



MIRANDA SCHUBERT
Ward 6 – Tucson City Council
3202 E 1st St, Tucson AZ 85716

October 9, 2026

Dear Fourth Avenue Business Owner,

We know there is significant frustration among Fourth Avenue businesses about **parking, maintenance, safety, and the overall economic health and vibrancy of the district.** Fourth Avenue is an iconic, historic, commercial, and cultural destination that holds a special place in Tucson. Its long-term success—and the day-to-day experiences of the business owners, employees, residents, and visitors who make the district what it is—matter deeply to Ward 6 and to generations of Tucsonans.

Our office has been following these concerns closely, and we want to share some information about what has happened—and where we believe attention needs to be focused next to achieve the outcomes many Fourth Avenue business owners have identified.

What happened with parking?

In January 2026, Mayor and Council was asked to consider several significant changes to the City's parking program, including **increasing hourly meter rates from \$1.00 to \$1.50** and extending meter enforcement to **8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.**, seven days a week.

Council Member Schubert requested that a decision be delayed to allow more time for community input. Over the following months, the Ward 6 office:

- **Held three community listening sessions, including Downtown and on Fourth Avenue;**
- Reviewed employee parking surveys from the Fourth Avenue and Downtown districts; and
- Gathered comments submitted by businesses, employees, residents, and other community members by email and phone.

When Mayor and Council revisited the proposal in May, the plan was modified in response to community feedback. **Sunday meter enforcement was removed from the proposal, and the proposed 10:00 p.m. enforcement time was scaled back to 7:00 p.m.** The new parking **rates** were adopted and took effect July 1, 2026.

Why did Fourth Avenue change from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m.?



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That change has a separate history. Fourth Avenue's meter enforcement hours had previously been scheduled to change from **5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.** as part of a citywide change approved in 2024 and implemented elsewhere in June 2025. Implementation on Fourth Avenue was delayed during construction of the Maclovio Barraza Aviation Parkway and moved forward after that project was completed.

According to Park Tucson:

- The change brought Fourth Avenue into alignment with other City metered parking areas, with enforcement from **8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.**
- The change was communicated at several meetings, including a meeting on **April 23, 2026.**
- When the new hours were implemented, Park Tucson followed its practice of issuing **warnings for at least two weeks before beginning full enforcement.**
- When the Passport mobile payment app experienced technical problems, **monetary citations were not issued because of the malfunction.** Parking staff could also verify active Passport sessions directly, so customers who had paid through the app were not cited.

We also recognize that this transition coincided with other parking problems that created additional confusion and frustration. A **miscommunication between TUSD and Park Tucson resulted in unauthorized paid parking management near Fourth Avenue,** affecting nearby businesses. The City subsequently directed that those unauthorized parking areas be removed, and that issue has been resolved.

Taken together, these issues made an already significant change more confusing for Fourth Avenue businesses, employees, and customers. Our office believes it is important to distinguish between the parking policies Mayor and Council adopted and **problems with communication, equipment, and implementation that should not have occurred.**

The meters themselves have been a problem

As of late September, Park Tucson reported:



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- **197 functional meters**
- **Approximately 185 inoperable meters**
- Replacement batteries have been ordered, and Fourth Avenue will be prioritized for repairs once replacement batteries arrive.

That is a real operational problem. **Parking management only works when the parking system works reliably**, and businesses and customers should be able to expect functioning equipment and clear information from the City.

Parking is one of many challenges facing Fourth Avenue

Businesses have also raised concerns about **cleanliness, security, maintenance, marketing, economic conditions, and the overall management of the district.**

At the same time, the Fourth Avenue Merchants Association is reducing some of the maintenance efforts it has historically provided. That raises the longer-term question: **Who provides the enhanced services that make a successful commercial district work?**

Those services can include:

- Regular cleaning and maintenance of the public realm
- Supplemental security and safety services
- Graffiti, trash, and quality-of-life response
- Marketing and promotion
- Business support and economic development
- Coordinated management and advocacy for the district

Potential long-term solution: El Corazón

The proposed **El Corazón Business Improvement District (BID)** deserves attention because it is specifically designed to create a sustainable mechanism for businesses and property owners to collectively fund and coordinate enhanced services in the greater downtown area. Another successful BID already exists Downtown called the Downtown Tucson Partnership.

Many of the issues Fourth Avenue businesses are raising with City leadership—**security, maintenance, cleanliness, promotion, and long-term economic stability**—are exactly



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the kinds of challenges a well-functioning BID is designed to address. Work towards creating such a district is already underway.

Since February 2026, City staff, including staff from the Ward 6 office, have been meeting generally twice a month with Fourth Avenue community members, property managers, and business owners to develop a path toward a BID. The effort is being guided by two community co-chairs, with discussions focused on potential district boundaries, assessment rules, and how revenues could be used. The co-chairs are now developing an outreach plan to bring this work to the broader Fourth Avenue community for discussion and feedback.

This process provides an opportunity for Fourth Avenue businesses and property owners to help shape a more sustainable approach to the very challenges being raised today. **The City still has responsibilities, and a BID does not replace them.** Rather, a BID can provide dedicated resources and a coordinated structure for **enhanced services** that go beyond the City's baseline responsibilities and that individual businesses cannot reasonably provide on their own.

Where we go from here

My office believes Fourth Avenue succeeds when businesses, property owners, the Merchants Association and the City are working from the same facts and toward the same goal.

That means **fixing broken parking equipment, making parking rules clear and predictable, addressing legitimate safety concerns, and building a sustainable system for maintaining and supporting the district over the long term.**

We want to continue that conversation directly with you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Miranda Schubert".

Miranda Schubert
Council Member, Ward 6
City of Tucson



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