



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

OFFICE OF THE INDEPENDENT BUDGET ANALYST REPORT

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Item Number: 5

IBA Review of Proposed Revisions to the Special Event Parking Program

OVERVIEW

On April 16, the Economic Development and Intergovernmental Relations Committee will consider a proposal from Council District 7 to modify the City's current Special Event Parking Program in the vicinity of Petco Park. The proposal, referred to as the "5-5-5" approach, would reduce the special event hourly parking rate to \$5.00, shorten the duration of special event meter rate enforcement to five hours, and decrease the geographic boundary of the special event zone to approximately five blocks which is estimated to be a one-quarter mile radius from Petco Park. These changes are intended to alleviate cost impacts on residents, workers, and local businesses, while potentially improving economic activity in the Downtown core.

In response, the Transportation Department prepared an initial analysis comparing the proposed changes to the existing program using data from 23 special events in Fiscal Year 2026, from September 2025 through January 2026, which is attached to this report as Attachment 1.

This IBA report assesses and further refines that analysis. Based on information currently available, we anticipate that the proposed changes would reduce parking meter by approximately \$1.3 million, which should be weighed against the proposal's goals of alleviating cost impacts and potentially increasing economic activity.

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FISCAL/POLICY DISCUSSION

Background

There have been several parking initiatives implemented since 2025. On January 27, 2025, the City Council took action to increase parking meter rates to \$2.50 per hour. Prior to this, a significant majority of parking meters charged an hourly rate of \$1.25.¹ In June 2025, City Council adopted further increased special event parking meter rates as one aspect of the Mayor's Parking Reform Package.

Implementation of the Special Event Parking Program began in September 2025, with the intention of managing parking demand, encouraging alternative modes of transportation to Downtown, and generating additional revenue during major events at Petco Park. The program applies to events with attendance exceeding 10,000 and establishes a special event parking zone extending one-half mile from Petco Park. Within this area, parking meters are priced at \$10.00 per hour and, for Padres games, these increased rates are enforced for a six-hour period which begins two hours prior to the event and continues for four hours after the start of the event. Other events, such as concerts, are enforced for the duration of the event, which can exceed six hours.²

The program was also envisioned to be extended to Sundays, consistent with a broader proposal to extend parking meters to Sundays as part the Mayor's Parking Reform Package. However, upon its approval, a provision was added to the Municipal Code³ requiring the establishment of a residential permit parking program prior to extending parking meter hours to Sundays within residential and mixed use areas. A residential permit program was presented to Council on January 27, 2026, but ultimately was not approved. Although there was one event in January where special event parking meter rates were implemented on a Sunday, the program currently does not enforce these rates (or any rates) on Sundays due to the lack of an approved residential permit program.⁴

The "5-5-5" proposal would reduce the special event hourly parking rate to \$5.00, shorten the duration of special event meter rate enforcement to five hours, and decrease the geographic boundary of the special event zone to approximately five blocks (or approximately one-quarter mile from Petco Park). Outside of the 5 blocks, parking meter rates would default to \$2.50 per hour, consistent with rates currently outside of the special event zone.

For purposes of the comparison analysis below, the meters that would continue to have increased special event rates under the 5-5-5 proposal are referred to as the "inner quarter mile," while those

¹ At that time, hourly parking meter rates varied by location between \$0.50 to \$1.25.

² For context, as part of the Mayor's Parking Reform Package, [Council Policy 200-04](#) was amended to allow meter rates to be set up to \$20.00 per hour in special event areas during, and up to four hours before the special event, as needed to cover the City's costs for managing parking and traffic during the special event. The Reform Package also included an increase to the range of hourly parking meter rates to \$1 up to \$20 in San Diego Municipal Code Section 86.0123(b), under the authority of California Vehicle Code section 22508.

³ Municipal Code section 86.0128(d)

⁴ According to the Transportation Department, as the City was initially rolling out the program special event rates were inadvertently charged on one Sunday. The City is working to refund those customers and have implemented safeguards to prevent this from occurring again.

inside the existing half-mile radius that would default to \$2.50 per hour are referred to as “the outer quarter mile.”

