

City of Auburn Parking Q&A

SNOW REMOVAL

Q: How should downtown property owners handle the sidewalk snow?

A: The City asks that property owners downtown push the sidewalk snow close to the curb for easy removal. The Department of Public Works is focused on consistent snow removal downtown this winter, so if the snow is shoveled on the sidewalk close to the curb, it can be removed easily. The BID will clean around the kiosks and clean a path to the roadway to provide access to the kiosks.

KIOSKS & METERS

Q: What is the purpose of the parking meters and kiosks?

A: The purpose of metered on-street parking is to create turnover, which yields a systematic rotation of vehicles (and customers) in the downtown commercial district.

Q: Do the kiosks accept dollar bills or credit cards?

A: None of the kiosks currently accept credit cards. A new kiosk located in the Seminary Ave parking lot currently accepts smart cards and dollars. All other kiosks accept coins only. The City recognizes the functional limitations of the current equipment, and is exploring options to upgrade and/or phase out older kiosk technology.

Q: What is the time limit for on-street parking at a meter or kiosk?

A: Most meters and kiosks have a 2-hour time limit. Per current parking regulations, as long as a car is moved after the time limit, it can park in a different spot, obtain a receipt, and will not be ticketed. The City encourages customers with long-term parking needs (over 2 hours) to park in the **Parking Garage** or at the **Cash Key Meters** located on the outskirts of downtown, which have a 10-hour limit.

Q: Would the City consider installing a change machine?

A: The City has considered installing a change machine; however, it would need to be maintained and a location would need to be decided upon.

Q: What is the “undercover kiosk” and how will I know when it is available?

A: The proposed undercover kiosk is a drive-up kiosk located inside the parking garage. Customers will be able to access the kiosk year-round, and can use the parking slip anywhere in the metered/kiosk area of downtown. The undercover kiosk will enable customers including seniors to easily obtain a parking receipt without having to walk through sleet, snow, rain or other inclement weather. As soon as the undercover kiosk is installed, the City will promote it in multiple ways,

including through The Citizen, online and in conjunction with our partner agencies including the Downtown Auburn Business Improvement District, Cayuga County Chamber of Commerce, and Cayuga County Tourism Office. It is illegal for the City to put promotional flyers on cars for this purpose.

Q: What are Cash Keys?

A: Cash keys offer a 50% discount on parking at select meters. They are intended to encourage customers to park in the less congested areas of downtown. Cash Keys can be purchased at the City of Auburn Treasurer's Office and can be used at select meters located on Court Street Lot, Dill Street Lot C, William Street and State Street. Cash Key Meters have a 10-hour maximum limit.

Q: What are Smart Cards?

A: Smart Cards offer a 35% discount on parking at select kiosks. Currently, the only kiosk in the City that accepts Smart Cards is the Seminary Avenue kiosk. Smart Cards are intended to encourage customers to park in the less congested areas of downtown. Smart Cards can be purchased at the City of Auburn Treasurer's Office.

PARKING GARAGE

Q: When will parking garage renovations be completed?

A: With the exception of the elevator replacement, most of the parking garage repairs include concrete ramp work are done. There is some work to be completed on the stairways and some overhead concrete work. The elevator work will begin in about two months; when it is scheduled to commence, the City will notify parking garage patrons well in advance so they can make alternate arrangements, if need be.

Q: How will the City increase garage usage?

A: The City is exploring different rate options to make long-term parking in the garage more favorable. The City will also work with partner agencies to promote the garage as a long term parking option. Finally, the City is undertaking renovations to the garage to make it more inviting, including new & brighter lighting and upgrading the elevator. The City wants customers to feel confident they are parking in a safe parking garage.

Q: Why can't the elevator run unattended?

A: For safety and liability concerns, the elevator is turned off when there is not an attendant on the premises.

Q: Can the garage be automated to save money?

A: The City has explored automating the parking garage, which has proven to be cost-prohibitive. The City would still have to employ someone to be on site while the parking garage is open.

Q: What is the best place for Musical Theatre Festival (MTF) patrons to park?

A: Since most shows last at least 2 hours, MTF patrons should park in the **Parking Garage** or the **Seward Lot** for long term parking options. On street parking and the metered area of the parking garage is limited to two hours.

TICKETS AND FINES

Q: How do I avoid getting a parking ticket and associated fine?

A: In metered areas, customers must pay to park downtown. If meters are paid and time limits are abided by, then no tickets will be issued, and no fines imposed. Metered parking in downtown Auburn currently costs \$0.25 cents per half hour – among the lowest cost parking in the entire Central New York region!

Q: Who sets the parking fines and why are they so low?

A: Parking fines are set by the City Court Judge; the Auburn Police Department does not regulate parking fines. The City recognizes that the current \$10 fine is among the lowest in our Region. As such, it is not a strong deterrent for parking violators. The City is exploring options to increase fines for both first time and repeat offenders.

Q: Can the City create an independent hearing officer to handle parking tickets?

A: The City Charter/Ordinance would have to be changed if ticket protests were taken out of the court system.

Q: Can the City stop ticketing cars with out of state plates?

A: Meter Enforcement personnel seldom tickets vehicles with out-of-state plates. However, the City will ticket repeat violators with out-of-state plates who, for instance, live half the year in Auburn and the other half the year down south. It is hard to gauge sometimes if this is the case when a ticket is issued.

Q: Why doesn't the City automatically issue courtesy tickets?

A: Courtesy tickets are given at the discretion of the Meter Enforcement officers. Meter Enforcement personnel currently issue an average of 20-25 courtesy tickets a day; the majority of those are issued to cars with out-of-state plates. Enforcement of metered parking is key to creating turnover in the downtown commercial district.

Q: Does the City offer a grace period when meters run out?

A: The City parking regulations currently do not offer a grace period. However, our Meter Enforcement personnel often give some leeway on this.

Q: Can the City offer free parking for Christmas shopping downtown, as was done in years past?

A: The purpose of metered parking is to create turnover, which yields a systematic rotation of vehicles (and customers) in the downtown commercial district. Because downtown is far busier now than in recent past, it is important to continue turnover

for customers. Free parking would likely result in those valuable spots being used by merchants and their employees.

SIGNAGE AND INFORMATION

Q: How will visitors new to the Auburn community know where to park?

A: The City is working with its partners including the Cayuga County Tourism Office, Cayuga County Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Auburn Business Improvement District, Finger Lakes Musical Theatre Festival, and Auburn Public Theater to insure that parking information is well publicized to visitors as well as existing businesses and residents. Additionally, the City has added a PARKING section to its website, and is adding Pay to Park signage on the kiosks, parking signs on the Parking Garage exterior, and other signage so out-of-town patrons can easily use, and get to know, our parking system.

Q: How will the City educate the public and businesses on parking?

A: In conjunction with its agency partners and media, the City will continue to educate the public, businesses and visitors on parking. Within the past two months, the City has added a Parking tab on its homepage and continually improves parking information online; has established an email for parking comments and inquiries; and has delivered two parking presentations to discuss current conditions, accomplishments and goals in the parking arena. The City Council presentation was televised, and was made available on the City website for interested members of the public to view. A public presentation and discussion was also held at the Auburn Public Theater where residents and business owners could voice their concerns and opinions about parking. Both of these meetings received press coverage.