

Parking fees coming for some Caesars visitors

By Mike Shoro Las Vegas Review-Journal

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Parking fees are coming to six Caesars Entertainment Inc. properties.

The gaming company announced Wednesday that self-parking fees will begin Oct. 30. Nevada residents with valid identification, hotel guests and Caesars Reward loyalty members at platinum rating and above are excluded from the policy.

Self-parking fees will affect all other guests at Caesars Palace, Paris Las Vegas, Bally's, Flamingo, The Linq Hotel and Harrah's, "intended to improve the overall guest experience," the company announced. Self-parking at Miracle Mile Shops and Planet Hollywood will remain free to all guests.

"With this updated self-parking policy, we intend to take care of our best customers — locals, hotel guests and loyal Caesars Rewards members — and provide them with ease and better access to our Las Vegas properties as they continue to stay and play with us," Caesars CEO Tom Reeg said in the announcement. "We are pleased to give back by donating all parking fee profits collected to charitable organizations in the local community and helping our team members impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic."

The company will donate parking fee profits to charitable groups that “support Caesars team members and local communities in need” through the end of the first financial quarter in 2021, the company said.

A Caesars spokeswoman added the policy was enacted “due to limited availability of self-parking for our customers.”

The spokeswoman didn’t answer questions about the specific charitable organizations, whether the fees will remain in place beyond early 2021 or whether a recent spate of violence on the Strip factored into the decision.

A UNLV hospitality professor, Amanda Belarmino, posited that it “could also be a move to increase security in the parking garages” due to the violence. She said most people who visit the properties still can do so for free, and it’s likely designed to prioritize parking for those guests. Belarmino expects self-parking fees to return across the board when properties are all operating in full.

“Part of the purpose of temporarily suspending parking fees was due to the fact that guests had limited options on properties,” she said. “With capacity restrictions on restaurants and the gaming floor, it was logical for casinos to eliminate the parking fees because of potentially increased wait times and reduced amenities.”

A gaming analyst said it was good to see Caesars donate fee profits to charity, but Las Vegas should focus on bringing back customers and prove its value in competing with other travel spots.

“It’s unfortunate to see one of the extra fees that was eliminated during the Great Shutdown come back so soon as the industry is trying to recover and

attract more guests to the destination,” Global Market Advisors LLC partner Brendan Bussmann said.

LaunchVegas LLC consulting group founder Nehme Abouzeid pointed to several factors in the decision; keeping locals happy with free parking, incentivizing loyalty by including parking as a Caesars Rewards perk; potentially using parking fees to pay for “aging infrastructure” and gaining goodwill with charity donations.

He also noted Caesars’ recent merge with Eldorado and its William Hill sportsbook deal, which set the company up to “create the most comprehensive casino and entertainment rewards program ever.”

“Defining the terms of parking is just one small step,” he said.

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