Recent projections for FY 2026 assume revenue collected from the Special Event Parking Program will total \$1.7 million.⁵ Actual revenue may be closer to \$1.4 million given revenue collected at the time of this writing, though available data is currently very limited. The Five Year Financial Outlook assumed a total of \$2.8 million in FY 2027, though \$2.0 million may be more reasonable based on current, limited data. Parking meter revenue must be spent on parking, mobility, and traffic safety within the parking meter zone it was generated, which would be the Downtown community for special events. Examples of eligible expenses include fixing streetlights, patching potholes, paving, sidewalk replacement, traffic safety improvements, and street sweeping in Downtown.⁶

Fiscal Impact Analysis

As shown in the Comparative Program Analysis table below, the “5-5-5” proposal is estimated to reduce Special Event Parking revenue from \$2.0 million under the current program to \$368,000 annually representing a reduction of \$1.6 million. Since parking meter revenue would continue to be generated in the outer quarter mile at standard rates of \$2.50 and for one hour within the inner quarter mile due to hours of enforcement going from six to five, this partially offsets the reduction for a net estimated revenue impact of \$1.3 million. Additionally, there are likely to be additional operational costs to implement the new policy. The Transportation Department has cited one-time costs related to creating new signage as well as costs associated with removing and reinstalling signage.

The revenue estimates for the current program are based on the average revenue generated per special event calculated using actual revenue data from 22 special events from September 2025 through January 2026 provided by the Transportation Department.⁷ The 5-5-5 proposal estimates are based on the same data adjusted to reflect reduced rates, enforcement duration, and geographic coverage under the proposed policy. To project full year revenue, the average revenue per special event for both scenarios, Current Program and 5-5-5 Proposal, was multiplied by 80 events per year which is based on a full season of Padres home games.⁸

⁵ The FY 2026 Adopted Budget assumed \$6.3 million in revenue from the Special Event Parking Program, but the projection has since been revised to \$1.7 million primarily due to: 1) the budget assuming an even larger one-mile special event zone, and 2) a July 1st start date versus the actual September start date.

⁶ Parking meter revenue supports program administration and infrastructure expenses. Program administration is performed by the City Treasurer’s Office, Transportation Department, and the Police Department for parking meter enforcement. Eligible infrastructure expenses include, but are not limited to, street light repair, traffic signal repair, pothole repair, sidewalk repair, sign repair and replacement, street striping, tree trimming, street resurfacing, street sweeping and enforcement, and storm drain inlet cleaning. With the waiver of Council Policy 100-18 for FY 2026 and 2027, the 15% previously allocated to the Community Parking Districts is available for these activities.

⁷ Transportation Department provided actual revenue data from 23 special events but since one event occurred on a Sunday which will not be occurring in the future, we removed that data point for establishing future annual projections.

⁸ Although a full season of Padres home games includes Sundays which are not part of the Special Event Program, other events do occur throughout the year in addition to Padres games making 80 events per year potentially still a reasonable assumption.

As of the Fiscal Year 2026 Mid-Year Budget Monitoring Report released in January 2026, the Transportation Department projected an updated revenue per event of \$35,000. However, the Department indicated this estimate is based on anticipated future conditions – including increased enforcement expected to increase compliance, ongoing program stabilization, and greater user familiarity – and may be refined as additional data becomes available. Since this estimate is higher than the averages calculated based on 22 events, the \$35,000 projection is not used as a basis of comparison.

