

## Parking tickets drives people away from downtown – Pmurg

First, I have a philosophical problem with having to pay for the privilege of parking on a city street that I already paid (through tax dollars) to build and maintain. Why should parking spaces be viewed differently than the travel lanes of a street? People who drive around more don't have to pay extra in comparison to people who walk, do they? Of course not. We all pay a pro-rata share of the cost of the streets, including the parking spaces on them. I understand that it's not ideal when someone parks in one spot all day and the space is then unavailable for customers of nearby businesses. However, often times the person doing that is an owner or employee of one of the businesses. We try to discourage this by limiting the amount of time one vehicle can sit in one place. But in doing so we wind up also levying fines on lots of people who are not chronic parking place abusers. I bet many, many of the unpaid tickets you're trying to collect on are situations where someone's dinner out ran a little long, they spent too many minutes in the dressing room at one of the shops or they stopped to chat with an acquaintance. Sure there's handful of recidivists/abusers, but why do we need a whole system set up just to deal with them?

Second, regarding that "system," I perceive Diamond Parking as a carpet-bagging, goon squad. Out of town business being paid with our tax dollars to harass tax payers. They use no common sense. I once got a ticket as the only car in the circular lot on Independence Point on Christmas Eve, no less. Brought some out of town guests down to take a quick look at the lights and they wanted to walk around the board walk. Ya, I failed to put my 2 bucks in the box. Still.... I suspect the Diamond employee was ticked off to be working on Christmas Eve and decided to take it out on me. Also, I highly suspect that Diamond has a profit motive in writing tickets. A privatized "speed-trap" of sorts where most of the money doesn't even stay in town. If it's a big enough problem that we need to hire private cops to enforce the parking law, then why don't the regular cops do it? Because its' not that big of a problem, that's why. It's like some kind of "make work" project for Diamond.

Last, I think that the whole idea of the parking tickets presents a disincentive to do business down-town. The fact that downtown interests have expressed this concern corroborates my thinking. I know that I, personally, shy away from the down-town businesses because of this. I would rather eat out at one of the joints in Riverstone, midtown or elsewhere knowing that if I have one too many glasses of beer or wine and decide to take a cab or ride home with someone else, I don't have to worry about coming back to a boot on my car or a ticket. That's my rant. Thank you.