

# Parking time limits to return to downtown Salem



Michael Rose, Statesman Journal 7:35 a.m. PDT August 26, 2014



(Photo: Thomas Patterson / Statesman Journal)

Parking time limits will likely return to the downtown Salem core, at least on a temporary basis.

Salem City Councilor Dan Clem on Monday asked city staff to draft rules to establish a three-hour parking time limit for on street parking in the Downtown Parking District.

Clem's motion, which passed unanimously, called for a three-hour parking time limit to begin in October and end on Feb. 3 2015

"I think three hours is a reasonable experiment as this is a short term solution," Clem said.

The move to restore parking time-limits should help free-up, on-street parking during the holiday shopping season, he said. Nine months ago, the Salem City Council adopted the intent of an initiative petition that ended the previous two-hour parking time limit. The petition also banned the installation of parking meters in the Downtown Parking District.

The parking district is an area roughly bounded Union Street, Church Street, Trade Street and Front Street.

At Monday's council meeting, a group of downtown business said that free, unlimited parking had clogged on-street parking. They urged the council to adopt a three-hour time limit.

"There's a bottleneck, almost a stranglehold," said Dino Venti, owner of Venti's Cafe & Basement Bar, at 325 Court Street NE. Venti spoke on behalf of 32 business owners, who gave the council a petition requesting a three-hour time limit.

"I want to stay in Salem. If things don't change, I can't," said Teresa Standish, owner of Bittersweet Boutique, at 321 Court Street NE.

Standish, who wiped away a teardrop during her testimony to council, said her sales were growing until the change to free, unrestricted parking. Customers complain that they can't find a parking place, she said.

Staff was asked to have a draft ordinance ready for the council's review by September 8.

Clem's motion would also remove the current restriction on businesses using 30 minute spaces for loading.

Clem said he wants to increase the number of 30 minute spaces in the downtown area, and create a plan to encourage downtown employees to use the city-owned parking garages.

Councilors at Monday's meeting reviewed a parking study done by Rick Williams Consulting, which provided a snapshot of current parking trends compared to 2012.

The study found that turnover — the number of cars using a parking place during a 10-hour period — is 5.95 cars per day. In 2012, turnover was 7.17 cars per day.

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