Comparative Program Analysis				
	Current Program	5-5-5 Proposal	Revenue at Standard Meter Rate (Offset)	Net Revenue Impact
Special Event Hourly Rate	\$10	\$5 (Inner 1/4 Mile)	\$2.50	
Hours	6 for Padres games; For the duration of event for others	5 for all events	6 (Outer 1/4 Mile) / 1 (Inner 1/4 Mile) ²	
Geographic Area	1/2 Mile	1/4 Mile ¹	Outer 1/4 Mile + Limited Inner 1/4 Mile	
Average Revenue per Event	\$25,100	\$4,600	\$4,000	
Estimated Events per Year	80	80	80	
Annual Revenue	\$2,008,000	\$368,000	\$320,000	

¹ Note a quarter mile is being used to estimate the proposed 5 block radius.

² Revenue reflects estimated collections at standard meter rates of \$2.50 per hour, including both parking activity in the outer quarter mile that would no longer be included in the proposed special event zone, and the one hour within the inner quarter mile that would no longer be subject to special event meter rates due to proposed hours of enforcement going from six to five. There were four events that exceeded six hours and for these we assume standard meter rates and hours (e.g. enforcement until 10pm) apply.

Driver Behavior and Demand

This analysis assumes that parking demand and driver behavior remain constant across pricing scenarios. Lower parking rates may lead to increased utilization of meters farther away from Petco Park, changes in parking patterns, or shifts in demand between the inner and outer quarter miles which could impact the estimates above. However, those impacts are unlikely to result in higher revenue than under the current program. As Transportation Department’s September 2024 and September 2025 revenue and utilization comparison of eight Padres games indicates in Attachment 1, the current program has resulted in significantly higher transaction volumes (17,306 versus 10,626, a 63% increase) reflecting greater driver turnover, as well as significantly higher revenue generation at \$10 per hour in September 2025 as compared to \$1.25 per hour in September 2024 (\$201,754 in total revenue versus \$17,008⁹).

⁹ Parking meter revenue generated during Padres games September 2025 was 11.9 times higher than revenue generated during September 2024, while meter rates were 8 times higher than in 2024, which suggests growing parking space turnover and demand in spite of the increased special-event rates.

Additional survey¹⁰ data from the Transportation Department, included in Attachment 2, indicates that approximately 50% of respondents consider walking distances of up to one mile to be reasonable (including 19.7% for less than one-half mile and 30.4% for one-half to one mile). This suggests that the existing one-half mile boundary is already within an acceptable walking range for many users. Given that the proposal reduces the special event parking zone to one-quarter mile, this may create a higher incentive to park just outside of that boundary since attendees would still be able to park close to Petco Park at half the cost. If so, this could potentially reduce revenue estimates for the proposal noted above. While the proposal's goals include increasing economic activity by keeping meter rates low enough to avoid discouraging visitors, the proposal could also have unintended impacts on businesses in the outer quarter mile that may benefit from increased turnover in nearby metered parking spaces. These aims and potential impacts should be weighed against each other.

Given limited data, projected revenue impacts should be interpreted with caution. While our analysis indicates a reduction in revenue under the proposed "5-5-5" policy to be approximately \$1.3 million, the magnitude of that reduction remains uncertain and will vary depending on actual usage patterns over time. Additional data collected over a longer period would provide a more reliable basis for evaluating the fiscal impacts of potential changes to the program.

CONCLUSION

Based on the available data provided by the Transportation Department, the proposed "5-5-5" policy is projected to reduce Special Event Parking Program revenue compared to the existing program by a net of \$1.3 million per year under current assumptions. There are also likely to be additional one-time operational costs to implement the new policy that are currently not quantified.

This anticipated revenue reduction would have an impact on the FY 2027 Budget, as all parking meter revenues – including those collected from the current Special Event Parking Program – that are not needed to administer the parking meter program will be allocated to expenses in parking meter zones that would otherwise need to be reduced or be borne by the General Fund (e.g. fixing streetlights, street sweeping, patching potholes, etc.). Given that the Special Event Parking Program is in the downtown parking meter zone, either infrastructure maintenance and improvement activities in Downtown would need to be reduced, or General Fund expenses elsewhere in the budget would need to be reduced. Ultimately, the extent of the revenue reduction remains uncertain due to limited data and unknown impacts to driver behavior. These impacts should be weighed against the proposal's goals of alleviating cost impacts and potentially increasing economic activity.

