



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

Department: Planning, Development and Recreation
Division: Building and By-law
Report Number: 2020-307-Planning, Development and Recreation
Prepared By: Mark A. Boileau, General Manager
Meeting Date: June 8, 2020
Subject: Business Parking – COVID-19

Purpose

To provide Council with information regarding Business Parking during COVID-19 as outlined in the New Business Motion approved May 11, 2020.

Recommendation

That given the impact of COVID-19, Council approve the following:

1. Continue to provide complimentary parking at all city spaces until Monday, June 22, 2020; and,
2. Provide first hour complimentary parking at all metered curbside and pay-by-plate parking spaces from June 22, 2020 until August 31, 2020; and,
3. Continue the City's current parking program starting September 1, 2020.

Financial Implications

The attached Parking Revenue document provides information on the historical collections (2018 and 2019), which would assist in determining the impact of providing complimentary parking, whether at meters or at Pay-by-Plate machines. Any revenue reduction is of concern if Cornwall's parking program is to remain self-financing and not dependent on the general taxation base.

Strategic Priority Implications

This item meets the City's strategy for reducing the number of vacant commercial spaces, as well as its mission of providing a financially sustainable community.

Background / Discussion

At the Regular Council Meeting of May 11, 2020, the following New Business Motion was approved:

Now therefore be it resolved that Council request 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

Now therefore be it further resolved that this report be presented to Council at its next Regular Meeting of Council of Monday, May 25, 2020.

The goal of the report would be to provide a series of suggestions on which rules would impact the local business community the most and at what cost to the city.

Cornwall's Parking Program:

The parking program, among other features, provides for paid public parking facilities on-street and in municipal parking lots. It is composed of 270 parking meters, 12 pay-by-plate machines, and 10 parking lots. Most are located in the two BIA Districts; those that produce the highest demand.

As well, over 200 monthly parking passes are available to the public for reserved municipal lot parking. Except for the Si Miller and Lally-Blanchard lots, all lots are located in the two BIA Districts. There is currently a waiting list for parking passes.

Enforcement is a component of the parking program and is administered by By-Law Enforcement Services. It ensures among other things compliance with Traffic and Parking By-Law 069-1989 regulations which require payment for the



use of convenient City owned parking facilities. Enforcement also protects public welfare and right-of-way maintenance regulations in favour of fire hydrant access, clear fire routes, property and emergency accessibility, barrier-free parking, school zone safety, garbage and snow removal, together with street cleaning.

Paid public parking facilities promote parking space use turnover and limits monopolization of available parking. This benefits commercial activity, particularly for retail and service establishments.

Public parking is considered a necessity in a city's commercial core where private parking is most often not available. In Cornwall, revenue from paid parking and from Parking By-Law Enforcement is programmed to offset parking program administration, enforcement and upgrading expenditures, as well as partially offsetting infrastructure maintenance and replacement.

Payment parking is enforced between 9:00 am and 6:00 pm Monday to Friday. Use of City parking facilities is otherwise complimentary. Public welfare and right-of-way maintenance regulations are enforced 24/7 and cannot be exempted from enforcement actions. Cornwall Police Service provides enforcement after hours, on weekends and statutory holidays.

Where private parking is provided for example in suburban shopping mall lots, similar maintenance costs as well as initial land purchase and municipal tax costs are factored into the merchandise pricing. No parking, be it public or private is "free".

Ending paid parking within city limits:

Parking revenues for the last couple of years were \$588,859.38 in 2018, and \$533,810.75 in 2019 (see attached spreadsheet); therefore, on average, the monthly revenue is approximately \$50,000 (\$46,777 over 2018 and 2019). These totals include parking permits, meter collections, machine collections, and violations. It is estimated that the financial impact of removing payments for the balance of 2020 (June to December) would be \$325,000.

The parking program is self-financed (user-pay cost recovery model), in that any equipment or capital improvement costs, annual licensing fees and salaries dedicated to parking enforcement are paid for from the above revenues. In recent years, By-Law Enforcement Services has purchased approximately \$120,000 in pay-by-plate machines, which are situated both street side and in interior municipal downtown lots.

The requirement for payment of parking not only contributes to the parking program, but also controls parking at the subject locations. For example, the requirement for payment in front of businesses ensures turnover, which is beneficial to the business and to the customer. Similarly, the requirement for payment in the interior lots ensures that parking spaces are available for permit holders (typically business owners and employees). It would be difficult for example, to ensure that parking spaces are available to customers, versus local residents and at times merchants themselves parking in curbside or interior lots, if parking were complimentary. Our experience in the past week or so is that cars are remaining in place for extended periods of time, and we have received complaints from some store owners as a result.

