

**COUNCIL ACTION FORM**

**SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR PARKING ENFORCEMENT AND METER FEE WAIVER  
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. A third, Collegiate Presbyterian, has three meter spaces along with additional private parking. Citizens who use these locations have frequently requested that 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.

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.

Elections are typically held twice per year although special elections or runoff elections can add to the frequency in any given year. Since elections are typically held on Tuesday, any waiver of parking fees would cover the hours of 8:00 am to 6:00 p.m. on that day.

Polling locations can be very busy at peak times of day. It is unlikely that any number of spaces will ensure availability to all voters at all times. Iowa State University, however, has been successful accommodating voters with four spaces at their campus locations.

After a review of parking options at each site, it appears that 20 spaces on Douglas would provide a great deal of convenient, short-term parking. There are additional spaces on Fifth Street (11 spaces) and in Lot Q (62 spaces) for a total on 93 spaces available in this area. At Collegiate United, there are 9 spaces on Lincoln Way that are adjacent to the Church. At Collegiate Presbyterian there are three spaces on West Street.

Based on citizen feedback and the experience of the Story County Auditor, it is proposed that some parking be allocated to allow access to three polling locations and that meter fees associated with those locations be waived.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

1. Approve election-related parking of up to 45 meter spaces near the Ames Public Library, nine spaces at Collegiate United Methodist Church and three spaces at Collegiate Presbyterian. Allow the Traffic Engineer to designate the specific parking spaces allocated to elections and waive meter fees.
2. Approve election-related parking of up to 20 meter spaces near the Ames Public Library, nine spaces at Collegiate United Methodist Church and three spaces at Collegiate Presbyterian. Allow the Traffic Engineer to designate the specific parking spaces allocated to elections and waive meter fees.
3. Do not approve the allocation of election-related parking spaces.

**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 within the city of Ames.

Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council adopt Alternative No. 1, thereby approving the election-related parking of up to 45 meter spaces near the Ames Public Library, nine spaces at Collegiate United Methodist Church and three spaces at Collegiate Presbyterian; waiving the meter fees; and allowing the Traffic Engineer to designate the specific parking spaces.