

Editorial: Vote 'no' on Measure P

Publisher's note: *Lake Tahoe News convened an editorial panel of six South Shore residents to decide on this endorsement for the June primary.*

Paid parking at beaches on the South Shore has been the norm for decades. It's about time South Lake Tahoe caught up.

We believe the city needs to find ways to increase revenues. Continuing with the paid parking program is a logical way to fill coffers because it is a user fee. Only people who are using that area to park have to pay. In other words, it's a choice to park where it costs money.

Tourists have discretionary money for incidentals like parking. And locals know where to find free parking if they don't want to pay for the premium spots that are closer to the venue.



Keep paid parking; vote "no" on Measure P on June 3.
Photo/LTN

Voters in South Lake Tahoe on June 3 will be asked if they want to keep the kiosks at Lakeview Commons and Lakeside Beach. A "no" vote keeps the meters in place indefinitely. And

that is exactly how *Lake Tahoe News* is recommending voters vote.

Since the parking program at these locations started last summer (June at Lakeside, July for Lakeview Commons), \$190,000 has been collected in parking revenue through April.

The city is projecting all kiosks – this includes Bellamy Court and Transit Way – would bring in \$300,000 per year.

Fines are in addition to those figures. There has been a 98.5 percent compliance rate at the kiosks, so relatively few tickets are handed out. And as people become more familiar with the program the city anticipates the number of citations to go down 10 percent each year.

The annual expenses are practically nil. The kiosks are \$48,000 for the next four years – whether they are used or not. They are solar-powered. The only expense that could go away if the program vanishes is the costs associated with one-quarter of an employee. Even then, that person could be assigned to other work.

We like that the money generated is going back into the area where it's collected. Maintenance and operation costs are seldom considered when projects are built. This is why so many entities end up with deferred maintenance expenses that are rolled over from one budget year to the next, and why facilities become dilapidated. If we can help prevent this, especially at someplace as new as the \$65 million Lakeview Commons, we owe it to ourselves to do what we can. Supporting paid parking is one of the things we can and should do.

Once we lose a revenue source, it is near impossible to get it back again.

It is time to move beyond how poorly the whole program was sold to the public and then rolled out.

We like that the city is willing to make changes. It is good that there is a \$40 locals' pass, that hours have been changed and citations have been reduced to \$35.

However, if people continue to get cited because signage is lacking and kiosks aren't obvious, then shame on the entire city – electeds and staff. Aggressive behavior is not warranted, either. Citing someone when a kiosk ticket is placed upside down on a dashboard is inane. How hard is it to tell someone walking away from their vehicle that they need to pay instead of waiting until they are gone to write them a ticket?

We realize the city has a temporary permit from the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency that allows for parking at Lakeside on the dirt. The caveat was that money raised from that area would fund the asphalt, other infrastructure improvements and realignment of the street. But the city has tabled the paving project until at least after the election.

This is wrong. The city and TRPA should be models for environmentally sound practices. It's hard to believe fine sediment reaching Lake Tahoe is the primary source of the decline of lake clarity when parking on dirt – and paying to do so – is allowed. The duplicity of this policy is mindboggling.

For that reason, *Lake Tahoe News* puts an asterisk next to the "vote no on Measure P" endorsement. We also say "no to any parking on dirt." Lakeside should be roped off until it is paved and not contributing to the degradation of Lake Tahoe.

Just as the city deserves to generate money from parking, the lake deserves to not be ruined because of it.