It should be noted that Cornwall's general rate of \$1 per hour is similar to most other municipalities in Eastern Ontario, and our monthly permit costs are lower than all compared. (See Municipal Information Comparison Table attached).

Complimentary parking for limited timeframes (1 or 2 hours, for example) requires more labour-intensive enforcement at meters; we have received confirmation that the pay-by-plate machines can be programmed to allow first hour complimentary parking, however it will take 10-14 days to be programmed by the contractor, and will have a cost of approximately \$750-\$1,000 to implement. At meters, it requires the Officer to attend initially and after the timeframe, can be more confrontational and more difficult to enforce and defend. It would also result in more complaints on contraventions to By-Law Enforcement Services. More enforcement time by the City's By-Law Enforcement Officers on parking reduces the amount of time spent on other matters such as property standards, yard maintenance, noise complaints, animal control, general By-Law contraventions, etc.

As outlined above, the Pay-by Plate machines can be programmed to have varying rates per hour. This would allow the user to benefit for the first hour, and the balance would return to the normal \$1/hour rate. The program will also be accessible using the ``Way-to-Park`` APP feature, which will soon be available. As these machines are not available throughout the business community, particularly in Le Village, the more traditional oversight will be required outside the downtown.

As a general comment, some form of complimentary parking during the Emergency Period resulting from COVID-19 is of significant assistance to the community's efforts to revitalize business activity and is recommended. However,

as outlined herein, the financial burden of extending the relief more permanently simply transfers the costs for parking provisions onto the general taxpayer. It should be noted that any business providing complimentary on-site parking, whether downtown or abroad, would be paying not only for its associated costs (land, improvements, maintenance, etc.), but would also be subsidizing the community's complimentary parking. It is not uncommon for a business which cannot meet the parking requirements of the Zoning By-Law to be charged a fee (cash-in-lieu amount assigned by the Committee of Adjustment through an application for relief) of \$1,500/space locally, plus the C. of A. \$2,250 application fee. This cost is in fact considerably below actual costs per parking space, and below many other comparable fees for same (ex. Kingston \$2,080, Ottawa \$5,000, London \$7,000, Kitchener \$35,000).

Relaxing parking By-Laws to allow for curbside pickup:

Following the Province's announcement that retailers would be permitted to provide curbside pickup services as of May 11, 2020, the City installed free curbside parking at various locations in the two BIA's. As of Tuesday, May 19, 2020 resulting from the Province's allowance for retailers to sell within their premises using COVID-19 guidelines, there is a diminished need for curbside parking. However, in order to meet the needs of some retailers which have not yet set up public access, the curbside parking is being maintained until no longer required. Staff will continue to monitor this feature.

Allowing businesses to claim a parking spot in front of their business for expanded shopping space:

As per the City's Encroachment Agreement updated in 2016, staff would encourage businesses to apply where they see a good fit for use of additional outdoor space. This may be on the existing bump-outs on Pitt Street from Third to First, or in other pedestrian areas, or in parking spaces once well protected and defined. Staff have had preliminary conversations with a couple of downtown merchants regarding this matter, at the time of writing this report. As some businesses do not have a parking spot in front of their store, this opportunity would not be available to all businesses.

To identify spaces for expanded pedestrian access (for social distancing) and for possible expansion of bike lanes throughout the city:

As per staff's report of May 25, 2020, social distancing in most of the downtown is not problematic. For bike lane commentary, please refer to the Transportation section comments following.

Comments from other Departments/Agencies:

By-Law Division: By-Law Enforcement Services

Parking Management

The City of Cornwall By-Law Enforcement Services monitors, regulates, and enforces parking activity in the city through the administration of the City of Cornwall's Parking By-Law which details restrictions on where and when parking is permitted on all city streets.

Parking Management Objectives

Parking choices are predicated on accessibility, affordability, and safety. The objective is to always provide sufficient parking that is strategically located, appropriately priced and is safe.

It is the City's goal to continue to:

1. Provide and maintain an appropriate supply of affordable, secure, accessible and convenient public parking (*customer focus*).
2. Provide and promote affordable short-term parking services, with fair and consistent enforcement services, that support local businesses and tourism (*economic development focus*).
3. Ensure the revenues generated by the Municipal Parking Program are sufficient to fully recover all related operating and life-cycle maintenance expenditures (*financial sustainability focus*).
4. To work towards residential de-escalation of parking problems (residential housing which is within close surroundings of the downtown core).
5. Work towards improving the efficiency and effectiveness of current and future resources dedicated to parking.
6. Maintain a constant progressive parking infrastructure (meters, machines, APP).
7. Promote a mix of programs to address parking pressures while encouraging activity downtown as well as ensuring convenience for people to shop and do business downtown.
 - a. Free 15-minute parking along some areas on Pitt Street.
 - b. Paid parking in the adjacent blocks.
 - c. Paid parking lots.

