



May 28, 2020

To: Cornwall City Council
Cc: City Clerk Manon Levesque
Re: Response on Business Parking - COVID-19

On request from the office of the General Manager, Planning, Development and Recreation, the Cornwall Downtown Business Improvement Area asked to prepare a response to the motion presented to council by counsellor Eric Bergeron at the council meeting on May 11th regarding "Business Parking - COVID-19".

Parking in the downtown has been an issue that the DBIA has encouraged the City to address for some time. The DBIA continues to be in favour of:

- 1) Enforced 1-hour complimentary on-street parking
and
- 2) Enforced 2-hour complimentary parking in the area municipal parking lots

It is recommended that these measures remain in place in parallel with the Eastern Ontario Health Unit COVID-19 related safety measures and restrictions on retail and food service businesses.

In offering complementary parking as noted above, it would not only limit the touching of common area's such as pay meters, it would send a powerful message to DBIA merchants and to the community that downtown businesses are open to safely serve customers again.

Prior to the pandemic, the implementation of the new parking meters resulted in a harmful impact on DBIA members. A survey conducted between March 4th and March 10th, 2020 by the Chamber of Commerce, in association with the DBIA, illustrates that of the 32 respondents, there was:

- A DECLINE IN SALES: An average decline in sales of -15% with some respondents experiencing up to 50% drop in sales
- A NEGATIVE IMPACT ON BUSINESS: 53% reported a negative impacted on their business
- A LOSS IN CUSTOMER BASE: 50% of the respondents lost customers, with 0% claiming an increase in customers

The negative impact of changes to parking before the pandemic, coupled with the disastrous effect of the emergency orders in response to the pandemic, has created a daunting challenge for members of the DBIA. The City can provide the members with some relief by immediately instituting the recommendations in this letter. If the parking changes demonstrate a positive impact on members, the DBIA further encourages the City to extend the free parking in perpetuity.

The DBIA appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback to Council and is eager to work with administration on a winning resolution to the matter.

Thank You,

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Chairperson,
Downtown Business Improvement Area
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