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CITY OF XENIA, OHIO

# MEDIA RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **City of Xenia De-Criminalizes Parking Tickets While Extending Parking Hours and Modifying Regulations**

**Xenia, Ohio (December 26, 2018)** – The City of Xenia will de-criminalize parking tickets and adjust parking fee violations throughout the City while introducing extended parking hours in the downtown area beginning in 2019. The new changes are part of City Ordinance 2018-31, which also created a Parking Violations Bureau in the Police Division for the enforcement and administrative oversight of parking regulations throughout the City. The Parking Violations Bureau will be housed in the Justice Center, 101 N. Detroit Street, which is home to the Xenia Police Division, Xenia Municipal Court and the Xenia Law Department.

Under Ohio law, all parking violations must either be criminal or non-criminal. If criminal, the parking ticket is processed through Municipal Court, court costs are owed, a court appearance may be required, and such information would appear in any criminal record search. Instead, the City of Xenia chose to make parking tickets non-criminal, as permitted under Chapter 4521 of the Ohio Revised Code, which the City believes will be an easier process for both the public and the City's new Parking Violations Bureau.

While creating a new civil process for parking tickets will make it easier for the public to pay or contest a parking ticket, the new rules and regulations will simultaneously allow more free parking time downtown at City parking lots and available on-street parking spaces. Specifically, parking limit times will adjust from a maximum of two hours to a new time limit of three hours. This is expected to help small businesses who have presented concerns to the City that the present City parking times are insufficient.

According to City Manager Brent Merriman, “we found that citizens visiting our downtown enjoyed parking at many of our five municipal lots and three shared lots, as well as utilizing the available on-street parking, but actually thought that more time for free parking would be optimal. In order to take that under consideration, it was prudent for us to also look at our parking regulations comprehensively, therefore we reviewed and amended many rules, regulations, and fees associated with violations to afford more accountability overall.”

Considering the change to a civil process for parking violations may be new to many, the City of Xenia is attempting to properly inform citizens of the new rules and regulations via traditional and non-traditional mediums. An aggressive “Frequently Asked Questions” campaign to inform citizens prior to the effective date of the new parking changes will kick-off in advance of the changes. Information will be posted on the City’s website, eXploreXenia.com as well as via signage throughout the City and via the City’s social media platforms.

The website and handout materials will highlight the comprehensive changes to the City’s parking regulations. Most concerns will center on what citizens can do if they receive a parking ticket. The most common question anticipated is what to do in case of a ticket. Under the new City ordinance, a person has thirty (30) days to answer the charged parking violation in one of three ways:

- Admit the parking violation by paying the \$20.00 fine. Payments can be made in person, by mail, phone or online to the City’s Utility Billing Department, 107 E. Main Street. If a person pays by check or credit card, the ticket number should be noted on the payment or a copy of the ticket should be sent with payment.
- Admit the parking violation, but ask for a waiver or a reduction of the fine. Any request for a waiver or reduction must be in writing and should include an explanation of the circumstances behind the request. The request should be sent to the Police Division’s

Parking Violations Bureau, 101 N. Detroit Street. A request or waiver of the fine may be submitted if:

1. The vehicle was temporarily disabled;
  2. A metered parking space meter was defective;
  3. A vehicle was parked due to a medical emergency;
  4. A person is a government employee in an official government vehicle and was on official business at the time of the violation; or
  5. A person was cited for illegally parking in a handicap parking space, but has proof that at the time of the violation, there was a valid windshield placard or valid special handicapped license plates or a valid parking card but neglected to display the placard, plates or card as required (In such cases the fine may be reduced but not waived).
- Deny the parking violation and request a hearing. The denial and hearing request must be in writing and should be sent to the Police Division's Parking Violations Bureau, 101 N. Detroit Street. The Bureau will schedule a hearing in front of the Hearing Examiner, and will mail notice of the date, time and location of the hearing.

If a person fails to answer the parking ticket in one of the three (3) ways allowed under law within 30 days, an additional \$20 will be charged. The Parking Violations Bureau will send a written Notice of Violation to the vehicle owner. If a person fails to answer the Notice of Violation within 30 days, an additional \$25 penalty will be charged, and a default civil judgement for the parking ticket fine and the additional \$45 in penalties will be entered.

City officials advise the public to visit [eXploreXenia.com](http://eXploreXenia.com) for a complete explanation of the changes and posting of the ordinance in advance of the January 1, 2019, deadline.