

Downtown Parking Pay Stations

Frequently Asked Questions

The City, working with the Downtown Ventura Organization, is getting ready to make some big changes to parking in Downtown. Why are we doing this? What were we trying to accomplish? How will the parking meters work? Learn the answers to these questions and more below...

The Plan

Upcoming parking changes are part of a large and comprehensive plan for the Downtown called the Downtown Specific Plan. The parking management portion of the plan was based on community input, best practices, and the latest cutting-edge parking research. This plan recommends moving to a market based parking management program. A copy of the Downtown Specific Plan and Downtown Parking Management Plan are available for download at http://www.cityofventura.net/community_development/planning/planning_communities/downtown

Q: Why is the City changing parking in Downtown?

A: The Downtown has changed a lot over the past several years. Since 1995 there have been major changes to the sidewalks, a cinema was added, we have many new restaurants, and dozens of special events are bringing more people downtown. This has led to a high demand for on-street parking spaces. By implementing a parking management program the City is helping to make more on-street parking available for customers, improve utilization of off-street lots, and reduce traffic congestion. Only 411 on-street spaces will be metered. The remaining 2,502 public parking spaces in the downtown core area will be free (1,878 spaces in lots and structures and 624 on-street spaces). There are an additional 1,927 private parking spaces in the downtown core that are available for employees, customers, and residents.

Q: Why are parking pay stations being installed now?

A: The current utilization of parking spaces on-street in the downtown core is over 90% most of the day, every day of the week. Many of these spaces are being used by business owners and employees rather than by customers. By charging for parking for these prime on-street spaces, they will be available for customers. The parking lots and on-street spaces along Santa Clara Street will continue to be free. This shift in parking will add more pedestrian traffic to side street businesses increasing their market exposure.

Q: Will there still be 2-hour time limit restrictions on Main Street?

A: No, the 2-hour time limits will be removed where on-street parking spaces are metered.

Q: What will the price be for on-street parking?

A: The parking rates will be set to achieve 85% utilization of the on-street parking spaces. Initially, the hourly meter rates will be \$1.00 per hour for the first two hours and \$1.50 for each hour after that. These rates can and will be adjusted to account for changes in the utilization to achieve the 85% goal. For instance, if the initial rates are too high and parking utilization drops below 80%, the prices will be adjusted down until the 85% goal is achieved.

Q: Do I have to pay for a whole hour even if I'm just making a quick visit?

A: Not at all. All pay stations take coins. If you only need a few minutes to make a quick stop, such as picking up a lunch order or dropping off some film for processing, simply put in a nickel or a dime.

Q: Do I have to use the pay station closest to my car?

A: No. You may pay for any numbered parking space at any of the pay stations. Simply go to the nearest one on the way to your destination. The City is also working on being able to pay using your cell phone or through an application on your mobile device.

Q: Do I have to put a receipt on my dash?

A: No. You will have a choice of printing out a receipt or not. Receipts are available for your convenience. The receipt will show your expiration time and parking space, so you can check it to see when the payment expires. It is also handy to have your parking space number for adding time if you need to extend your visit.

Q: Do I have to go back to the original pay station to extend time?

A: No. You can go to any pay station in downtown and add time to the space. Once a phone and mobile device pay method is available, you won't even have to leave your location to add time to your space.

Q: How will the City enforce the new pay stations?

A: The parking enforcement officers will generally be walking on the sidewalk rather than driving in the street. This will allow them improved interaction with customers. The enforcement personnel will carry handheld equipment that will show which parking stalls are paid for and which aren't. If an expired stall has a car in it, a citation will be issued.

Q: Where is the free parking?

A: All of the off-street parking lots will remain free as well as all of Santa Clara Street, Poli Street, Thompson Boulevard, and the side streets south of Santa Clara Street. New signage will direct customers to free parking areas.

Q: I am disabled and can't walk from the free parking areas. How is the City going to accommodate my needs?

A: All on-street parking is free and without time restrictions for anyone who has an accessible parking placard or accessible license plate issued by the State.

Q: I am a resident and live in or adjacent to the downtown core area where the parking pay stations are being placed. Won't people just park in front of my house and walk a few blocks so they don't have to pay?

A: This is a concern that the City shares. As a part of the program, the City Council has set up a program for residents to obtain a residential parking permit. This will allow residents to park on-street as they do now if they have limited on-site parking at their residence. The permits will be issued for a 2-year period and can be obtained at City Hall in the Engineering Office.

Q: Is there enough parking in the Downtown area?

A: There is! As a part of the Downtown Specific Plan we looked at this issue and found that there always has been and continues to be enough parking Downtown for current and near-future needs. We have a plan in place to ensure that we provide enough parking as the Downtown continues to grow through future public-private partnerships that will add structured parking as it is needed.