

“Parking fines easy cash for cities”

By Andrew Seaman

Parking fines easy cash for cities

But bills' extra bite may leave tourists with bitter taste

By Andrew Seaman
Special for USA TODAY

Municipalities across the USA are turning to more aggressive parking enforcement and higher parking fines to shore up declining revenue.

“Cities are looking for as many avenues as they can to alleviate these budget shortfalls,” says Martin Stein, president of the National Parking Association, which represents more than 1,200 companies and municipalities.

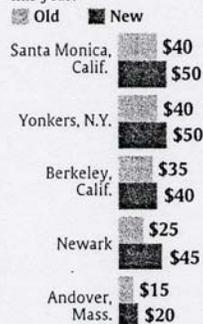
Justin McNaull, AAA director of state relations, says fines provide a real temptation for enthusiastic enforcement, because they have the benefit of producing revenue for governments. However, he says there are risks associated with it.

“For tourists, strict parking enforcement probably won't keep them away, so much as it will leave them embittered,” McNaull says. “For suburbanites, parking tickets might dissuade some of them from going to certain neighborhoods if they fear over-zealous parking enforcement officers.”

In January, California imposed a \$3 additional fee on municipalities for each parking citation to increase funding for the court facilities construction fund, according to Bruce Gillman, spokesman for the Los Angeles Department of Transportation. The new fee came on top of a \$1.50 state fee, bringing the state's charge to \$4.50 per fine.

Rising fines

Some municipalities that have raised parking fines this year:



Source: USA TODAY research

By Julie Snider, USA TODAY

That spurred several cities to increase their fines this year. Santa Monica increased its parking fines from \$40 to \$50 in June, according to Carol Swindell, the city's director of finance.

Berkeley increased its parking fines in June from \$35 to \$40, says Julie Sinai, the chief of staff for Berkeley Mayor Tom Bates. Sonoma voted to increase its parking fines in June from \$20 to \$40, according to Mayor Ken Brown. Gillman says Los Angeles increased parking tickets from \$40 to \$45 last July.

Elsewhere:

► **Yonkers, N.Y.**, increased the parking fines in June to help pay for its \$900 million budget, says David Simpson, a city spokesman. Over-time parking fines will rise to \$50 from \$40, and no-standing fines will increase to \$70 from \$50. The increases should bring in an extra \$1.2 million in revenue, he says.

► **Newark** increased parking fines by \$20 to \$45 in June, says Ethelyn Bowers, director of administration for the Newark Parking Authority.

► **Andover, Mass.**, increased parking fines this month, said Lt. James Hashem, commander of the Andover Police Department. According to Hashem, most parking fines will increase from \$15 to \$20, which is estimated to bring in an additional \$70,000 in revenue.

► **Washington, D.C.**, will install cameras on street-sweeping equipment in order to issue citations to people who do not move their cars, says Erica Stanley, a district spokesman. The district expects the cameras to bring in an additional \$6.8 million after maintenance.

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