Given these limitations, allowing the program to operate over a longer period, including a full year of data collection, would provide a more reliable basis for evaluating program performance and informing potential policy adjustments.

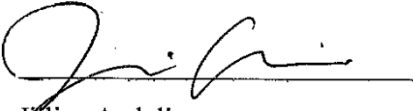
¹⁰ The 2010 survey represents the most recent available ConsumerStyles data providing information related to walking distance. A more recent survey was done in 2025 focusing on walking behavior rather than distance specific measures using ConsumerStyles data from 2022, [Self-Reported Reasons Prevented US Adults from Walking to Places Within 10 Minutes of Home](#).



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Attachments:

Attachment 1: Transportation Department's: 5-5-5 Special Event Proposal – Draft Briefing Document

Attachment 2: Weighted percentages for what adults think is a reasonable distance to walk for transportation by demographic characteristics, Summer ConsumerStyles, 2010



TRANSPORTATION

5-5-5 Special Event Proposal – Draft Briefing Document

Special Event Zone Purpose

The Special Event Zone parking program was established to fulfill several policy goals:

- Better manage available on-street parking during peak demand by increasing turnover and increasing availability of on-street parking for other community needs during events, when it can be difficult to access businesses,
 - Citywide target utilization of 85% per municipal code and Council Policy
- Encourage alternative modes of transportation to events at Petco Park, which is relatively well served by transit
- Generate revenue for reinvestments that improve safe access and community infrastructure in the surrounding area, as required by state law and municipal code

Overview of 5-5-5 Special Event Proposal

Council District 7's initial 5-5-5 Special Events proposal is to reduce the special events parking meter rate from \$10/hour to \$5/hour, reduce the active hours of the rate from 6 hours to 5 hours, and reduce the special event zone from 1/2 mile to 5 blocks (for analysis, staff assumed this as 1/4 mile). All projections in this briefing document are based on this assumption.

Council District 7 has stated their reasoning for the reduced rates and area is because they believe the current policy unfairly burdens residents, workers, and small businesses. Additionally, Council District 7 has also stated that the revenue generated would be higher if we were to reduce the area and rates, because they assume we would have more meter utilization farther away from Petco Park compared to the current special events area.

The analyses below provide a comparison of what the projected revenue would be if the City were to maintain the current special events zone compared to the 5-5-5 proposal and also compares revenue and meter utilization data prior to the when the special event rates went into effect.

Projected Revenue Comparison

Current Special Events Area Revenue Projection Methodology

The Transportation Department reviewed actual revenue data for all special events since September 2, 2025 (23 events) and determined that the **average revenue per event is \$24,800 for the 1/2 mile area, \$10/hr rate, and 6-hour duration**. Assuming 80 events per

year and \$24,800 of revenue per event, the annual projected revenue for the current special events area is approximately \$1.94M.

Note that for the purpose of mid-year FY26 budget projections, it was assumed that the revenue generated from special events would increase to \$35,000/event as enforcement increased, generating \$2.8M total for 80 events for a full fiscal year. Data for special events so far has shown an increase in revenue per event, especially when compared to the first few weeks of implementation in September, so it is reasonable to expect average revenue per event will increase compared to the initial roll-out. A full year of data will help the City understand fluctuations and make more accurate projections going forward.

5/5/5 Special Events Proposal Revenue Projection Methodology

Actual revenue data for the 5/5/5 special events proposal does not exist – meter rates during special events have never been charged at \$5, and special events hours are not currently set for 5 hours. In order to complete the revenue projection analysis, the Transportation Department had to make assumptions about the revenue generated if this proposal were to be implemented. This does not account for potential changes to driver behavior under different pricing.

