



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

Department: Planning, Development and Recreation
Division: Building and By-law
Report Number: 2020-362-Planning, Development and Recreation
Prepared By: Mark A. Boileau, General Manager
Meeting Date: September 14, 2020
Subject: Business Parking – COVID-19

Purpose

To provide Council with additional information regarding Business Parking during COVID-19 as outlined in the New Business Motion of May 11, 2020 and related Council Motion of June 8, 2020.

Recommendation

That Council reinstate the original parking program, which existed prior to COVID-19.

Financial Implications

While the non-enforcement of paid parking at meters and machines and the more recent 2-hour subsidy has been beneficial to businesses in the two BIAs during the COVID-19 pandemic, the continuation of either program will have an impact on the City's parking program funding, and in turn on the other businesses and general taxpayers. Parking revenue is trending at a shortfall estimated at \$310,000 at year end.

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.

At the Regular Council Meeting of June 8, 2020, following the submission of a report by Administration (attached), the following Motion was approved:

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

Since Pandemic:

In summary, complimentary parking coincided with the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in March, as paid parking and payment violations were not being enforced by staff. In addition, complimentary curbside parking arrangements and on-street parking cafes were introduced by the City shortly thereafter in various downtown and Le Village locations, to assist with that phase to the economic recovery efforts. Finally, following the Motion of Council, two-hour complimentary parking has been provided at all municipal paid parking locations since June 8, 2020.

Staff's report of June 8, 2020 (attached) outlined the details of the City's parking program including its purpose and benefits, as well as the financial implications of reducing or removing parking fees. This report will primarily provide an update on financial implications to date.

Parking revenues were \$558,132 for 2017, \$588,862 for 2018, and \$529,257 for 2019. These totals include parking permits, meter collections, machine collections and violations. The budget for 2020 was to collect \$606,968 in parking revenues. To date (July 31, 2020 latest financial data), \$182,412 has been collected, including \$50,365 in monthly parking passes, and \$55,727 in violations. On the subject of parking passes, they are predominantly sold to employers (St. Lawrence Seaway Authority, Job Zone, Numed, etc.). We have not received requests for repayments or refunds, however this may occur, and the trend of home employment may reduce our typical parking pass numbers. At July 31, 2020, \$76,320 has been collected from meters and machines this year. As a result of the above, there is a projected substantial shortfall from the budgeted \$606,968 for 2020 as a result of the non-payment and considerable reduction (2-hour complimentary) since the pandemic in March.

Purpose of Funds:

In addition to the benefit of causing a desired turnover of parking spaces, which is beneficial to the BIA's, the collection of funds allows the parking program to be self-funding. Revenue is used primarily to offset operating expenditures, including salaries, equipment, maintenance, lease agreements, snow removal, and property taxes. Any funds in excess of parking-related costs are contributed to the Parking Reserve Fund, which is used to offset any operating revenue shortfalls and for parking-related capital works such as paving parking lots, fencing, etc.

Should parking fees be subsidized (as has occurred since June 8, 2020) or be eliminated, it would place the cost directly onto the general taxpayer, all of which are affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. In the case of businesses which provide their own parking, this would be an additional cost to their parking development and maintenance costs. The overall parking program, totalling approximately \$600,000 in revenue, represents approximately 1% of the tax levy.

Chamber Survey:

Attached to this report is the email message from the Chamber Executive Director, as well as the survey findings. As indicated, the survey was sent to businesses in the BIAs where email addresses existed, resulting in 27 completed surveys. It is worth noting that businesses outside of the BIAs were not included, which would not benefit equally from subsidization.

On the subject of how the 2-hour parking could be improved, staff would offer the following comments. The provision of complimentary parking was difficult to implement at the pay-by-plate machines, as the user was required to access the device. While this was troublesome to the user, it provided a very well recorded method of providing the complimentary period. At the older traditional meter heads, it provided more work for staff, who needed to monitor parking in a similar fashion to typical 2-hour parking allowance (more commonly found on adjacent residential streets). As a result of these challenges, which are identified as the second issue by the survey, the City provided numerous postings on-site, on websites, in newspapers, and on social media.

Conclusion:

Parking payment was not enforced in the early months of COVID-19, as there was little activity by merchants and customers during that period. The provision of 2-hour complimentary parking, together with curbside pickups, on-street cafes, etc. was beneficial to the BIA businesses in recovering from the pandemic. While continuation of the subsidization would similarly be helpful, the cost to the parking program is significant, and is transferred to the other City businesses and general taxpayers. It is therefore recommended that the customary parking program be reinstated at this time.

Document Title:	Business Parking - COVID 19 - 2020-362-Planning, Development and Recreation.docx
Attachments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Business Parking - COVID 19 - 2020-307-PDR.pdf- 2018-2019 PARKING REVENUE.pdf- Chamber Letter re Parking Survey.pdf- DBIA 2 Hour Free Parking Program.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Sep 9, 2020

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

Tracey Bailey - Sep 9, 2020 - 2:56 PM

Maureen Adams - Sep 9, 2020 - 2:57 PM