

# Modified parking plan referred to council

**METERS:** Public comments prompted city to reduce some 10-hour and four-hour meters to two-hour meters.

By Scott Aust  
Journal staff

A revised downtown parking plan will go to the Rapid City Council later this month, though it still includes plans for more metered parking. Unveiled in late April, the plan called for two-, four- and 10-hour

metered parking areas surrounding a core of two-hour free parking along Main and St. Joseph streets from Fourth to Ninth streets. But comments received during an open house Tuesday prompted the city to reduce some 10-hour and four-hour metered areas to two-hour meters.

Monica Heller, community planning coordinator, said several businesses along Kansas City and Columbus streets did not like the idea of longer-term parking in front of their buildings.

"They felt it put too much of a burden on them and that employees from Main and St. Joe and other areas would park and take up all the parking spaces for their clients," she said. "We still wanted to provide some four-hour parking because businesses felt

two hours was not enough."

One of the goals of the plan is to keep parking spaces open for customers in front of downtown businesses by moving employees out toward the perimeters of downtown to park. City officials say the public and merchants have also complained about two-hour parking because it doesn't allow enough time to shop, eat or go to the movies.

Heller said the goal is still to provide some consistency with the plan,

so in general, most of the east-west streets have two-hour meters, and the north-south streets in the central business district would have four-hour meters. Ten-hour parking is limited to areas on the perimeter.

Nonmetered two-hour parking would still be in effect on Main and St. Joseph streets from Fourth to Ninth streets, and on Fifth, Sixth and Seventh streets between Main and St.

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## PARKING: Prepaid parking cards will be available for purchase.

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Joe. However, fines for over-parking on those streets would change from \$5 per violation to a graduated system of increasing fines that could cost up to \$20 per ticket if four tickets are received in a sixth-month period.

Parking meters would charge 50 cents per hour in the two-hour zones; 25 cents per hour in the four-hour zones; and 25 cents for two hours in the 10-hour zones on the

periphery of downtown. Each meter includes a button allowing 15 minutes of free parking for those who need to make a quick stop to drop something off or pick something up.

People will also be able to buy prepaid parking cards containing a certain number of minutes to use in the parking meters to buy parking time — and to put unused time back on the card if they don't use all of their minutes.

"I think this addresses most of the concerns. It's not going to make everyone happy, but it does address a lot of the concerns we heard on Tuesday night," planning coordinator Heller said.

Mayor Alan Hanks said the

plan should help keep parking spaces open for customers in the central core while creating additional revenue for the city to use for future parking improvements, including the possibility of additional multilevel ramps.

"The goal of this plan is twofold: Change behavior of employees so we can get them off of Main and St. Joe, and ... come up with a (revenue) source where we can actually have additional parking," Hanks said.

"No matter how good this plan is, the reality is we need more parking stalls. We're talking a couple of years down the road before we could put up additional ramps."

The City Center Revitalization Task Force signed off on the plan and forwarded it to the city council with a recommendation for approval. The plan's first stop will likely be at the July 16 legal and finance committee meeting.

The task force, which was formed in 2006 to develop a long-range plan for the city's core, including the creation of a parking plan, has wrapped up its work, according to chairwoman Karen Gundersen Olson.

Gundersen Olson said a new group, Destination Rapid City, will take over in a leadership role for downtown revitalization efforts.

"From my perspective, I

think we have completed the work we set out to, and know there are entities out there right now ready, willing and able to take leadership in terms of revitalization," Gundersen Olson said.

A map of the draft parking plan can be viewed on the city's Web site at [rcgov.org/planning/transplanninghome/page.htm](http://rcgov.org/planning/transplanninghome/page.htm).

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