In order to determine the projected revenue for the 5/5/5 special events proposal, the Transportation Department reviewed actual special event revenue data for ¼ mile from Petco Park (~5 blocks), reduced that revenue to only include actuals for 1 hour before events and 4 hours during (5 hours), and divided that revenue in half to be equivalent to the amount of revenue that would be generated as a result of the reduction from \$10/hr to \$5/hr parking meter rate. Note that approximately 36% of meters that are active during special events are within the first quarter mile (412 meters) compared to the next quarter mile (738 meters).

Transportation then reviewed actual special event revenue data for the next ¼ mile from Petco Park, reduced that revenue to only include actuals for 1 hour before events and 4 hours during, and divided that revenue by 4 to be equivalent to the amount of revenue that would be generated as a result of the reduction from \$10/hr to \$2.50/hr in this area. **The results of this analysis projected that if the 5/5/5 special events proposal were to be implemented, the average revenue would be approximately \$6,900 per event, using actuals from 23 events.**

A comparison of the anticipated revenue for each scenario is shown below.

Special Events Boundary	Average Revenue per event (23 events)	# of Events per Year	Projected Annual Revenue
Current Special Events Area	\$24,800	80	\$1,984,000
5/5/5 Special Events Area (¼ Mile, 5 hours, \$5/hr rate plus ¼ Mile, 5 hours, \$2.50/hr rate)	\$6,900	80	\$552,000

September 2025 and September 2024 Revenue and Utilization Comparison

The table below compares revenue and meter utilization data from all meters within a half-mile of Petco Park for 8 Padres games in September 2024 (pre-special events rate) and September 2025 (special events rate). These games were on the same day of the week and in the same month in order to best compare. **The data shows total revenue and total number of transactions were significantly higher in September 2025 when the special events rate was in effect – showing that the current implementation has been both successful from a revenue generation standpoint and a vehicle turnover standpoint.** It's important to note when comparing this data that the hourly parking meter rate in September 2024 was \$1.25/hr, which was doubled in February 2025.

Event Month/Year	Total Revenue	Total # of Transactions (Vehicles Served)
September 2025*	\$201,754 (\$10/hr)	17,306
September 2024**	\$17,008 (\$1.25/hr) – Actuals \$34,016 – assumed revenue if \$2.50/hr \$136,064 – assumed revenue if \$10/hr	10,626

*September 2025 dates are: September 11th, 12th, 13th, 22nd, 23rd, 24th, 26th, and 27th

**September 2024 dates are: September 5th, 6th, 7th, 16th, 17th, 18th, 20th, and 21st

Conclusion

The special events rate was implemented in September 2025 and there have been a limited number of events over the implementation period. The current data indicates that the implementation has been successful in terms of vehicle turnover and revenue generation, and it is recommended to keep the current implementation rates and continue to evaluate the program after one full fiscal year of implementation.

Backup Documentation:

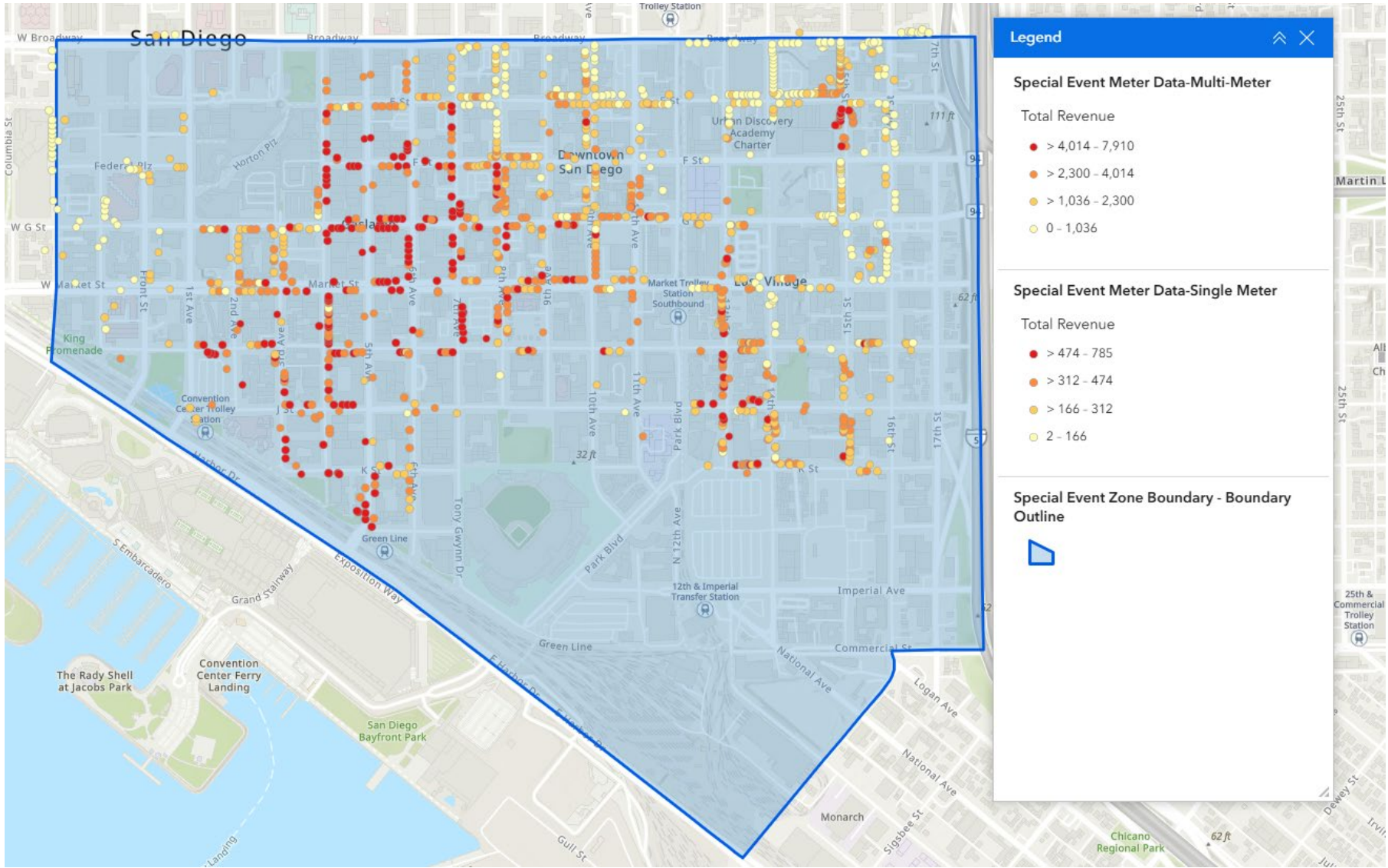
Fiscal Year 2026 Special Events Revenue Data (23 events)

