



City of Houston  
Administration and Regulatory Affairs  
Washington Corridor Parking Benefit District  
Frequently Asked Questions

**Got a parking problem? It might look something like this:**

- People circle the block cruising for parking: frustrating drivers, putting pedestrians in danger, increasing traffic congestion, air pollution, and wasting gasoline and time.
- Convenient parking at the curb is hard to find.
- Most of the parking spaces are occupied by cars that remain parked for long periods.
- Due to a lack of available parking spaces, residents fear rather than welcome new development.
- Parking in parking lots is increasingly more expensive.

**What can be done to improve the situation?**

A curb parking space is a limited commodity and should be managed using economic principles such as supply/demand.

**How can you manage the curb space?**

Signage and meters are the starting point but parking benefit districts (PBD) provide a greater value for drivers and the community. In a PBD, a portion of the meter revenue is reinvested back into that same community.

**What is a Parking Benefit District (PBD)?**

Parking benefit districts are defined geographic areas in which a portion of the meter revenue is returned to the district to finance improvements that enhance the quality of life and promote walking, cycling, and the use of public transportation.

**Why install meters?**

New developments in the Washington Avenue Corridor have resulted in an increased demand for on-street parking that has spiraled out of control. The current parking problem will only continue to grow if no action is taken. By pricing the curb space, parking can be better managed. The return of revenue to the district will benefit all with improved sidewalks, lighting, marketing, landscaping, and security without additional costs to businesses owners or residents.

The improvements funded by meter revenue will make the district more inviting to patrons and appealing to residents thereby helping to sustain its long-term viability.

**How much will it cost to park at the meter? Who sets the rates?**

The rate is \$1 per hour from 9 am to 3 pm. After 6 pm, customers may select a flat rate of \$7 for the entire night or an hourly rate of \$2. In coordination with the community appointed volunteer Advisory Committee, Parking Management will determine specific rates in the area based on demand.

**Why doesn't the City just build a parking garage?**

A parking garage is viable solution. The current estimate for the construction cost is about \$25,000 per space. This funding is currently not available in the City budget but funds from the PBD may be dedicated for this project.

**Will the residents now have to pay to park on the street?**

Many blocks in the corridor are mixed development and cannot receive relief under the Residential Permit Parking (RPP) program. The PBD ordinance includes provisions to grant these residents the same protection from commuter vehicles that other RPP residents are offered. Occupants of these blocks (as shown on the map) will have the option to pay at a meter on Washington Avenue or purchase an annual permit for the permit parking areas only.

**How much do the permits cost?**

The Advisory Committee will make recommendations regarding the cost and the maximum number of permits per address.

**What if the meters cause a decrease in our business?**

Parking meters will help to promote economic development in the district. Long-term parkers will not be able to occupy the most convenient spaces. The turnover of parking spaces will open spaces for additional customers and patrons.

Austin, Texas implemented a Parking Benefit District in 2006 and saw an increase in both sales tax and mixed beverage receipts. The same model was implemented with success in the city of Old Pasadena, CA in 1993, Redwood, CA in 2006 and in San Diego, CA in 1997.

**Where will my employees park?**

Business owners are encouraged to establish lease agreements with area parking lot owners for long-term employee use. Funds from the district share of the revenue may be used for a shuttle service.

**Washington Avenue is too busy to allow parking.**

The Traffic Engineer will review the traffic patterns and establish parking regulations that enhance mobility and promote public safety.

**How much funding will we receive for projects?**

The district will receive a portion of net meter revenues. Based on initial analysis, the City anticipates at least \$170,000 in net revenues will be split between the district and the City in the first year.

**What projects will be funded?**

The Mayor will appoint an advisory committee comprised of representatives from the business community, residents and (non-voting) city department representatives. This committee will develop a project list based on feedback received from stakeholders. Possible projects include sidewalk repairs, landscaping, lighting, alternative transportation, marketing for the district or funding for a garage.

**What happens if no one pays to park at the meter?**

This is an 18 month pilot program that may be modified, terminated, or continued upon recommendation to City Council.

**How will this affect our residential permit parking area?**

Regulations for an existing Residential Permit Parking area will not be impacted by the meters. If there are changes in the parking patterns, the residents may increase the timings of the RPP.

**Will valet operators be allowed to park cars in the district?**

Valet operators must pay the meter in order to store vehicles in metered areas. They will not be authorized to store vehicles in permitted areas.

**Will capital improvement projects receive less funding due to the meter revenues?**

This will not affect the allocation of funding for capital improvement projects. A parking benefit district is a way to generate additional funding and help expedite projects for the community.