

Staff Report

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Report To:	General Government Committee		
Date of Meeting:	May 31, 2021	Report Number:	LGS-019-21
Submitted By:	Rob Maciver, Director of Legislative Services		
Reviewed By:	Andrew C. Allison, CAO	Resolution#:	
File Number:		By-law Number:	
Report Subject:	Bowmanville Downtown Parking		

Recommendations:

1. That Report LGS-019-21 be received;
2. That courtesy parking in downtown Bowmanville continue to be provided each year in the month of December with improved signage;
3. That an amendment to the Traffic By-law be brought forward to discontinue the two-hour free parking in Municipal lots beginning on January 1, 2022;
4. That an amendment to the Traffic By-law be brought forward to increase parking rates to \$1.00 an hour beginning on January 1, 2022;
5. That an amendment to the Traffic By-law be brought forward to introduce a maximum daily parking rate of \$5.00 for the Division, Silver, Water Tower and Church St lots beginning on January 1, 2022;
6. That an amendment to the Traffic By-law be brought forward to establish a two-hour maximum parking limit in the 20 King St lot beginning on January 1, 2022;
7. That as part of the 2022 Municipal budget, staff include a proposal for the procurement of a mobile app service and related equipment to process parking payments;
8. That all interested parties listed in Report LGS-019-21 and any delegations be advised of Council's decision.

Report Overview

A report to aid in the parking in Bowmanville to provide more convenient payment options, increasing parking rates and to permanently establish courtesy parking for the month of December in each year.

1. Background

- 1.1 At the February 18, 2020 GGC meeting, resolution #GG-075-20 was passed, to refer the matter of parking in downtown Bowmanville to staff to report back on:
 - No longer offering free parking downtown Bowmanville at Christmas
 - Increasing the parking meter fees
 - Removing the two-hour free parking in lots; and
 - Investigate the possibility of a parking garage downtown
- 1.2 At the November 23-24, 2020 Council meeting, resolution #C-480-20 was passed:
 - That courtesy parking be provided for downtown Bowmanville for the month of December 2020
 - That staff work with the Bowmanville BIA to develop further parking recommendations for downtown Bowmanville
- 1.3 Parking rates for metered spaces in downtown Bowmanville are \$.50/hour, with a maximum of two hours. In municipal lots, the first two hours are free with subsequent time at \$.50/hour. Rates for parking are only in effect Monday to Friday between 8:00AM-6:00PM; weekends and Holidays are free. The first two hours of free parking has been in place since 1998, arising from report TR-58-98, at the request of the BIA. There has been no change in parking fees since.
- 1.4 In recent years, courtesy (i.e. free) parking has been provided in Bowmanville during the month of December at the request of the Bowmanville BIA. Over the past two years the initial two-week period was extended to the full month, and most recently into the month of February. The most recent increase to courtesy parking was in relation to a pilot project at the request of the BBIA prompted by continuing challenges to businesses struggling to operate under stringent COVID restrictions.

- 1.5 Municipal lots provide business employees long term parking and customers or clients more than the two hour on-street meter limit. All meters are coin operated and do not offer alternative options for payment.
- 1.6 Meter revenue over the last four years averages \$114,000, with a significant low in 2020 due to the various stages of Emergency Orders. Meter revenue aids in staffing costs to enforce, maintenance costs and is available for road or lot maintenance and snow removal.

2. Discussion

Paid on-street parking

- 2.1 Paid on-street parking is to assist in vehicle turn-over and to promote the availability of parking spaces for patrons of businesses. The low rate allows individuals to pay for either a brief time or up to 2hrs. Enforcement is regularly carried out during 8 am and 6 pm and is proactive. The revenue directly impacts the ability to provide regular enforcement to ensure individuals are not parking outside of permitted times or areas.
- 2.2 With meters only providing coin operation, payment method is restrictive. It is becoming increasingly known that alternative options are preferred by individuals and business owners. With current technology, and an increased market for pay by phone apps, the ability to provide additional payment options is feasible.
- 2.3 With various service providers for pay by phone apps, fees can range from per transaction use, one-time transaction fees per parking session, to monthly or yearly subscriptions. Transaction fees can range from \$.20 to \$.55 on top of the parking rate. Individuals who regularly use paid parking also have opportunities to sign up for monthly subscriptions to avoid transaction fees.
- 2.4 With more individuals using phone-type payment services and debit cards there is a large population of people that no longer carries money, let alone change, on their person. These pay by phone apps are increasingly being used within municipalities.
- 2.5 As fees have remained unchanged dating back to 1998, cost for enforcement, maintenance and road has steadily increased. Increasing fees minimally would assist in continued upkeep, and aid in moving towards more advance payment technology.

