

# Your Town

search  GO

[< Back to front page](#)

Text size - +

ALLSTON BRIGHTON, BACK BAY, BEACON HILL, CHARLESTOWN, DOWNTOWN, FENWAY-KENMOR, JAMAICA PLAIN, MATTAPAN, NORTHEND, ROSLINDALE, ROXBURY, SOUTH BOSTO, SOUTHEND

## Boston parking tickets issued during 5-day span next month can be paid in toy donations

Posted by Matt Rocheleau November 16, 2011 05:51 PM

[Print](#) | [Comments \(\)](#)

ADVERTISEMENT

### ALLSTON-BRIGHTON REAL ESTATE

**86**  
Homes for sale

**160**  
Rentals available

**6**  
Open houses this week

**0**  
New listings this week

ADVERTISEMENT



Waiting for Twitter to feed in the latest...

[Follow other Boston.com Tweets](#) | [What is Twitter?](#)



Mayor Thomas M. Menino (left) joined members of the United States Marine Corps to announce Boston's "Toys for Tickets" campaign and to help kick off the annual *Toys for Tots* campaign on Nov. 9. Beside Menino is USMC Staff Sgt. Schidner.

By **Matt Rocheleau**, Town Correspondent

For the 18th straight year, Boston parking scofflaws will be able to literally wrap up some of their ticket payments when they visit City Hall.

Any non-public safety parking ticket issued on Boston streets between Dec. 5 and Dec. 9 can be paid off by donating a non-violent, wrapped toy, of equal or greater value than fine amount, that will be given to a local needy child for the holidays, city officials said.

The city's "[Toys for Tickets](#)" initiative will accept the toy donations for eligible tickets from Dec. 8 through Dec. 16 between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. at the parking clerk's office on the second floor of City Hall or at the City's tow lot at 200 Frontage Rd., the city says. Drivers must bring the parking ticket and a receipt for the toy.

And, many of the drivers who come in to exchange a toy for clearing their violation are thankful for the opportunity to donate, according to city parking officials.

“We write 1.5 million tickets a year and I have yet to have anyone come up to me and say ‘hey, thank you for that parking ticket,’” Thomas Tinlin, commissioner of the transportation department which oversees the parking clerk’s office, said by phone today. “But, this is the only time of the year we see people coming in and not grousing about their parking ticket.”

“Someone may get a \$25 ticket and we see people come in here with donations well over the violation amount, sometimes \$75 in toys,” he added. “They enjoy it because they know they’re going to put help put a smile on the face of a child in need.”

The five-day window of eligible tickets is the longest the city has ever offered since Thomas M. Menino launched the program during 1993, his first holiday season as Boston’s mayor.

One decade ago, just two days of tickets were eligible and the collection period lasted only two days as well, the city said. This year, the eight-day stretch during which toys can be dropped off will be the second longest collection period the program has ever offered.

Last year, the city offered three days of eligible tickets followed by a five-day collection period that was later extended by five more days due to a high number of families needing assistance, officials said. Over the 10-day collection period, the city collected \$3,495 worth of donated toys.

“Drivers who came in with tickets expressed pleasure to have this opportunity to contribute to a charity and pay their bill at the same time,” city transportation spokeswoman Tracey Ganiatsos said in an e-mail. “Some donated in excess of the original fine amount. We hope that more drivers will make the effort to handle their ticket payments with toys this year.”

Though 14,000 tickets were eligible to be resolved by toy payment a year ago, only 103 – less than 1 percent – of them were settled through the toy donation method. It benefits local, less fortunate children during the holiday season.

“During these difficult economic times, families are struggling everyday just to make ends meet,” Menino said in a statement. “After putting food on the table and paying the bills, many parents and guardians don’t have the ability to buy toys. Unfortunately, this means that too many kids are missing out on the joys of the Holiday season. This year the demand will be very high. I am asking everyone to give what they can.”

There is no set goal on how many toys the program hopes to collect.

“We want to collect as much in toys as possible,” the transportation spokeswoman said. “We strongly encourage as many Boston drivers as possible to participate. It’s for a very worthy cause, especially with so many families currently in tough financial circumstances. This is a program where you can be assured that 100 percent of your donation is reaching people in need.”

Public safety violations that are excluded from this program are: parking in the way of handicapped ramps; parking in spots reserved for those with handicapped or disabled veteran license plates; blocking fire hydrants; parking in crosswalks; double parking; parking less than 20 feet from an intersection; parking in a fire lane; and being in a no stopping and standing zone.

*E-mail Matt Rocheleau at [mjrochele@gmail.com](mailto:mjrochele@gmail.com).*

*For the latest updates about your community, follow some of our local neighborhood, city and town Twitter accounts, [here](#).*



Mayor Thomas M. Menino (center) joined members of the United States Marine Corps to announce Boston's "Toys for Tickets" campaign and to help kick off the annual *Toys for Tots* campaign on Nov. 9. Behind the mayor are USMC Col. Fallon (left) and USMC Staff Sgt. Schidner (right).

[Tweet](#)

[◀ Previous entry](#)

[Next entry ▶](#)