

# Reinstate Pay Parking and Parking Enforcement

## ISSUE

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, pay parking and maximum length of stay requirements in pay parking zones and in residential areas were suspended, effective March 20, 2020. With release of the provincial government's Re-Open Saskatchewan Plan, businesses and services will start to open and will increase as other phases are introduced, thus increasing parking demand in pay parking zones. It is now an appropriate time to evaluate the City's go-forward plans with respect to pay parking requirements and parking time restrictions.

The Residential Parking Permit Program has also been suspended, and is not fully addressed at this time. Administration is working through appropriate protocols to be able to safely handle the permit sales and renewal transactions and once protocols are in place, recommends reinstatement of the program.

## RECOMMENDATION

That the report of the General Manager, Community Services Department be forwarded to City Council requesting approval of the plan to reinstate pay parking and other parking enforcement measures, as outlined in this report

## BACKGROUND

Bylaw No. 7200, the Traffic Bylaw, specifies streets for which paid parking is required. Pay parking zones are established in areas of high parking demand and where parking turnover is desired. This includes Business Improvement Districts, other commercial areas and areas around high parking generators, such as hospitals and universities.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the City temporarily suspended payment requirements in City-designated pay parking zones, effective 5:00 pm on Friday, March 20, 2020, until further notice. In addition, motorists were not required to adhere to the posted parking time limits in the pay parking zones. These measures were taken to protect the health and safety of the public, contract parking enforcement staff and City staff, and intended to be responsive to the changed environment where there was significantly reduced parking demand in these areas. It also reduced the need for flex station repair, coin collection and public use of the flex stations, at a time when hand sanitizer and cleaning supplies were scarce or unavailable and minimized the potential for negative interaction between parking officers and public.

In addition, the bylaw requirement of allowing vehicles to be parked for no longer than 72 hours in residential areas was suspended. This was done to accommodate those who might be self-isolating, due to return from travel or illness and to encourage residents to stay home and prevent the spread of COVID-19.

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Enforcement of 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 (maintain 1 metre from the centre of a fire hydrant);
- 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.

Parking Officers have exercised more discretion with other types of parking infractions, however they have found a significant increase in the number of certain types of violations throughout the city. This includes vehicles parked with the left side tire adjacent to the curb (e.g. facing against traffic flow) and over-length vehicles parked in residential areas for extended periods of time.

### DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

The suspension of pay parking requirements and street parking time limits has ensured residents were not unduly impacted by the bylaw requirements which would limit their ability to comply with provincial directives to stay home or to self-isolate. With low demand for on-street parking in the typically high-use commercial areas, the suspension of pay parking requirements reduced some of the costs associated with delivering the pay parking program. At a time when parking revenues would be minimal, it provided downtown residents the opportunity to park, for extended periods of time, in those zones and helped to ensure the health and safety of staff and the public.

The Re-Open Saskatchewan Plan has now been released and outlines a phased approach in allowing businesses and services to be reopened (with appropriate provisions to ensure health and safety) as summarized on the following table:

#### Re-Open Saskatchewan Plan:

Phase	Effective Date	Services / Provisions
Phase 1	May 4	Medical services (dentists, physiotherapy, optometry, podiatry, occupational therapy, chiropractors)
Phase 2	May 19	Retail stores, shopping malls, select personal services (hair salons, massage therapy, acupuncture/acupressure)
Phase 3	TBD	Remaining personal services, restaurant/food services (to 50% capacity), gyms/ fitness facilities, licensed establishments, childcare facilities, increase size of gatherings to 15 people
Phase 4	TBD	Outdoor recreation and entertainment facilities, increase size of gatherings to 30 people
Phase 5	TBD	Consider lifting some long term restrictions, continued limits on size of gatherings

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While specific dates are in place for early phases, the dates of later phases will be determined based on continued assessment of transmission and other socioeconomic factors. However, Phase 2 will signal the reopening of a number of businesses and services throughout the commercial areas.

### Reinstate Provisions for Pay Parking and Restrictions on Length of Time Parked on Street, effective June 1

In consideration of the Re-Open Saskatchewan Plan and the increased activity occurring throughout the city, Administration believes it is appropriate to reinstate the requirements for pay parking and the maximum length of time vehicles may be parked in one location. Pay parking and length of time on street requirements, as well as enforcement of all other general parking provisions are proposed to take effect June 1. This start date will ensure the public are provided with sufficient notice. It also ensures COVID-19 safety protocols can be put in place for returning contract staff and provides the time required to reactivate the work programs required to support these functions.

