

Big hike in city centre parking fees on the way

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Motorists will have to fork out R5 an hour to park in many parts of the central area of Port Elizabeth if a new mobile parking system is approved.



The Mandela Bay Development Agency (MBDA) has finalised proposals for the new system, which will go to the council next year to decide if it should be rolled out. The new system will result in the replacement of older coin-operated meters, which charge R1 for 20 minutes.

The proposed mobile parking system will be used in Strand Street, Govan Mbeki Avenue, Chapel Street, Whites Road, Western Road, Donkin Street, Parliament Street, Clyde Street, Rink Street, Belmont Terrace, Robson Street, Rose Street, Bird Street, Havelock Street, Lawrence Street and Stanley Street.

The MBDA will manage the new parking system, if it is approved, but a service provider will be hired to provide attendants to man the 1,329 bays to be set up. The attendants will have handheld devices to record the charges.

The mobile parking management system is a pilot project in the city centre, and could be launched in other areas of the

metro if it is successful. The idea was first pitched to the economic development tourism and agriculture (EDTA) committee two years ago.

MBDA spokesman Luvuyo Bangazi said an advert for a service provider would be placed as soon as the proposal was approved by the council. "We presented the proposal to the EDTA portfolio and safety and security committees," Bangazi said. "It will be tabled at the next council meeting for approval.

"We expect the process to take about six months, with the new system possibly starting in the second half of next year."

Public participation with businesses had already been carried out.

Bangazi said the city lost revenue daily as a result of car guards manipulating the operation of the parking meters. "By having a controlled or managed parking system, we hope to begin to eliminate the problem."

He said the new system would ensure an increase in revenue for the municipality. "Based on the usage rate of the bays being 60%, it would equate to an income of R678,490 a month."

The income generated would be divided between the service provider (60%), the municipality (20%) and the MBDA (20%).

Safety and security political head John Best said the MBDA's proposal would go to the mayoral committee and then the council.

"We have seen how successful this project is in Hermanus and in Cape Town, so it is a good proposal," Best said.

Municipal spokesman Kupido Baron said the municipality had collected just more than R27,000 between January and November for parking in the city centre.

"Motorists are required by law to pay for parking," he said.

"We have law enforcement officials responsible for monitoring parking meters. If [the meters have] expired, fines are issued against the transgressors."

The proposed R5 parking fee is considerably cheaper than Cape Town's prices, where motorists must cough up R11.20 for an hour of parking in the city centre. In Hermanus, parking costs R4 an hour.

In Grahamstown and Graaff-Reinet, the mobile parking system was scrapped due to problems with service providers. Makana Municipality community and social services director Mandisi Planga said they had stopped the system a month ago due to contract disputes with the service provider.

Dr Beyers Naude Municipality (Graaff-Reinet) DA caucus leader Samantha Jankovich said: "We stopped the system about eight months ago because the service provider owed us about R500,000 and there was no hope that it would be paid back."

Port Elizabeth motorists had a mixed reaction to the proposed parking system.

Vuyani Bene, 45, of Forest Hill, said: "I don't have a problem paying the requested amount, but where will all this money be going?

"If they could say that it is for security [purposes], then it is fine."

Mercia Brink, 41, of Kensington, said R5 an hour was a fair deal and other motorists would get a chance to park in the city centre.

Sindiswa Speelman, 30, of Motherwell, said: "It is too much - they could charge R2."

Cheslyn Petrus, 28, of Gelvandale, said the amount was ridiculous.

Source: Herald

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