



MEMO

TO: Stephanie Reyes, City Manager
FROM: Jamie Lee Case, Director of Parks and Recreation
DATE: March 18, 2026
RE: **Paid Parking Pilot Implementation**

SUMMARY:

This memo provides the history and current status of the Paid Parking Pilot Program implementation in City Park parking lot.

BACKGROUND:

December 19, 2019 - Following the Cost of Recovery study in December 2019 the Parks and Recreation Board began discussing and exploring ways in which to generate revenue for the Parks & Recreation Department. During the Board's Discussion on December 19, 2019, the prospect of paid parking within the River Parks arose.

January 13, 2020 – The Parks & Recreation Board and Parking Advisory Board held a joint meeting to discuss the creation of paid parking benefit districts and paid parking implementation. Following the Joint meeting the Parks & Recreation Board held their regular meeting where they adopted Recommendation 2020-01RR supporting the creation of a River Benefit Parking District with the implementation of paid parking within the district.

July 7, 2020 – City Council discussed Recommendation Resolution 2020-01RR which supported the creation of a river benefit parking district with the implementation of paid parking within the district. Council provided direction to move forward with a River Benefit Parking District and for the Parks and Recreation Board and Parking Advisory Board to work together on the parking benefit district and eventually bring back recommendations to Council. The Parks and Recreation Board and Parking Advisory Board both formed subcommittees to work together on this effort.

November 19, 2020 - The Parks and Recreation Board Subcommittee provided regular updates on progress to the board and ultimately recommended Recommendation Resolution 2020-04RR to the board on November 19 during their regular meeting which was subsequently approved and sent to City Council in December 2020.

April 15, 2021 - Following the November 2020 recommendation being approved and sent

to the City Council the two subcommittees reconvened and agreed to Part 5 on Recommendation Resolution 2021-02RR which was approved by the Parks and Recreation Board.

May 04, 2021 – City Council held discussion regarding Recommendation Resolution 2021-02RR and provided consensus to move forward with compiling information and further studies on a paid parking program at City Park, not Rio Vista at no charge for residents. Council also provided direction to look at a fee for parking during university home football games at City Park.

June 7, 2022 – City Council received a staff update during the Work Session regarding the results of data and vendor analysis regarding the possible implementation of paid parking within the City Park parking lot. Following discussion, the City Council provided consensus for staff to proceed with a pilot program of paid parking in City Park parking lot and for the Parks and Recreation Board to develop an implementation plan.

December 15, 2022 – The Parks and Recreation Board approved the attached Recommendation Resolution which includes their recommended implementation plan. Following adoption Staff is recommending replacing the term “Proof of Residency” with “Proof of Address” during the implantation process. While the Board is recommending specific documents as being “acceptable” it is not the intent of the body to negatively impact anyone who wishes to register a vehicle. Staff will provide additional options for Council’s consideration when Council decides to discuss this recommendation.

January 17, 2023 – City Council discussed the Parks and Recreation Board Recommendation that was approved on December 15, 2022. Following discussion, the City Council provided consensus to proceed with implementation of the paid parking pilot in City Park parking lot. City Council also provided direction that Parks and Recreation Staff work with Parking Advisory Board to review the technology being considered, and that at least one machine be able to accept cash payment.

January 23, 2023 – Parks and Recreation staff discussed the Paid Parking pilot program technology capabilities previously provided to City Council and the Parks and Recreation Board with the Parking Advisory Board. Please refer to table below of desired capabilities each body would like to see.

Technology Capability	Council	Parks and Recreation Board	Parking Advisory Board
San Marcos residents Free	X	X	X (limit to 5)
San Marcos resident verification	X	X	X
System integrates with current and future LPR cameras	X	X	X
Portable (can be removed)	X	X	Nice to have
Solar compatibility	X	X	X
Works with enforcement	X	X	X
Integrates with citation system	X	X	X
Accepts cash	X (limited to one machine)	Recommended Cashless Technology	X (at least one)
Online management system	X	X	X
Flexibility for facility rental users	X	X	X
Flexible parking fees (ex. special event rate)	X	X	X
Customer mobile application	X	X	X (and web application)
ADA accessibility			X
Include parks benefit in marketing			X
Insure everything is multilingual			X
Training			X

The Parking Advisory Board agreed with all identified technology capabilities provided and requested that the following be included to the list of functions: ADA Accessibility, market information on where the funds go when people are paying to park, ensure multilingual integration on everything (machines, marketing and applications), training available for users. Additionally, they recommended that the number of vehicles allowed per address should be limited to 5.

April 2023 – The City of San Marcos hired a Multimodal Parking Initiatives Manager, Mr. Charles Campbell. Mr. Campbell's vast experience with implementing and managing paid parking programs ensures that a feasible implementation plan be developed. Mr. Campbell spent a couple of months getting acquainted with the history of paid parking discussions within our organization.

June 2023 - Staff from Parks and Recreation, Parking Enforcement, the City Marshal and Public Works began to evaluate various vendors that provide the technology that the City Council, Parks and Recreation Board and Parking Advisory Board would like to see implemented.

December 18, 2023 – The Parking Advisory Board was provided an update from the Multimodal Parking Initiatives Manager and Director of Parks and Recreation regarding the recommendations for the City Park Paid Parking pilot program that staff had evaluated. Staff recommended a centralized parking management system that stores and controls all incoming and outgoing data from the parking kiosks, pay by text, validation, and permit systems. This data would be used for reporting and enforcement purposes. Staff recommended a multi-vendor solution for the kiosks, pay by text

validations permit system and enforcement system. Staff forecasted a “Go Live” date in 2025 to allow time for budget alignment and procurement of technology and equipment.

January 18, 2024 – The Parks and Recreation Board approved Recommendation Resolution 2024-01RR-PRB recommending paid parking within Rio Vista Park.

April 16, 2024 – The City Council discussed the Parks and Recreation Board Recommendation Resolution 2024-01RR-PRB recommending paid parking within the Rio Vista Park area. City Council provided direction to proceed with evaluation and to bring back a recommendation. Staff indicated that an update will be brought back to City Council following receiving input from the Neighborhood Commission and Parking Advisory Board.

December 3, 2024 – The City Council approved Ordinance 2024-55 amending Chapter 85, Article 4 of the San Marcos City Code by adding a new Division 4 to authorize the issuance of tickets by mail for non-payment of parking fees within paid parking areas, specifically City Park Parking lot currently. This new Division 4 will be sunset on April 30, 2028 unless renewed by City Council which would be the end of the 3 year pilot program.

May 2025 - Procurement of Equipment:

City Staff completed all procurement and service contracts associated with the paid parking pilot program. Kiosks (3 cashless and 1 cash accepting) went live on July 1, 2025. Bilingual signage instructional and informational signage was installed around the parking lot notifying patrons of the lot being a paid parking lot.

Technology costs:

- \$46,549: Flowbird Payment Kiosks
- \$37,221.83 (YTD): IPS Enforcement Technology and Permitting Software
- Some fees still TBD: citation letters, follow up letters, registered owner look-ups, PaybyPhone transaction fees

January 6, 2026 – The City Council received a staff presentation and held discussion regarding the Paid Parking Pilot Program in the City Park Parking lot.

After extensive discussion, the Council provided direction to:

- Expand permit eligibility to include residents within the 78666 zip code;
- Further expand eligibility to all residents within the SMCISD boundary;
- Consult with Council before exploring any privatization of the program

END