



**Parking** meter idea trips on Hawthorne  
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Time warp back a few decades and check out the Hawthorne Boulevard that business owner John Chassaing sees. A massage parlor. A half-dozen taverns. A strip joint.

The Southeast Portland boulevard was seedy, nothing like the thriving hippie, yuppie retail success story it's become.

"You couldn't buy a customer when you first opened up here," he says.

So you can't blame Chassaing, who owns Showcase Music and Sound, and other Hawthorne old-timers for being protective of the now-thriving street.

Now, he says, it could all be at risk if an idea from city Commissioner **Sam Adams** goes through.

It's a big if.

The commish is working with **neighborhood** business associations to explore adding **parking** meters and permit **parking** in key Southeast **neighborhoods**. **Adams'** original idea included St. Johns, but an analysis showed there wasn't enough demand to warrant paid **parking**, he says. A study looking at Hawthorne, Division, Clinton, Belmont and the Central Eastside industrial area is due in October.

The idea fell flat with Chassaing, who has owned his Hawthorne business and building for 29 years. The lifelong Portlander found similar sentiment among neighbors and began printing anti-meter signs from his computer this month. The white fliers dot windows of many storefronts on the boulevard.

Members of the Hawthorne Boulevard Business Association say those who oppose the **parking** plan are charging forward without enough information.

"All people have is 'I don't like **parking** meters,' " says developer Paul Niedergang, who has an office on Hawthorne. "The question is: Are we losing business, are we making it less desirable for people to come to Hawthorne because **parking** is a hassle?"

Before deciding anything, he says, people should see the results of the **parking** study, and a customer evaluation and demographics survey.

**Adams** says he understands merchants' concern.

"I'm totally sympathetic because at first blush, it's totally counterintuitive," he says. "When I first heard about it, I thought, 'Well, that's a dumb idea. It's going to chase all the customers away.' "

Now, though, with information from the University of California at Los Angeles, he says meters and **parking** permits would help businesses by ensuring a regular turnover of customers without crowding residential streets. It also could help the environment if **parking** fees encouraged employees and others to use mass transit, **Adams** says.

Under his plan, much of the money from tickets and meters would funnel back to the **neighborhood parking** committees, he says.

"I'm going to be totally open book about this," **Adams** says. "This is not something the city will make money on."

And it's not something the city will ram down **neighborhoods'** throats, he promises.

"If folks don't want to do it, we won't go forward," he says. The Hawthorne and Belmont business associations say they're willing to consider it.

Chassaing insists **Adams** is listening to the wrong people if he thinks merchants are open to the idea. Two or three times a week, he walks Hawthorne from Ninth to 50th streets, fliers in hand. Only two people, he says, have turned them away.

"Sometimes we shoot ourselves in the foot to gain a dime," Chassaing says.

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