Use of the WayToPark app will be encouraged as a no-touch way for people to pay for parking. While we recognize not everyone has access to the app, hand sanitizer is now more widely available. This allows the public to take the necessary precautions, should they need to use the FlexParking pay stations.

If City Council is in support of this direction, Administration will reinstate requirements for the length of time vehicles may be parked. In residential areas, vehicles may be parked in one location for no longer than 72 hours. Residents of the neighbourhood are impacted when vehicles are parked in one location for an extended period of time and complaints are being received. Parking time limits in pay parking zones ensure vehicle turnover throughout the day.

Finally, should the recommendation be approved, enforcement of all parking infractions will be fully reinstated to encourage adherence to the regulations in place to manage parking turnover, ensure public health and safety, maintain traffic flow and allow for emergency access. An easy to read brochure outlining common parking infractions is available on the City of Saskatoon website at [saskatoon.ca/understandingparking](https://saskatoon.ca/understandingparking). Residents are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the information.

### Residential Parking Program – Delayed Reinstatement

The Residential Parking Permit Program (RPP) has been suspended and is proposed to remain suspended at this time. Planning is currently underway to address the logistical considerations in issuing permits and Administration anticipates having a plan in place in the near future. As soon as plans are confirmed and implemented, Administration recommends reinstatement of parking enforcement in the RPP zones. Notification to the public of the timing on this would be through a PSA and all social media channels. It should be noted that reinstatement of parking regulations such as the 72-hour limit a vehicle may be parked in one location, as well as all other general parking infractions will be enforced in all neighbourhoods including RPP zones.

### Disabled Parking Permit Program – Expired Hologram Stickers will Remain Valid

Under the Disabled Parking Permit Program, people with disabled parking permits, issued by the SaskAbilities Council, can purchase a hologram sticker from the City. The hologram, affixed to their valid parking permit, allows people to park in a pay parking zone without payment. All hologram stickers expired at the end of April 2020. The issuance of new stickers requires people to visit City Hall to provide the required documentation and purchase a hologram.

At this time the expired holograms will continue to be honoured in pay parking zones until provisions to issue updated stickers can be implemented. Those who have recently received a disabled parking permit but are unable to obtain a hologram sticker may take advantage of options available to anyone with a disabled permit. This includes parking in loading zones for an extended period of time.

Given the current circumstances, if a parking customer feels they have unfairly received a ticket for unpaid parking, when a SaskAbilities permit is clearly displayed, they can request a ticket review as outlined on the back of the ticket. The customer will need to provide proof of a recently acquired disabled permit. SaskAbilities has continued to issue disabled permits over the past few months.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

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

In suspending pay parking requirements, time on street restrictions, and in minimizing ticketing of certain bylaw provisions, it was understood this would result in additional financial implications.

A review of 2019 pay parking revenue, for the same 10-week period of time as when the pay parking system was suspended in 2020, indicates approximately \$1,250,000 was collected. In 2019, during that same period of time, approximately \$630,000 was generated from tickets issued for bylaw regulations that have been suspended this spring (pay parking infractions and length of time on street violations in pay parking zones and residential areas). However, with the pandemic situation, similar levels of parking revenues, or ticketing would not have been achieved in 2020.

Operating expenditure savings of approximately \$145,000 were realized, as a result of the suspension of the pay parking requirements and of the Residential Parking Permit program, primarily due to a reduction in contract staff.

It is expected pay parking revenues will be significantly reduced from previous years over the coming months and will begin to rise only as the province is able to move into latter phases of the Re-Open Saskatchewan Plan. Ticket revenue will likely be similarly impacted. This reduction in parking related revenues was included in the recent Budget update report to Council on April 27, 2020.

### **OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

Upon suspension of the pay parking program, Administration observed many vehicles were parked 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. The successful return of commercial activity and services will be reliant, in part on restoring parking management initiatives in the high demand pay parking zones, through the reinstatement of pay parking requirements and enforcement, which together will drive parking turnover.

### **NEXT STEPS**

Administration 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. A variety of communication methods will be used to ensure this information is widely advertised and to explain the reason why these requirements are being reinstated at this time. Tactics will include social media, updates on the City's website, public service announcements and posters throughout BID areas. Promotion of the WayToPark app will remind people of this no-touch option to pay for parking.

If approved, Administration will implement the necessary processes to ensure the pay parking program can take effect June 1. This will include working with the contract service providers to reprogram the FlexParking terminals and WayToPark app, carry out system testing, and ensure parking operations and enforcement staff are in place and can safely reinstate delivery of these programs and bylaw provisions.

### **REPORT APPROVAL**

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