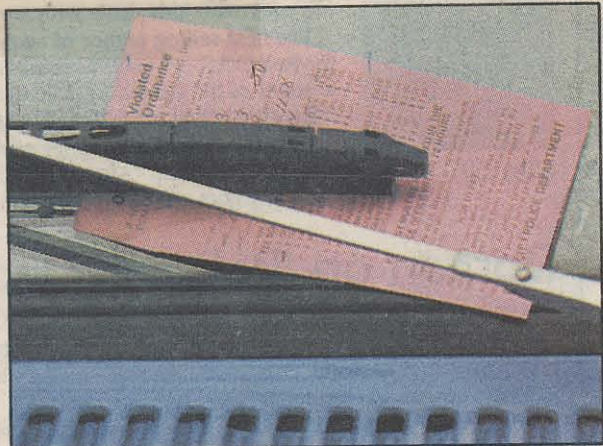


Ooops!  
Overparked.  
If Rapid City  
approves a  
proposal to  
increase  
rates, park-  
ing tickets  
like this will  
soon carry a  
fine of \$5  
instead of  
\$2.



Journal photo by Don Polovich

# Parking fines face increase

■ City Council panel  
to discuss issue at  
Wednesday public  
meeting.

By Heidi Bell  
Journal Staff Writer

Overpark in downtown Rapid City today and you'll get the same penalty you would have gotten in 1986: a \$2 parking ticket. Pay it within 72 hours or it costs \$7.

After 12 to 15 years of unchanged overparking fines, the Rapid City Council is looking at an update. Proposed fees are \$5 within 72 hours, or \$10 after 72 hours.



Hughes

Rapid City Community Development Director Bonnie Hughes said the rate increase would be needed to help fund a two-level parking structure that city officials are thinking of building downtown.

"The revenue that's generated has to pay for the amount of new parking," Hughes said.

The Rapid City Council's Legal and Finance Committee will discuss fines at its Wednesday, Jan. 15, meeting. The meeting starts at 1:15 p.m. in council chambers at the City/School Administration Center.

Some parking fines have already gone up. For example, fines for parking in loading zones used to be \$4 within 72 hours and \$5 after 72

## Leased parking rates

### Rapid City:

\$30 per month in most lots, as of Jan. 1, 1997.

### Sioux Falls:

\$21.15 per month to \$53 per month (includes tax). Leased parking lots are cheaper than stalls in the three downtown parking ramps.

### Cheyenne, Wyo.:

\$25 per month, plus \$30 deposit, for parking lots and parking ramp.

### Billings, Mont.:

\$45 per month in parking lots, \$35 per month in all four parking structures, except for \$15 roof spaces.

### Bismarck, N.D.:

\$33 per month inside two parking structures and \$23 per month for rooftop stalls. Dirt parking lot stalls are \$21 per month.

### Casper, Wyo.:

\$15 per month in parking ramp, \$20 per month in parking lot.

Journal graphic/Marty Two Bulls

hours. The late rate is now \$8.

Downtown parking meters are being phased from 25 cents for two hours to 25 cents for one hour.

The city's "boot" fee has also gone up, from \$35 to \$50. The boot — a metal device that is locked onto a car wheel and prevents the vehicle from being driven — is put on cars with

See Parking on page A2

# Parking: Comparable

Continued from page A1

five or more unpaid parking tickets.

Parking officers put a warning sticker on the vehicle first. If outstanding tickets aren't paid within three days, the boot goes on. It costs \$50, on top of the unpaid tickets, to have the boot removed.

Leased parking rates have gone up, too, although final increases won't take effect until July 1. Spaces in most lots will cost \$30 per month after July 1.

That's comparable to leased rates in other cities (see chart).

Raising overparking fines is the next piece of the parking puzzle. Consultants say the 320-car ramp, which would be built on the lot north of Main Street between Fifth and Sixth streets, could be paid for if leased parking rates, meter rates and fines were all increased.

The increases being considered now will put Rapid City on par with other cities its size in the region.

Only Billings, Mont., has cheaper rates. Billings charges \$2 for meter overparking and \$5 for overtime parking, and fines do not increase over time.

Sioux Falls is close, with \$3 tickets for overparking in timed zones or at meters. If not paid within 72 hours, the fine jumps to \$12.

At the other end of the spectrum, Bismarck, N.D., charges \$5 for overparking. But if the ticket isn't paid within 30 days, the fine jumps to \$50. And the city issues a bench warrant for your arrest.

Cheyenne, Wyo., and Casper, Wyo., both charge \$5 for a basic overparking ticket.

Cheyenne charges motorists \$5 for every two hours they overpark in limited time parking zones. Expired meters bring fines of between \$2 and \$7. A \$1 late fee is added to all tickets that aren't paid within one week.

Casper has a policy allowing the fine to increase after 10 days, but the council has not formally adopted that policy. "So basically it remains at \$5," said a city spokesman.

Like Rapid City, Casper has a two-hour parking limit downtown. However, Casper motorists are only allowed to park in one "block face" — the area on both sides of the street, from one intersection to the next — for two hours per day.

"That's to stop the people who work downtown from just rolling their car forward a space or backward a space," the spokesman said of the policy, which has been in effect for about three years. "The public's really angry about it."

Downtown employees who frequently move their cars to avoid parking tickets take up spaces customers need. To help curb that problem in Rapid City, city officials have considered leaving the fine at \$2 for first offense, then charging more each time a car is overparked.

While the idea has merit, it also has drawbacks. Hughes said there is no way to project how much money a graduated fine would generate. If it did as intended and changed parking habits, revenue would drop.

Also, Hughes said, "If we're going to do a graduated fine, we really ought to have an option for those people." Currently, there are waiting lists for stalls in all city-owned leased parking lots.

There is one area where Rapid City still lags behind in fines. All cities contacted, except Cheyenne, which charges \$50, charge a \$100 fine for parking in a handicapped space. Sioux Falls' citations come with a mandatory court appearance.

Citizens had requested that Rapid City go to a \$100 fine, which is allowed under city ordinance. But for now, Rapid City's handicapped parking fine remains at \$25.