the development of the Parking Plan.

We understand the need for long term parking solutions and agree that the most likely solution is the construction of parking structures. This will require funding, and if the Council determines parking meters are the best funding source, the most equitable solution is to place parking meters throughout the entire downtown area. We request your consideration in not placing an unfair, additional burden on those just outside the CBD by only installing metered parking in areas outside the CBD. We have too, for decades, financially supported Rapid City and the Downtown area.

Respectfully submitted,



Jerry Schmidt
Vice President of Operations
Black Hills Federal Credit Union
jerrys@bhfcu.net
605-718-6130

Subject: Parking meters - It made sense Until I Thought About It

Black Hills Frame Shop

518 7th Street

Address Line 2

Rapid City, SD 57701

USA

Phone 355-9730

Email ronbunnell@rap.midco.net

Dear Council Members:

It's 4:00 in the morning. I just can not sleep because of what appears to be a knee-jerk approach to putting meters into downtown Rapid City.

I own Black Hills Frame Shop and West River Gallery located half way between Main Street and St. Joseph Streets on 7th Street. 518 7th Street to be exact. I moved the business there in February of 2001 and have stuck it out even after September 11, 2001 when most similar businesses quit or left downtown.

Parking there has always been abused by employees and business owners. Even when there was only a handful of businesses on this block, parking was often completely taken. It was because of abuse - not customer traffic.

Some time ago, I was called upon to be among those on the original parking review group formed by Bill Okrepkie and others several years ago. Included with the other types of parkers such as shoppers from out of town , local customers, clients, downtown dwellers, visitors, delivery people, business employees, business owners, sales people, etc. we had a number of blatant parking abusers - those who cared nothing about the fore going list, but only about themselves. These abusers would drive to their downtown office, shop or store and be there until hell freezes over if it meets there needs. They have no regard for anything other than their own private interests. They have absolutely no concept of customer parking and don't care one iota.

On 7th Street between Main and St. Joseph, there are 26 parking spaces. If you walked to each business establishment in this little area, there are more than 34 businesses. Several of them have more constituents of their business than there are parking spaces at any given time.

Many of these establishments have people who would gladly feed meters so they can park out front without any regard to anything else that is going on in downtown.

To illustrate the customer's side of this problem, I had a customer call me yesterday - Monday, March 9th. He said that he had been downtown last Thursday and Friday but after driving around the block several times, there was "no place to park" - so left. He said that he returned on Saturday, but I was closed. I explained that I was only open from 9AM until 1PM on Saturdays, otherwise, I was there all of the time. Here he was calling me Monday to see if I was there and if there was going to be a place to park.

Now how stupid is that? We all know that there is plenty of parking but people coming downtown expect to park in front of the stores that they are visiting. That's their stupid expectation. Most of them won't walk a half block or around the corner. (Note: the notable exception is that people from out of town are more likely to park somewhere nearby and walk to see me unless they get accosted by pan handlers along the way).

If these few precious parking places in front of our stores are filled all day, downtown will certainly fail. Those abusive perpetrators won't even know what they have done.

Reflecting back to those initial meetings with Bill Okrepkie and others, we ruled out meters in downtown precisely because of these reasons. They are simply not the solution!

Thank you - I must now get back to the business of serving customers and trying to provide more sales tax to the city and the state. We all need your help during these times, so please do the right thing and NOT INSTALL a bunch of parking meters downtown. We have all worked far too hard to see it evaporate with this knee-jerk response to our problem.

If there is ever anything that I can do for you, I can be reached at ronbunnell@rap.midco.net or call me at 355-9730.

Ron Bunnell

Black Hills Frame Shop

West River Gallery

P.S. I park in the downtown parking garage and walk several blocks to/from my business everyday that I don't ride a bicycle to/from work. Thank you for getting this completed, but it remains very under utilized. It seems that no one wants to walk around the corner and down the street. They just want to park as close as close as they can to their destination and any other consideration goes completely out of their consciousness. Maybe we all need an introductory parking package to the garage including a warm jacket, gloves and some walking shoes.

Subject: Parking Meters

I am writing to ask you to reconsider putting in parking meters in downtown. I own a business downtown and am opposed to the meters. The main reason is once you put in parking meters, there will never be parking spaces open for customers. I see on a daily basis my customers trying to find a parking space and they let me know how frustrating it is to drive around the block 3 times before a space opens up or they have to park one to two blocks away. But once you put in the parking meters, what will stop the employees of other downtown businesses from parking in the same spot all day long. I see people shuffle their cars around daily. Just look at the streets on a bad weather day -- most of the cars out there belong to owners or employees of businesses.

The City may simply look at this and say that you don't care who is parking there all day because it is revenue, but it *does* matter to me. It means that customers will not find parking spaces near our stores. And when you are frustrated in not being able to find parking, why bother shopping downtown. After all, if you drive to the mall, you don't have to pay for parking. And unless it's Christmas time, you don't have to keep circling to find a parking space.

I ask you again to please reconsider putting parking meters in downtown. I do realize there is no easy answer, but I don't think meters are the right answer.

I do have a suggestion and that would be to make the ramp and future ramps ones that are not only monthly rental, but pay by hourly or daily. Maybe more people would be willing to use the ramps. It seems to work for Deadwood.

Jeanette Howe

Affordable Elegance, Inc.

