

City considering increasing Oahu parking costs

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The cost of city public parking could be increasing in an effort to incentivize using other forms of transportation besides cars, as well as recover lost revenue.

The city loses about \$4.27 million each year on parking because the amount of revenue parking fees generate is unable to cover the cost of maintenance, Honolulu Police Department enforcement and upgrades for the meters, according to the city Department of Transportation Services.

Annually, revenue from city on-street and off-street parking comes out to just \$6.7 million, paling in comparison to the \$11.4 million it costs the city to operate it.

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The city operates 8,000 parking stalls in total, 4,000 on-street parking stalls and 4,000 off-street parking stalls.

“Our parking is significantly underpriced ... We’re in the red. We’re not making enough money to even pay for that resource,”

said DTS Chief Planner Chris Clark during Tuesday's Honolulu City Council Committee on Transportation, Sustainability and Health meeting.

"We really just don't have enough land or enough money for everyone in their own car, single-occupancy vehicle, driving and parking at all their destinations. We just cannot sustain that sort of transportation environment."

One of the issues is that although HPD does all of the traffic enforcement for the city parking stalls, the city does not get any of the funds from fines. The revenue from those parking fines goes instead to the state.

Council member Esther Kia'aina suggested that the city go to the state Legislature next year to see if it can secure some of the money from those parking fines.

"Why are we going to be penalized because of a system set up where we don't rightfully recoup some of the fines? I think a lot of money is made by fines. And I actually think perhaps we don't do a good enough job with enforcement to secure increased fines," she said.

"We can get really rich by just parking a couple of (enforcement officers) in Lanikai and fining everybody every day. And I wish I was joking, but I'm not joking. That's a perfect example of where you can make a lot of money."

One of the options DTS suggested is increasing the city parking up to the market rate comparable to the area. Currently the city parking is about 25% of the market rate.

In 2019 former Mayor Kirk Caldwell increased hourly parking rates in Chinatown, downtown, the Civic Center near Honolulu Hale and Waikiki from Hobron Lane to Kapahulu Avenue from \$1.50 an hour to \$3. Hourly parking costs were also raised from 75 cents to \$1.50 an hour in Kaimuki, Liliha, Aala, Kalihi, Kailua, Kakaako, Sheridan Tract, Kapahulu, McCully, Makiki and Ala Moana.

The increases could range from increasing parking that currently costs \$1.50 to between \$2.25 and \$3 and increasing parking



that currently costs \$3 to between \$4.50 and \$6. However, DTS is still considering what increase it would want to submit to the Council for approval.

Another program the department is considering implementing is creating restricted parking zones where people could pay the city from \$100 to \$400 annually for a permit to park in the area, which would no longer be open to the public.

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Kia'aina emphasized the need to ensure that there was a lower kamaaina rate for residents if DTS plans to implement this type of program.

These types of changes would need to be done legislatively with Council approval.

Council member Calvin Say encouraged the city administration to ask the state Legislature next year to eliminate the city's liability regarding clashes between different forms of transportation in bike lanes and on sidewalks.



“We should not be held accountable for the incidents or accidents that occur. Because that bike lane is going to be too narrow to accommodate how many? Three or four different types of transportation in the bike lanes, and then you get the sidewalks where they’re also really already doing it,” he said.

“We’re trying to look for alternatives, but it always seemed like we’re left with lawsuits ... we have to be much more aggressive with the state Legislature.”

DTS is hoping to use Federal Highway Administration funds to also implement programs such as bike sharing, promoting alternative types of transportation and establishing van pool programs which allow a large amount of passengers to be transported to a destination.

The department plans on finalizing their proposals by fall to present the plans to the community.



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