Parking Management Importance

Recognizing that public parking is a community asset, the management policies and procedures play an important role in supporting controlled order downtown during regular workdays as well as during activities and events.

1. The parking management process strives to achieve efficient and effective parking management while supporting business vitality and sustainability.
2. Residents pay a fee to park in a place because there is a premium on space.
3. Paid parking revenues could be committed to the economic vitality of the downtown core to ensure that the downtown continues to be vibrant and progressive. This would mean that additional revenue can be injected into local projects and amenities.
4. The current parking infrastructure is financially self-sufficient and sustainable. The parking system will continue to pay for itself (will operate under a user-pay cost recovery model) including funding for new infrastructure, maintenance, equipment, enforcement, upgrades, customer service APPs, replacement of existing infrastructure and management.
5. Downtown parking promotes a safe and inviting downtown parking environment.
6. Focus on customer service, friendliness and fairness in parking practices by providing options, technologies and information.
7. Parking enforcement is an important tool for managing and maximizing the downtown parking supply and has city-wide implications.
8. Downtown businesses purchase parking permits as a benefit to their staff to ensure parking space is available for them. Employees are a valuable user group in the downtown core. Implementation of any different source of parking must be such that downtown employees remain a valuable economic and social component of the downtown.

Impact of No Parking Fees

1. The parking enforcement for both the Downtown BIA and Le Village BIA is conducted by By-Law Enforcement Officers first “on-foot” and “vehicle” patrol, and secondly by responding to complaints.

If the parking fees are waived for any period (short or long-term), the “on-foot” and “vehicle” patrolling will not be conducted regularly due to the fact that revenues generated from the parking enforcement assist the department with all By-Law Enforcement Service expenses (i.e. staffing, vehicles, etc.).

2. Parking enforcement is considered to be the main deterrent of illegal parking, as drivers are less likely to exhibit illegal parking behavior if they perceive a higher chance of getting ticketed by a By-Law Enforcement Officer. Illegal parking often arises as a result of insufficient enforcement. Less enforcement may encourage more illegal parking.
3. If/When individuals choose to park in a parking stall for a lengthy period of time causing low parking turnover rate, whether it be on street or in parking lots, this type of violation will go unnoticed and will not be resolved quickly.

Financial Services:

The Municipal Act requires a connection between the user fees collected and the cost of a service. The current funding model for the City's parking program is that revenues from parking fees stay within the Parking Program service.

The parking program is not designed as a profit center nor does it perform as one. Revenue is used primarily to offset operating expenditures, including salaries, equipment, maintenance, lease agreements, snow removal, and property taxes. For instance, the City leases three parking lots, and rent is paid by the City with parking revenues.

Revenue is sourced from parking meters, pay and display machines, and monthly passes, as remuneration to the City for the use of its parking facilities. Parking tickets issued for non-payment add to revenues as do public welfare and right-of-way maintenance related violation tickets for parking in front of a fire hydrant, in a fire lane, too close to an intersection, in a barrier-free space without a provincially issued accessible parking permit, restricting snow removal and similar.

Annual parking revenues collected in excess of parking-related costs are contributed to the Parking Reserve Fund. The Parking Reserve Fund is used to offset any operating revenue shortfalls and for funding parking-related capital works; such as, paving of parking lots, fencing.

The dollar (\$1.00) per hour parking rate and violation rates were last set in 2007. Due to inflation and the expansion of the parking program, the Parking Reserve Fund was used to offset revenue shortfalls in three of the last five years to balance operating expenditures to the public to zero.

At this time, any revenue reduction is of concern if Cornwall's parking program is to remain self-financing and not dependent on the general taxation base.

Municipal Works: Infrastructure Planning

Ending Paid Parking Within City Limits

If paid parking was eliminated within City limits, it would greatly discourage vehicle turnover adjacent to local businesses. On-street parking turnover within business areas is very important as it discourages vehicles from parking in a spot for prolonged periods and opens up new spaces for additional shoppers. The best way to self-control and encourage parking turnover is with metered paid parking.

If paid parking was eliminated in an effort to support local businesses, it would likely render the opposite result as it would significantly limit the vehicle turnover adjacent to local businesses thus lowering the number of potential customers. Eliminating paid parking would allow and may encourage guests/clients of residents and non-retail businesses to park in the on-street parking spaces for prolonged periods thus reducing the amount of available on-street parking spots for customers visiting retail businesses.