607 Main Street

Rapid City, SD 57701

605-342-9838

Subject: Downtown Parking

Good Morning to all of you:

The City Mayor , Council members, and several community and business leaders have been working hard on coming up with a parking plan that satisfies the business community downtown. All parties are trying to be fair and practical to ensure that the plan is enforceable, feasible, profitable and good in revitalizing downtown.

Downtown will grow and thrive if we continue to work for the good of all instead of the few who speak their minds. The plan should represent the community regardless of how vocal its segments are.

I suggest the following:

1- Parking Meters: The meters should be entirely installed or removed from all parts of the central business district. This matter should be applied uniformly to all within the downtown business district. Installing meters that give one hour complimentary parking may help the downtown businesses and generate the revenue needed to expand the parking facilities. Removing the meters and placing limits of 1,2, or 4 hour parking should be applied uniformly to the businesses of downtown. If the revenue generated from the meters is an issue, apply a parking fee and include it in the taxes to all the real state in downtown. The businesses should be grateful that the City is providing the parking and maintaining it for the businesses including mine. Such tax should be based on the square foot of the business and should be applied uniformly. This tax should be placed in a special fund to construct a public parking ramp that is not leased to the businesses but is used by the customers of the businesses that are paying the tax.

2- The existing parking ramp: This facility is built by the public for use by the public. Businesses lease parking spaces at the facility. Majority of the public do not know that the facility is open for public use after 5:00pm and during weekends. The City should place signs on the facility to inform the public that the facility is free from 5:00pm to 2:00am and it is free during weekends.

Whatever we do downtown should be done uniformly and we should stand united and equal to make sure that we will thrive as a downtown and as a community. I hope these small comments can be of help to you in making you decision on the parking issue.

Thank you for your time,
Sincerely,
Hani Shafai

Date: Monday, March 02, 2009 3:52 PM
Subject: Parking

Greetings from Downtown,

The amendment to add meters in the core area will probably generate a crowd at the March 11 L&F and the next Council Meeting. Please be clear that Destination Rapid City represents members on both sides of this issue. Our position is your position. Our job is to make downtown vibrant and a redeveloped downtown...with meters in the core, or without. My comments below, come as a member of the parking review committee on elements of the ordinance.

With that in mind I would offer some comments on the proposed parking ordinance. I would like to see parking **tokens** added to the “coins and cards” payment. The reason is that business improvement districts help make parking acceptance faster and easier if we can give away or discount tokens to downtown businesses to give to their customers. Almost all improvement districts do this. It is **parking friendly** and Downtown Improvement District friendly to use tokens. It is usually a one or two year program in BIDs to have tokens available.

The meters in the core will be two hour meters. It should be **acceptable for a visitor to feed the meter**. In the public comments, both businesses and visitors asked for 3 or 4 hour parking in the core to have time for a meeting, attend a movie, or have a shopping and dining time beyond just a 2 hour park. I also believe the cost of enforcement is not worth the reward. My input to the process was that enforcement should be efficient but not more expensive—hence the scooters which make checking the meters for expiration more efficient versus marking tires. I would also point out that feeding the meter is not prohibited in other 2 hour meter locations in the parking district—sort of a fair-is-fair play on the same reasoning that meters are in the core. People will seek the 4 hour meters if the cost is a factor. Also, allowing the meters to be fed means more money for the ultimate purpose---ramps.

With the “unmetered” portion of the ordinance negated by the amendment, **all expired time fines will be \$5 including in the core**? No graduated fines? The graduated fines are an unfriendly part of the parking plan—too many out of town visitors (and locals) will not appreciate the \$20 fine.

In Sioux Falls, a highly regarded parking plan element is the **one time “free courtesy ticket” to out-of-county plates**. This was mentioned several times at the hearings and in committee meetings. I wish to recommend we leave that in or put it in as parking friendly element of our parking plan.

Finally, the Parking Manager and the formation of a long term parking committee are recommended actions for the City to take to further enhance parking management. These recommendations were not intended to be included in the ordinance. My observation of the comments on these two recommendations were that under the long range parking solutions committee the City could evaluate the best proposal to accomplish short and

long term goals for parking. Both of these actions are classified as urgent based on committee discussion and comments I heard from council persons.

Thank you for the effort you are making to get this plan done. We are almost there. For those of us that who have toiled in this arena for 20 years plus, we see a light at the end of the tunnel. It is the light of the new era, and in no way of any other outcome. Please contact me with any questions you may have.

John Brewer
Chair, Citizens Review Committee
716-7979 office

Rapid City Council Members:

March 16, 2009 **MAILED 3/16/2009**

Re: New Information

Good Morning:

This morning I was asked to present the power point for the parking plan that was given to Legal and Finance and at the council meeting to the downtown folks. A group of 32 attended the presentation at the Elks Theatre. Although it was intended to be an information presentation there was some venting and some politicking for individual agendas.

Included with this memo is a newspaper account from 1978 regarding parking district action that included property owners that were assessed \$1000/year for 10 years to pay for off street parking so that meters could be removed. You can read the article for other information on the action.

This information was not made known in any written or verbal comments during the public meetings on the parking plan. The 1978 ordinance was not listed in the committee review process in the power point because it was not brought to our attention.

The article and the city action in 1978 will most assuredly be brought out in subsequent hearings on the parking plan. I provided Monica Heller a copy of the article and suggested that council minutes for this action should be researched. I advised her that I would send this to the council members for your information purposes.

John Brewer