

Expansion of ramp to shuffle parking

CITY PLAN: Free shuttles to serve displaced commuters in downtown Rapid City for the next four months.

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Time to put on your boogie shoes if you lease a parking space in the downtown parking ramp.

For the next four months, the ramp will be temporarily closed because of the construction of an additional level of parking.

Creating a third level to the ramp will add about 165 spaces to the current 323-space, two-level ramp, located south of the railroad tracks between Fifth and Sixth streets. The city sold bonds to pay for the \$2.6 million project.

Starting Monday, and going through until Jan. 15, the ramp will be closed, though it may be available on certain random days at the discretion of the construction company, but the city recommends counting on it being closed.

Neil Eichstadt, a downtown worker who leases a space in the ramp, said he is aware of the coming project and understands the necessity for it.

"It's really important to the development of downtown,"

Free parking

The city emphasizes that the free parking is in designated areas and only available for people with valid ramp parking stickers. The exception is the New York Street lot, which is open to anyone for free. The city is encouraging its employees to park in the New York Street lot and use the shuttle.

Downtown Parking Garage Renovation Parking Alternatives

Alternate areas where you can park

- (1) Fifth and New York street lot. A shuttle bus will transport people from the lot to the Sixth Street entrance of the City/School Administration Center lot. The shuttle will run every 10 minutes from 7 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. and 4 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. This option is open to lease holders and the general public as an attempt to minimize the impact on downtown parking.
- (2) Fifth and Omaha street. Workers were laying asphalt for this lot the past couple of days and expect to finish surfacing by Monday. The lot, which holds about 50 spaces, was acquired in June by the city in a swap with the state Transportation Department. The city traded land on Catron Boulevard plus \$10,000 to get the lot from the state at the southeast corner of Fifth and Omaha specifically for a parking lot.
- (3) Sixth and St. Joseph parking lot, in a designated area.
- (4) Sixth and Main parking lot, in a designated area.
- (5) A lot on the north side of Main Street, across from Black Hills Federal Credit Union. Non-customer parking is not allowed in the credit union's parking lot.

PARKING: The mayor says demand is high for ramp parking.

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Eichstadt said. "I'm an engineer, so I'm familiar with construction. It's just a necessary evil. I'm all for it. If there's a little inconvenience, so be it."

In an effort to reduce the inconvenience, the city is encouraging parking lease holders to use one of five other options. Mayor Alan Hanks said as long as a person's lease payment is current and their parking ramp permit is properly displayed, people can park in several other lots free of charge. (See the map.)

"We're trying to be as accommodating as possible," Hanks said. "We're trying really hard to give people a lot of options."

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The city is encouraging its own employees to park in the New York Street lot and use the shuttle.

Demand is high for ramp parking. Hanks noted there are 194 names on a waiting list for covered parking spaces, which indicates the additional level will fill quickly.

Leasing a space on the ramp costs \$40 per month in the covered portion and \$30 per month in uncovered



portions. During the project, those with a covered space lease will pay a reduced rate of \$30 per month.

Bond payments for the project

will come from the parking lot area fund, a dedicated fund used solely for parking related expenses including operation of the parking enforcement

system and maintenance of all the city's parking lots downtown. Revenue for the PLA fund comes from lease payments, meter revenue and

parking fines.

"We certainly understand it's going to inconvenience people in the short term. Our goal is to provide additional parking

in downtown Rapid City to help promote and make downtown more vital," Hanks said.

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Mayor Alan Hanks