

ITEM# 12
DATE: 2-25-20

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

**SUBJECT: REQUEST TO WAIVE PARKING ENFORCEMENT AND METER FEES
AT POLLING LOCATIONS WITH METERED PARKING**

BACKGROUND:

The Story County Auditor supervises the election process including all 20 polling places within the City of Ames. Two of these city polling locations (Ames Public Library and Collegiate United Methodist Church) have metered parking that serves as the primary public parking resource for these locations. Citizens who use these locations have frequently requested that metered spaces be available to accommodate voters and that the associated meter fees be waived on election day. The other 18 locations in the city have private parking associated with the facility or, in the case of Iowa State University, already allocate parking for poll workers and voters.

There are currently three elections planned for 2020: March 3, June 2, and November 3. The Story County Auditor has requested the following allocation of parking spaces and the waiver of meter fees, as done in previous election years:

March 3 at the following location (\$13.50 loss to Parking Fund):

- Six meters on the west side of Douglas Avenue directly in front of the Ames Public Library

June 2 at the following locations (Total of \$23.63 loss to Parking Fund):

- Six meters on the west side of Douglas Avenue directly in front of the Ames Public Library.
- Three meters on the south side of Lincoln Way in front of Collegiate Methodist Church.

November 3 at the following locations (Total of \$75.38 loss to Parking Fund):

- Up to 20 parking meters in on Douglas Avenue between 5th St. and 6th Street.
- Up to nine parking meters on the south side of Lincoln Way in front of Collegiate Methodist Church.

While there is no statutory requirement to provide parking, some citizens who have raised the issue have noted that meter fees may serve as a potential barrier to voting. Others have referred to the principle of removing barriers to voting in their comments, noting that the City has waived parking fees for commercial events in the downtown area. Polling locations can be very busy at peak times of the day; thus, it is unlikely that the requested reserved spaces will ensure availability to all voters at all times.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Approve the request of the Story County Auditor for election day-related allocations of parking spaces and the waiver of meter fees at the locations noted above for the March 3, June 2, and November 3, 2020, elections only.
2. Do not approve the waiver of fees for election-related parking spaces.

CITY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

The allocation of parking spaces and the waiver of meter fees will assist the Story County Auditor in making polling places accessible for the voters of Ames. In those areas where parking is limited, allocating parking to the polling place will allow poll workers to ensure turnover, and as a result, improve access to polls for Ames residents.

The greatest number of spaces requested is for the general election on November 3, 2020. Even with reserving 20 spaces on Douglas Ave, there will still be over 70 other spaces open to the public in the area. The nine spaces on Lincoln Way will be between Sheldon and Hayward Avenues, with many other spaces in Campustown open to the public, including the Intermodal Facility. The total loss of \$112.51 in estimated meter revenues will not have a significant impact on the health of the Parking Fund.

Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council adopt Alternative No. 1, as noted above.