If complimentary parking for limited time frames (1 or 2 hour timeframe) was implemented, it would be extremely difficult to enforce as noted above. A recent example of the difficulty of enforcing maximum time parking, is York Street in front of the St. Joseph's Villa. Vehicles would park on the road for the entire day and would simply move the vehicle occasionally throughout the day in order to avoid fines. After several months of enforcement efforts, the issue was only resolved with the implementation of metered parking. If complimentary parking for limited timeframes was provided, a similar issue could arise thus limiting vehicle turnover and decreasing the number of potential shoppers.

In addition, if free parking is implemented in paid parking lots, it may hurt other types of business located in the downtown which rely on longer stay short term parking (up to 2 hours). Similar to on-street parking, a parking time limit and vehicle turnover is better controlled with paid parking in the parking lots. The elimination of paid parking in the City owned parking lots would result in vehicles parking for prolonged periods thus eliminating potential parking spots for shoppers as well as for the clients of other businesses located in the downtown. People would likely park at the lots for long periods of time if paid parking is removed at the parking lots, which will be detrimental to parking turnover. There are also areas in the parking lots dedicated to monthly permit holders. The City already has sold permits to those monthly pass users. Making parking free at the parking lots, would be unfair for those who have already paid for a monthly permit.

City owned parking lots require operational and capital investments both in the short and long term. The capital works and operational maintenance of the parking lots is funded using the revenue generated from the metered parking program. The capital expenditures necessary to maintain the parking lots include asphalt resurfacing, concrete curb replacement, fence replacement, etc. The ongoing operational maintenance costs of the parking lots include snow clearing, pavement markings, etc. If paid parking was eliminated, the revenue necessary to fund the capital and operational expenses of the parking lots would be eliminated and would need to be funded directly from the tax base. Additionally, the City currently leases three of the parking lots and the rent is paid by the City with the parking revenues.

Relaxing Parking By-Laws To Allow For Curbside Pickup

As previously noted, the City has installed free curbside parking locations in the two BIA's. The Traffic and Parking By-Law does allow for the vehicles to park temporarily for the purposes of loading or unloading of merchandise. Please refer to Section 1 (27) below:

“Sec. 1 (27) “park” or “parking” when prohibited means the standing of a vehicle, whether occupied or not, except when standing temporarily for the purposes of and while actually engaged in loading or unloading merchandise or passengers.”

The Traffic and Parking By-Law could be amended to designate areas as curbside pickup only; however, it would not be required. Since retailers have been permitted to re-open using COVID-19 guidelines, the need for curbside pickup parking has been reduced as noted above.

Allowing Businesses To Claim A Parking Spot In Front Of Their Business For Expanded Shopping Space

If parking spaces were to be designated as expanded shopping space for businesses, it would limit the number of available spaces for vehicles. Currently, there are often not enough open on-street parking spaces to support the needs of the retailers/businesses in the downtown.

If parking spaces are designated for other purposes, it would likely be detrimental to the businesses as it would limit the number of available parking spaces directly adjacent to the store thus possibly reducing the number of customers. Additionally, this could be detrimental to the current curbside pickup arrangement. There are generally not sufficient spaces currently for each business. As noted above, there is a significant amount of pedestrian space that could alternatively be used as expanded shopping space.



To Identify Spaces For Expanded Pedestrian Access (For Social Distancing) And For Possible Expansion Of Bike Lanes Throughout The City

As noted in the Council Report from May 25, 2020, social distancing in the downtown area is not problematic due to the amount of available pedestrian space. Pitt Street, Second Street as well as Montreal Road offer ample sidewalks, varying from 3 to 6 meters in width within the downtown areas and Le Village.

Where space is available, and if rules allow for certain business operations, such as outdoor restaurants, etc., business operators could seek specific encroachment permits that would support their operations on the sidewalk, where possible, on a case-by-case basis.

In terms of bicycle infrastructure, the City has been and continues to expand the bicycle lanes throughout the City with a comprehensive network which provides sufficient connectivity to the downtown areas. At this point, cyclists can access the downtown and Le Village areas safely and conveniently utilizing the existing bicycle infrastructure.

Document Title:	Business Parking - COVID 19 - 2020-307-PDR.docx
Attachments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Municipal Parking Comparison Review As of May 29, 2020.pdf- 2018-2019 PARKING REVENUE.pdf- DBIA_Parking_Map 8.5x11.pdf- Village_Parking_Map 8.5x11.pdf- DBIA Parking Feedback, May 28, 2020.pdf- Chamber Letter on Parking, May 28, 2020.pdf- Le Village BIA - Business Parking COVID-19, May 18, 2020.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Jun 2, 2020

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

Tracey Bailey - Jun 2, 2020 - 2:19 PM

Maureen Adams - Jun 2, 2020 - 4:40 PM