



The Corporation of the City of Cornwall
Regular Meeting of Council
Report

Department: Planning, Development and Recreation
Division: Building and By-law
Report Number: 2021-12-Planning, Development and Recreation
Prepared By: Mark A. Boileau, General Manager
Meeting Date: January 11, 2021
Subject: Business Parking – COVID-19

Purpose

To update Council regarding business parking during COVID-19 as outlined in the New Business Motion of May 11, 2020 and related Council Motions of June 8, 2020 and September 14, 2020.

Recommendation

1. That the City continue the current free 15 minute curbside parking in the Downtown and Le Village, for the period of the Provincial Shutdown;
2. That Council reinstate the original parking program, which existed prior to COVID-19, following the Provincial Shutdown.

Financial Implications

The City approves a parking budget annually that is funded solely from parking revenues such as user fees, fines, and permits. The 2020 parking budget was \$673,299.

Since March 2020, due to the changes in the parking program, the City has not been collecting parking fees as budgeted and until recently provided enforcement for emergency conditions only, including vehicles impeding intersections, blocked fire hydrants, emergency fire routes, and misuse of accessible parking spaces.

The City's estimated financial position at December 31, 2020, as it relates to the municipality's parking budget is a net shortfall of \$340,000. Parking revenue is estimated to be below budget by \$377,000 (parking fees \$279,300, violations \$97,700). Expenditures are expected to be under budget by \$37,000.

For 2020, the City will offset this shortfall by utilizing Safe Restart Agreement (SRA) funding received from the federal and provincial governments. The SRA funding is to help municipalities address operating pressures related to the COVID-19 pandemic. This funding provided the City with the opportunity to continue to deliver critical public services and address the most urgent needs in the community.

The 2021 parking budget has been prepared with the same service level as in prior years (original parking program, with usual fees). If Council decides to continue to provide complimentary parking, approximately \$400,000 of net expenditures related to: By-law Enforcement, City equipment rentals, lease agreements and parking lot maintenance (snow removal, surface improvements, taxes, electricity, etc.), would be unfunded for this service level change.

Currently, Cornwall's parking program is self-funded, whereby any surplus/deficit is contributed to or funded from the Parking Reserve Fund. The Parking Reserve Fund has an estimated balance of \$42,000. Any additional shortfall in funding would become dependant upon the general taxation base.

Background / Discussion

The City of Cornwall provides municipal parking in the Downtown and Le Village commercial areas through a combination of on-street metered parking spots and parking lots.

The original New Business Motion regarding business parking was introduced at the May 11, 2020 Council meeting, whereby Council requested Administration to prepare a report on parking rule changes for the remainder of 2020 including and not limited to:

- ending paid parking within city limits,
- relaxing parking By-laws to allow for curbside pickup,
- allowing businesses to claim a parking spot in front of their business for expanded shopping space,
- to identify spaces for expanded pedestrian access (for social distancing) and for possible expansion of bike lanes throughout the city.

Subsequent motions of Council included the following:

Jun 8, 2020: Motion to provide two-hour complimentary parking at all metered curbside and pay-by-plate parking spaces until September 14, 2020.

Sep 14, 2020: Motion to maintain the current parking program until December 31, 2020 and the program be revisited at the first meeting of January 2021.

Both Council reports for the above meetings are attached and provide detailed background on this subject.

The City implemented changes to the parking program to provide financial relief to residents and businesses, and has facilitated curbside commerce and on-street patios. With the recent Provincewide shutdown, Administration has arranged for the curbside signage to be re-erected to assist merchants.

The relief to payment requirements provided by Council in the two previous motions has certainly benefitted Downtown and Le Village merchants and shoppers, however its impact is arguably difficult to measure, particularly given our very affordable rates. Council had also supported Transit Services with complimentary fares until September 2020; it is likely that this subsidy benefited a greater transportation need. At the end of the day, it becomes a question of which services Council wishes to subsidize going forward. Any municipal parking program costs money; for land, improvements, enforcement, and maintenance. The City's customary parking program charges the user for the service; any subsidy including those provided since March 2020, are generally charged to the taxpayer. In 2020, the shortfall in funding was covered by the SRA funding as outlined earlier, however going forward Council may wish to direct funds from this funding program to other community needs.

Administration has updated the parking revenue table, attached to this report, to reflect the most recent estimates for 2020, in addition to past 2018-19 figures.

Document Title:	Business Parking - COVID 19 - 2021-12-Planning, Development and Recreation.docx
Attachments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Business Parking - COVID 19 - 2020-307-PDR June 8, 2020.pdf- Business Parking - COVID 19 - 2020-362-PDR September 14, 2020.pdf- Parking Revenue Comparison 2018, 2019, 2020.pdf- Municipal Parking Comparison Review As of May 29, 2020.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Jan 7, 2021

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Mark A. Boileau - Jan 6, 2021 - 5:14 PM

Tracey Bailey - Jan 6, 2021 - 5:56 PM

Maureen Adams - Jan 7, 2021 - 8:56 AM