

SLT parking to include reduced fines, locals pass

By Kathryn Reed

Paid parking is going to remain in South Lake Tahoe – for now. But it's going to look different than it did last summer.

The South Lake Tahoe City Council on Feb. 18 had a two-part session – morning and evening – so the public could hear where the program is, learn about proposed changes, and give their input.



Venice Drive in South Lake Tahoe will not have paid parking, and the future of boat trailers will be decided later. Photo/LTN file

Changes include:

- A \$35 fine for violations at kiosks. It has been \$55. (There are now times when warnings are issued.)
- The city will have no paid parking on Venice Drive. The issue of boat/trailer parking will be addressed at a future meeting.

- Annual passes for locals will be \$40. A local is defined as anyone living full time on the South Shore in ZIP codes including South Lake Tahoe, Meyers, Stateline and Zephyr Cove. The passes will be valid Monday-Friday.
- The hours of enforcement will be from 8am to 8pm. It had been until 10pm.

Exactly when these changes take place has yet to be decided.

Because the council on Tuesday morning opted to put a question before the voters in June asking if they want the paid parking program to remain, improvements that require money will not take place this summer. The thinking is that it would not be fiscally prudent to make improvements that may turn out to be temporary. (If voters say no, it will not change Bellamy Court, Transit Way or the Heavenly Village parking garage.)

This means the dirt at Lakeside used for parking would not be paved in May as was the original plan. The street was going to be realigned, along with the possibility of creating an employee parking area.

Striping, lighting and signage improvements are also on hold anywhere there are kiosks.

If the entire program were to be scrapped today it would cost about \$620,000. This includes \$191,000 to pay off the kiosks and losing projected revenues that have already been allocated.

The manufacturer of the kiosks has told the city it would not buy them back. The city could on its own try to sell them.

That \$620,000 includes getting rid of Transit Way and Bellamy Court. Revenue there is about \$85,000 a year. And if the city were to get rid of those kiosks, it would have a ripple effect involving the Heavenly Village parking garage. This is because people who purchased the bonds were told there would not be

competing free parking nearby.

“Termination of the program is based on what is budgeted,” City Manager Nancy Kerry said. “These are estimates.”

She added that estimates are on track. For the first three months of the fiscal year that began Oct. 1 \$28,000 has been collected from parking.

Some of the new kiosks were installed in June, others in July. This means the city has not had a full year to know if its projected revenues are accurate. There have been about 63,000 transactions since the inception.

“If parking stays, it’s a real opportunity to see what kind of revenue is generated over the long run and where those funds could be spent,” Kerry said.

Besides using the parking revenue for operations and maintenance in the areas where the kiosks are located, other ideas for spending that cash include a bike path from Lakeview Commons to Ski Run Boulevard and improvements at Lakeside Beach area. But those ideas will not be fully explored until after the June election.

If parking stays, there is talk of having the neighborhoods with kiosks form groups to have input on how revenues are spent.

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In other news:

- There will be a special council meeting Feb. 24 at 5:30pm to iron out the ballot arguments for the parking question.
- Tahoe Prosperity Center’s board is meeting Friday with the goal of hiring an executive director.
- In April the council will hear from the fire chief about how

prepared the city is when it comes to dealing with a dry summer.

- Lakeview Commons is officially closed because when there has been snow people were riding the rails and sledding. The city would be liable if anyone got injured.