Special Event Date	Event Type	Special Event Rate Hours	Total Special Event Hours	Attendance (people)	1/2 Mile, 6 hours, \$10 rate (Actuals)	First 1/4 Mile, 5 hours, \$5 rate (Assumed)	Outer 1/4 Mile, 5 Hours, \$2.50 rate (Assumed)
9/2/2025	Padres Game	4:30pm - 10:30pm	6	37,870	\$17,252.00	\$2,665	\$1,555
9/3/2025	Padres Game	11:00am - 5:00pm	6	19,797	\$27,552.00	\$5,381	\$2,833
9/5/2025	Savannah Bananas	5:00pm - 11:00pm	6	38,921	\$18,427.00	\$2,709	\$1,490
9/6/2025	Savannah Bananas	5:00pm - 11:00pm	6	39,665	\$19,328.00	\$2,685	\$1,542
9/8/2025	Padres Game	4:30pm - 10:30pm	6	31,171	\$15,903.00	\$2,931	\$1,382
9/9/2025	Padres Game	4:30pm - 10:30pm	6	29,453	\$15,639.00	\$3,052	\$1,351
9/10/2025	Padres Game	3:30pm - 9:30pm	6	33,935	\$20,998.00	\$4,018	\$2,173
9/11/2025	Padres Game	4:30pm - 10:30pm	6	26,806	\$17,869.00	\$3,393	\$1,365
9/12/2025	Padres Game	4:30pm - 10:30pm	6	33,983	\$22,815.00	\$4,322	\$2,196
9/13/2025	Padres Game	3:30pm - 9:30pm	6	35,583	\$29,705.00	\$5,809	\$2,894
9/17/2025	Chris Brown Concert	5:00pm - 11:00pm	6	38,668	\$24,058.00	\$4,006	\$2,284
9/22/2025	Padres Game	4:30pm - 10:30pm	6	38,786	\$22,468.00	\$3,688	\$2,219
9/23/2025	Padres Game	4:30pm - 10:30pm	6	34,864	\$20,619.00	\$3,976	\$2,030
9/24/2025	Padres Game	11:00am - 5:00pm	6	25,820	\$29,001.00	\$5,699	\$3,076
9/26/2025	Padres Game	4:30pm - 10:30pm	6	39,885	\$26,290.00	\$4,325	\$2,840
9/27/2025	Padres Game	3:30pm - 9:30pm	6	41,340	\$32,987.00	\$5,403	\$3,779
11/1/2025	Dia de los Deftones	12:30pm - 11pm	10.5	25,999	\$40,535.00	\$7,851	\$3,600
11/29/2025	WWE: Survivor Series	1:30pm - 7:30pm	6	42,815	\$34,505.00	\$6,201	\$3,634
12/27/2025	Wild Horses Festival	5:00pm - 11:00pm	6	19,355	\$21,973.00	\$3,774	\$1,627

Attachment 1

12/31/2025	NYE Proper	1:00pm - 11pm	10	25,274	\$33,596.00	\$6,270	\$2,439
1/16/2026	San Diego Rodeo	3:00pm - 11pm	8	10,929	\$29,022.00	\$6,730	\$2,804
1/17/2026	San Diego Rodeo	3:00pm - 11pm	8	16,548	\$31,821.00	\$7,033	\$3,084
1/18/2026	San Diego Rodeo	12:00pm-9:00pm	9	11,068	\$11,448.00	\$2,735	\$838
Total			153.5 hrs	698,535 ppl	\$563,811	\$104,650	\$53,034
Average			6.7 hrs	30,371 ppl	\$24,843.59	\$4,550.00	\$2,305.83

Special Events Parking Meter Utilization Map



Weighted percentages for what adults think is a reasonable distance to walk for transportation by demographic characteristics, Summer ConsumerStyles, 2010

Reasonable Distance	None		< 0.5 mile		0.5 to < 1.0 mile		1.0 to <1.5 miles		1.5 to < 2.0 miles		2 or more miles	
	%	(SE)	%	(SE)	%	(SE)	%	(SE)	%	(SE)	%	(SE)
Total	7.3	(0.7)	19.7	(1.1)	30.4	(1.1)	20.9	(1.2)	11.7	(1.0)	9.9	(0.8)
Sex												
Male	7.7	(1.2)	18.3	(1.4)	31.0	(1.5)	20.5	(1.4)	11.7	(1.6)	10.8	(1.1)
Female	6.9	(0.9)	21.0	(1.8)	30.0	(1.5)	21.3	(1.8)	11.8	(1.2)	9.1	(1.1)
Age group (years)*												
18-44	5.7	(1.3) ^a	17.9	(2.1) ^a	28.3	(1.9)	21.6	(2.2)	15.3	(1.9) ^c	11.2	(1.5) ^b
45-64	5.8	(0.7) ^a	18.3	(1.0) ^a	32.6	(1.2)	22.2	(1.1) ^b	9.9	(0.8) ^b	11.2	(0.8) ^b
65+	15.1	(1.4) ^b	28.0	(1.7) ^b	32.2	(1.8)	16.1	(1.4) ^a	5.2	(0.8) ^a	3.5	(0.7) ^a