

Dubai shopping malls eye parking charge move

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NEW CHARGES: Shopping malls in Dubai are considering parking charges. (Getty Images)

Dubai malls may soon introduce parking fees to limit the number of Dubai Metro users leaving their cars in their car parks.

A Dubai radio station on Sunday reported that the Mall of the Emirates, the world's largest mall by sales, is set to introduce parking meters for people leaving their cars in its car park for longer than four hours.

No details regarding the level of charges was mentioned.

“At the Mall of the Emirates we do everything to ensure that there are sufficient car park spaces available for our customers. With Mall of the Emirates Metro station so conveniently situated we are looking into a number of ways we can manage our parking spaces. We will announce details of any schemes shortly,” a spokesperson told *Arabian Business*.

A four-hour time limit would enable most MoE shoppers to continue parking for free, while commuters taking the car to the mall's metro station would have to pay.

Nakheel, owner of Ibn Battuta, said it too was looking at different ways of managing its parking facilities.

“Ibn Battuta Mall anticipates increased patronage as a direct result of the new Metro line and station,” said David Thurling, managing director of Nakheel Retail Shopping Malls.

“Parking at the mall will continue to be managed in such a way as to ensure that all shoppers and visitors are provided with convenient and accessible car parking facilities. We are also looking at ways in which to best accommodate the needs of Metro patrons who may wish to utilise the Mall's parking facilities.”

Emaar's Dubai Marina Mall does not charge for parking but signs telling visitors to pay for their parking have caused confusion among its visitors. A company spokesperson was not immediately available for comment.

Al Ghurair Group's BurJuman mall already charges for parking, but the money is refunded if shoppers spend a certain amount of money.

MoE was the highest grossing mall in the world last year, a MAF official told *Arabian Business* in May.

Naeem Ghafoor, chief executive of Skyline Retail Services, a Dubai-based consultancy, said he did not think the parking fees suggested in media reports on Sunday would impact sales at the mall.

"I doubt very much that people spend more than four hours shopping at Mall of the Emirates," he said.