

## **Parking FAQs**

### **Why not keep on-street parking free?**

The current downtown parking system is considered an “upside-down” model, where the close and convenient parking spaces are free, whereas the low-dollar paid parking spaces are in parking garages. Free parking spaces are never truly free - the cost is simply paid in less visible ways. When parking is offered at no charge, someone still pays to build it, maintain it and manage it.

Our current downtown parking model does not encourage longer visits which is where business benefit from potential additional shopping. While on-street parking may be free, it limits how long someone may visit downtown and limits spaces for quick trips. Pricing parking appropriately helps ensure that spaces are available when people need them, that maintenance costs are covered and that the system is fair and financially sustainable over time.

If Fort Collins continues with free downtown parking, costs of building and maintaining garages, enforcement, snow removal, lighting, repairs, technology, etc still need to be covered. That funding would have to come from other sources such as sales tax, property tax, or reductions in other services.

### **Is the parking system currently losing money?**

Yes. With ongoing maintenance requirements, the three City-managed parking garages operate at a loss.

### **Has the City delayed important garage maintenance?**

No. Maintenance planning was adjusted due to financial and operational impacts from COVID-19.

A 2019 condition assessment identified needed repairs in the Civic Center Parking Structure. Due to pandemic-related impacts and reduced downtown activity, maintenance was deferred until parking behavior and funding stabilized.

### **Are two parking officers assigned per vehicle?**

No. Parking Enforcement Officers operate with one officer per vehicle with the exception of the downtown route where two officers are assigned due to:

- High traffic volumes
- Safety considerations
- The need to issue citations efficiently on both sides of the street

### **Why are many tickets currently issued as “courtesy” tickets?**

Currently, the first overtime violation is issued as a \$0 “courtesy” citation which provides education on the parking system. Moving from \$0 to \$10 results in:

- Approximately \$71,000 from a \$10 first-time fine
- Approximately \$140,000 from adjusted escalating fines (assuming no behavior change)
- Approximately \$170,000 from expanded Saturday enforcement

### **How much will paid on-street parking cost to implement?**

The estimated upfront cost for implementing paid on-street parking is approximately \$1.7 million. This includes signage and parking access and revenue control systems.

Estimated additional annual revenue from paid on-street parking is approximately \$2.5 million.

### **Will paid parking hurt local businesses?**

We have heard that some businesses fear/believe that paid in-street parking will hurt the downtown businesses. Paid on-street parking is common in successful downtowns across the country. When parking is priced and managed properly:

- Customers are more likely to find available spaces near the businesses they want to visit.
- Employees and long-term parkers move to garages or off-street lots, freeing up curb space for shoppers.
- Downtown areas maintain or even increase overall foot traffic, because customers don't waste time circling for a free space and they are not limited by a 2-hour window of parking.

A managed parking system ensures spaces are available when people want to shop, dine, or run errands, helping support healthy, vibrant businesses downtown.

### **Will the on-street parking use the same app as the garages?**

Yes. The Park Mobile app will be utilized as well as credit card and cash kiosks strategically placed along block faces.