

 COBOURG	THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF COBOURG	
	STAFF REPORT	
TO:	Mayor and Council	
FROM:	Laurie Wills	
TITLE:	Director of Public Works	
DATE OF MEETING:	October 26, 2020	
TITLE / SUBJECT:	Approval to Resume Parking Fare Collection Downtown and in Parking Lots	
REPORT DATE:	October 15, 2020	File #:

1.0 STRATEGIC PLAN
NA

2.0 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Municipal Staff will work with communications staff to provide public notice of the reinstatement of pay parking requirements and the need to ensure vehicles are not parked for longer than permitted. A reminder of the need to adhere to all bylaw requirements when parking their vehicles will also be provided. In addition, the Town will communicate to the public on the various options to pay for parking once reinstated.

A variety of communication methods will be used to ensure this information is communicated and a grace period will be implemented for the first two (2) weeks with the assistance of the Cobourg Police Auxiliary to By-law Enforcement which will involve the placement of reminders on vehicles prior to issuing tickets as a reminder that paid parking is now in effect.

3.0 RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council approve the reimplementation of parking fee collection and By-law enforcement of downtown parking meters and parking lots effective November 16, 2020.

4.0 ORIGIN

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, paid parking requirements in pay parking zones such as parking meters and municipal lots were suspended, effective on March 18, 2020. These measures were taken to protect the health and safety of the public, Municipal Law Enforcement Officers (MLEOs) and other municipal staff and intended to be responsive to the changed environment where there was significantly reduced parking demand in these areas as well as to help support the merchants within the Downtown Business Area. It also reduced the need for parking meter repair, coin collection and public use of the parking meters, at a time when hand sanitizer and cleaning supplies were scarce or unavailable and minimized the interaction between MLEO's and the public.

5.0 BACKGROUND

The closure of Victoria Hall due to the pandemic limited residents to obtain parking passes online and have been free since March. Municipal Law Enforcement Department resources were also lower than usual due to the constantly changing guidelines and regulations related to physical distancing and gatherings in public places making coin collection and parking enforcement difficult to keep up with.

Although the Enforcement of downtown paid parking was on hold and suspended since March, safety-related parking restrictions has continued, in order to maintain emergency access and traffic flow. This includes enforcement for the following:

- No Stopping signs;
- No Parking signs;
- Accessible Parking signs;
- Fire Hydrants;
- No parking within 10 metres of an intersection;
- No parking in alleys unless active loading/unloading is taking place; and
- Unregistered vehicles parked on the street.

In addition to the above, the Municipal Law Enforcement Department continued to receive complaints by the public related to other parking related issues which were investigated and enforced at the Officers discretion.

6.0 ANALYSIS

Upon suspension of the pay parking for the Downtown parking regulations under the Town of Cobourg Parking By-law, Staff observed many vehicles parking in the pay parking zones for extended period of time which are likely vehicles of people who have continued to work in the downtown area or are residents of the residential units above the many storefronts. Municipal Enforcement believes that with the reinstatement of pay parking requirements and enforcement, parking turnover will increase and free up parking spaces to be once again

utilized by patrons wishing to contribute economically to the Downtown Businesses.

With businesses and other services now being re-opened, there has been a noticeable increase in parking demand in pay parking zones in the downtown area, including at meters and in municipal parking lots. It is now an appropriate time to evaluate the Municipality's go-forward plans with respect to pay parking requirements and parking time restrictions.

Staff does recognize that with COVID-19 cases now increasing again, and the fact that Victoria Hall has remained closed to the public, Staff are recommending that parking passes resume being sold online and implement a call-in payment option as well. Members of the public who choose not to or cannot pay by credit card can drop off payment by cash or cheque in a drop box at Victoria Hall. Once payment is received, a pass will be set up online which can either be emailed, mailed, or picked up at the Public Works and Parks Joint Operation Facility if necessary.

As the pandemic has progressed, all businesses including the Town have had to adapt their processes to include the use of technology in order to continue to conduct business. The pandemic has forced society in general to rely more heavily on technology and with this turn of events it actually is increasing the efficiency of doing business for the most part. For example, the Town has been able to move most accounts receivable and payable to electronic funds transfer instead of the labour intensive process of issuing and depositing cheques. The Town only recently purchased the online capability to purchase and print parking passes so this is a great opportunity to educate and encourage that small remaining percentage of the public who are not yet using the online service, to give it a try. Patrons can also call into the Town and request help from staff to fill in the online application and those without computers are able to access one at the Library if needed. . Pre-COVID-19, parking passes were sold online more than they were paid for in person so it is not anticipated that this new process will put a strain on resources. The Municipal Law Enforcement Department now have the resources, appropriate PPE and sanitizer to conduct coin collection regularly from parking meters and enforce non-payment.

7.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS/BUDGET IMPACT

The declaration of the Provincial State of Emergency, and the local Health District Health Unit directives for people to stay home and businesses to close, had an immediate impact on pay parking revenues.

In suspending pay parking requirements, it was understood that this would result in additional financial implications. A review of the parking revenue as projected in the 2020 Budget compared to the actuals for 2020 indicates the following:

2020 Budgeted Revenue/Actuals

- Parking Passes – \$70K (budget) \$8,362.68 (actual)
- Parking Tickets - \$100K (budget) \$36,969.45 (actual)
- Downtown Meter Revenue - \$187,500K (budget) \$35,123.30 (actual)

Parking Ticket revenue has also been similarly impacted as follows:

Parking Tickets Issued

- 2018 – 4,338
- 2019 – 4,412
- 2020 – 1,278 (to October 15)

8.0 CONCLUSION

THAT Council approve the reimplementation of parking fee collection and By-law enforcement of downtown parking meters and parking lots effective November 16, 2020.

12.0 AUTHORIZATION/SIGNATURES

Laurie Wills
Director of Public Works



Tracey Vaughan
Chief Administrative Officer