Municipal Lots

- 2.6 Municipal lots have had the first two hours free since a pilot request from the BBIA in 1998. There have been regular concerns with the free two hours being abused. This occurs with vehicles being moved from lot to lot to avoid paying additional fees.

- 2.7 Enforcement in Municipal lots is time consuming as it entails officers to locate and mark vehicles not displaying a payment receipt, then time the vehicle; returning two hours later to note if the vehicle has moved or remains with out a payment stub.
- 2.8 There are six Municipal lots in Bowmanville. At times these lots are heavily utilized by business owners or staff, leaving very few available areas for customers to park. It has been noted the King Street lot, having the only entrance from King Street, is regularly filled with vehicles parked for prolonged periods. This specific lot provides the best accessible frontage to business areas when on-street parking is limited.
- 2.9 Municipal lots are all controlled with central meters and, as is with on-street meters, are operated by coin only. Central meters do have the ability to be upgraded to a debit or credit card payment option. Central meters may also be upgraded to a pay by phone app.
- 2.10 To assist in providing additional accessible areas for customers to park, and aid in enforcement of long-term parking, it would be beneficial for the King Street lot to be designated as a short-term lot with a maximum of two hours paid parking at a rate of \$1 per hour. In addition, removing the first two hours free parking and increasing the rate too \$1.00 an hour with a flat rate of \$5.00 for the entire day on all other lots.

December Courtesy Parking

- 2.11 Free parking has been regularly provided for a two-week period prior to Christmas. The past two years a pilot of providing a month-long period and further extending into January was provided. Unfortunately, due to Emergency Orders and closures of nonessential businesses a true gauge of the success of these pilots was not possible.
- 2.12 The courtesy parking is accepted and well received by both consumer and business owners. Issues faced are prolonged use by individuals parking longer than permitted times. Feedback in relation to parking was that signage was misleading, as bags are covered with only "Courtesy Parking" being seen, it led to the belief there was no time limit.
- 2.13 Prior to bagging meters in December 2020, notices were provided to store fronts, tenants and or property owners advising of the 2-hour limit. Several notices were issued and or warnings were issued to tenants, others in receipt of notices provided the feedback of being unaware of the two-hour limit.
- 2.14 Improving signage during this period of free parking would alleviate the issues in connection with continued enforcement.

BIA

- 2.15 There has been ongoing requests and/or correspondence from the BIA dating back to December 2018 Joint Committee meeting where resolution JC#20-18 was passed to refer the removal of the two hour free parking to staff. In that time staff has provided various reports to Council, including CLD-018-19, CLD-021-19 and LGS-003-20.
- 2.16 As has occurred with Emergency Orders the impacts to business has provided for fluctuating circumstances at times providing for changes of decisions. The Manager of Municipal Law Enforcement has met over the past three years with the BIA. More recently, two meeting that provided for a full understanding of the needs for the BIA. Meetings were productive in providing the benefits and obstacles to enforcement and metered parking. Including differences between Newcastle where more off street private is available and the makeup of mixed residential business is lesser creating less parking related issues. Similar to Orono, where unfortunately some business have moved locations and again where mixed business residential are less frequent more complaints are received. With the change in business frontages in Orono and the past year and a half of Emergency Orders, it would not provide as a good comparator.
- 2.17 The BIA is supportive of:
- Removing the two two-hour free parking from Municipal lots
 - Increasing parking rates to \$1.00 an hour
 - Having a flat maximum daily rate for most Municipal lots
 - Designating 20 King St lot to a maximum of two hrs.
 - Implementing a mobile app for parking payment
 - Providing courtesy parking annually for the month of December
 - Increase signage and communication for parking

Surrounding Municipalities

- 2.18 Currently Clarington is at the lowest rate for parking by hour in comparison to other Municipalities. It is also the only Municipalities that is a coin only operation providing the least available payment options. The following chart provides a comparison.

Municipality	Oshawa	Coburg	Whitby	Peterborough	Belleville
Per Hour	1.25	1.00	1.50	1.50	1.00
Mobile App	Honk	Honk	Honk	HotSpot	HotSpot

3. Concurrence

Not applicable.

4. Conclusion

It is respectfully recommended that staff implement the recommendations contained in this Report.

Staff Contact: Duncan Anderson, Manager Municipal Law Enforcement, 905-623-3379 Ext 2110 or danderson@clarington.net.

Attachments:

Not Applicable

Interested Parties:

List of Interested Parties available from Department.