Paid Parking Q and A

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PAID PARKING Q AND A

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The St. Augustine Beach City Commission has delayed having a system of paid parking at City-owned lots and along the right-of-way of certain streets. Below are some questions and answers concerning related matters.

Please note the following:
St. Johns County owns Pier Park and the parking lot at the east end of Pope Road.
Discussion for paid parking started in April 2018. The following is information about this program thus far:

1. Why has the implementation been delayed?

The City of St. Augustine Beach has been in communication with St. Johns County about each having the same parking management plan because the County has a major parking area in the City: the pier parking lot. Each government having the same parking plan will mean less confusion to visitors and residents using either City or County parking lots. The County advertised for companies to submit proposals.

At its April 2nd meeting, the County Commission accepted the proposal from Republic Parking System and authorized the County staff to negotiate with Republic. The County has invited the City staff to participate in the negotiations. The City Commission reviewed this information at its April 29th special meeting and decided to wait to see what the County Commission eventually decides. Republic's plan proposes that the parking fee be $5 a day and $50 for an annual pass for everyone, County residents and non-residents.

2. What is the plan for residential neighborhoods?

The City Commission's major goal is to protect the residential neighborhoods from intrusion by beach visitor parking. To implement this goal, the Commission has approved signage that will allow parking by residents only on those streets where a majority of the residents request the

signs.

At its April 29th special meeting, the City Commission reviewed a proposed ordinance to create a resident parking permit system. Residents of a residential street may request this permit system, so that only those vehicles with the permit may park on that street. A household is limited to two permits; each permit may be registered to one vehicle and is non-transferrable. Enforcement would be managed by the City of St. Augustine Beach Parking Enforcement Specialist.

After considerable discussion, the City Attorney was directed to provide a revised draft of the proposed ordinance. It will be presented at the Commission's June 10th regular meeting.

3. What will the funds collected from this program be used for?

The program will fund enforcement efforts to protect residential areas. An enforcement specialist will remove the burden of parking enforcement from busy law enforcement officers.

The City's beach has become increasingly popular as the population of the County has grown. As it is likely that visitors, rather than residents, drive to the City for a day at the beach, it is only fair that the visitors pay the costs to enforce the regulations. Currently, unless they pay the toll to drive and park on the beach, the visitors pay nothing for parking and maintenance of parking lots, restrooms, etc.

Another use of revenue from parking fees will be to pay for improvements to parking areas. For example, these improvements may include pavers at the plaza on the west side of A1A Beach Boulevard between A and 1st Streets and pavers along the north side of 4th Street east of the Boulevard. Parking revenue could also be used to build restrooms in Ocean Hammock Park.

A long-term goal of this program is to fund improvements to existing parking areas, such as the plaza on the west side of the Boulevard by 8th Street (by A1A Automotive), other undeveloped areas along the Boulevard, and increasing the number of parking spaces in Ocean Hammock Park.

Use of revenue might also be used to implement a shuttle to the beach during peak times. This shuttle would run from City Hall or other available lots to the beach.

4. What will the hours of enforcement and the per-hour parking fee be?

At its March 5th meeting, the City Commission set the following hours and rates for paid parking:
Hours: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Rates: $2.00/hour for visitors (non-County/City residents)
50 cents/hour for County residents
50 cents/hour for business employees
Free for City residents
$1 an hour to park in Ocean Hammock Park

However, since March 5th, the Commission has learned from the County that charging different parking fees could jeopardize the share of dollars that the federal government provides for beach restoration projects. The City's parking fees thus will have to be changed. Republic's plan proposes that the parking fee be $5 a day and $50 for an annual pass for everyone, County residents and non-residents.

5. Which parking areas will still be free and which areas will have paid parking?

The City Commission has designated only the following areas for paid parking: the north side of 16th Street, east and west of the Boulevard; the 10th, 8th and A Street plazas east of the Boulevard; the south side of 5th Street east and west of the Boulevard; the north side of 4th Street east of the Boulevard; and Ocean Hammock Park. All of these areas are now being used for parking by beach visitors.

There are other areas where beach visitor parking will be shared with an adjacent business, and where parking will be free. These include the plaza south of the Sunset Grille, and the plazas in front of Café 11, the Sunshine Shop, Kookaburra, and Jack's Bar-B-Q. Free parking for beach visitors and business patrons is also provided along the north side of 8th Street, west of the Boulevard.

6. How can we pay to park?

It will likely be smartphone technology, or what is called a mobile pay parking system. Smartphone owners can download an app and use it to pay to park. If one does not own a smartphone there may be an option to call a phone number to pay. Also, for those who do not wish to pay by credit card, free public parking will be available on a limited basis.

7. What's the schedule for implementing paid parking and other changes?

Enforcement may begin in March 2020, which is the tentative date the County staff has set to implement the Republic Parking System, should the County Commission approve it.

8. Where can I submit any additional questions?

They can be sent to parking [at] cityofsab.org