

April 15, 2020

To: Mayor and Members of City Council

From: Patrick Duhaney, City Manager

Subject: **REPORT – EXPANDING 10 MINUTES FREE OR STANDARD RATES PROGRAM FOR NEIGHBORHOOD PARKING METERS**

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**REFERENCE DOCUMENT #202000197**

City Council at its meeting on February 5, 2020 referred the following item for report:

MOTION, submitted by Councilmember Pastor, WE MOVE that the Parking Division of the Department of Community and Economic Development expand the "First 10 Minutes Free" parking policy that is currently practiced in the Central Business District to all smart parking meters in Cincinnati's 52 neighborhoods and business districts.

**BACKGROUND**

In 1998 the City of Cincinnati created a Parking Improvement Plan (PIP) which included offering the first ten minutes of parking at a parking meter for free. The ten minutes free parking policy was amended in 2015 with the advent of the new parking meters. The ten minute free became "ten minutes free or standard rates" (e.g. as 2015, if a citizen opts for the ten minutes free and then adds payment, the ten minutes free are eliminated and replaced with the standard parking times for the amount of money added). The intent was to provide a period for quick stops for retail and other short visit establishments versus adding ten minutes of free parking for stays of all durations. This program was intended to encourage short trips downtown while still encouraging parking turnover and stays of longer durations to consider off street options.

Currently the "10-minute free or standard rates" feature is offered only in the Central Business District and only available at single-space meters. This policy does not currently apply to Over the Rhine which is the highest concentration of parking meters outside of Downtown. The feature is not available on some older model meter or at multi-space meters due to technology limitations so it is not available at every space within the CBD.

**CONSIDERATIONS**

In addition to the financial impact (below), the "ten minutes free or standard rates" feature has created an opportunity for abuse. There are several locations throughout the Central Business District where data and observation indicate abuse of the feature through repeated use of the feature. The Parking Division monitors the trouble areas closely and educates and enforces appropriately when the abuse occurs. OTR and the neighborhoods do not currently fall under this

policy and both OTR and the neighborhoods have different parking demand. Furthermore, the neighborhoods have all three meter types (Single Space Smart Meters, Multi-space Smart Meters and Single Space Meters (non-smart meter) [approximately 700]. The non-smart meters, along with the multi-space meters cannot be programmed for the 10-minute free feature.

**FINANCIAL IMPACTS**

The financial impact to expanding the “ten minutes free or standard rates” feature to the technologically capable single-space meters throughout the rest of the City would create an anticipated annual revenue reduction of approximately \$110,000 under pre-pandemic circumstances. This calculation is based on applying the same transaction ratio (number of 10-minute free button pushes monthly: meter count) for the Central Business District to the remaining IPS single-space meters throughout the City. Most of these meters are in Over-The-Rhine.

	Transactions/month	Meters	Monthly revenue	Annual revenue
OTR	7,030	236	\$1,757	\$21,084
Neighborhoods	29,468	989	\$7,367	\$88,404
<b>Total</b>	<b>36,500</b>	<b>1,225</b>	<b>\$9,125</b>	<b>\$109,500</b>

Note that these cost estimates are based on the pre-COVID 19 climate. The Administration is separately updating City Council on the changes to on-street enforcement resulting from the pandemic and social distancing practices which have affected on street parking utilization. Further, due to the need to change parking technology to accommodate a policy expansion, this is not an easily implementable policy under the current circumstances. Should City Council desire an expansion of this policy it should be expanded in FY21 to allow for sufficient time to make the technology changes and to further adjust revenue projections accordingly to accurately reflect the true budgetary impact.

**RECOMMENDATION**

The Administration awaits policy direction from City Council.

c: Markiea L. Carter, Interim Director, Department of Community and Economic Development