

Suspension of Saturday Pay Parking Requirements

ISSUE

This report provides information outlining the implications of suspending pay parking requirements on Saturdays, beginning at the earliest opportunity in December 2020, until the end of April 2021.

BACKGROUND

At its November 23, 2020 meeting, the Governance and Priorities Committee heard a presentation from Tourism Saskatoon and the Combined Business Group, seeking support to expand the City of Saskatoon's WintercityYXE Strategy to incorporate a number of iconic outdoor events that would take place throughout the coming months. These initiatives will support local businesses and provide safe and healthy opportunities for people to participate in social, recreational and cultural opportunities in consideration of pandemic protocols and requirements.

In response, the Governance and Priorities Committee passed several motions, including the following:

"That the Administration report on the option of a one-time waiving of City of Saskatoon paid parking fees in Business Improvement Districts on Saturdays for as much of December as possible, January, February, March and April."

This report provides an overview of the considerations and financial implications of suspending pay parking, for Saturdays only, during this time period.

CURRENT STATUS

Bylaw No. 7200 - the Traffic Bylaw, 1991, 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 educational institutions. The flex parking system allows a customer to pay for parking by either using a pay parking terminal or the WaytoPark app.

Due to the temporary nature of this provision, amendments to update the Traffic Bylaw to reflect this suspension are not proposed at this time.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

Suspending pay parking requirements on Saturdays, throughout the winter months will further encourage the public to support local businesses, restaurants and services, whether visiting these businesses or arranging for curbside pickup.

The flex parking system is set up as one integrated system throughout all of the pay parking areas. It is not possible to suspend pay parking requirements in only certain

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areas. People use either the flex parking terminals located on the street or the WaytoPark app to pay for their parking session and can park their vehicle anywhere within all pay parking zones for the length of time purchased up to the maximum posted time limit in one location. As a result, should Council choose to suspend pay parking requirements on Saturdays, this will apply throughout all pay parking areas served by the City's flex parking terminals and WaytoPark app.

One objective in establishing pay parking within high demand areas is to ensure parking turnover on the street. To maintain parking turnover on Saturdays, people will be allowed to park no longer than the posted maximum parking time. With the suspension of pay parking requirements on Saturdays, Parking Enforcement staff will continue to monitor for all other parking requirements and will ticket as required, including vehicles parked in:

- 1) reserved parking spaces, or accessible parking spaces without the required permit;
- 2) "no stopping" or "no parking" zones;
- 3) alleys (unless actively loading or unloading); or
- 4) a parking space for longer than the posted time permitted.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The suspension of requirements to pay for parking on Saturdays will result in a loss of revenue from parking payments as well as reduced ticket revenue.

Table 1 (see page 3) provides an estimate of the revenue losses and savings resulting from the suspension of paid parking for a 4 ½ month period (mid-December to April inclusive) based on a total of 20 Saturdays.

There may be other secondary impacts arising as a result of a decision to provide free parking on Saturdays which are also noted; however, these are more difficult to quantify.

Pay parking, as well as ticket revenues, have already been significantly reduced since the onset of the pandemic. The financial implications assume pandemic conditions will remain in place throughout this time, and revenues for December and the first half of 2021 are already forecast, in the adjusted budgets, to be approximately 65% of those realized in the previous year (pre-pandemic).

Due to timelines required to implement free parking (reprogramming parking stations and the WaytoPark app), the provisions may not take effect until December 12, and financial impacts for December reflect this.

The Temporary Reserve Parking program provides an opportunity for customers to reserve on-street paid parking for their exclusive use, to accommodate construction, maintenance or other specified uses at adjacent sites or nearby on the right of way. Fees are based on the number of spaces reserved for use during days when paid parking provisions apply. When pay parking requirements were suspended in the spring of 2020, Council specified Temporary Reserve Parking fees payable during this

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time should also be suspended. A similar approach has been applied in this situation to estimate the resulting loss of revenue in excluding Saturdays from Temporary Reserve Parking billings.

Administration estimates the suspension of pay parking requirements for a 20 week period extending through the winter of 2020/2021 will result in a net budget impact of approximately \$350,000.

Table 1 – Summary – Financial Impacts

Estimated Losses	2020 (three Saturdays in Dec.)	2021 (Jan to April: 17 Saturdays)	TOTAL Dec 2020 to April 2021
Parking Revenue	\$39,200	\$203,100	\$242,300
Ticket Revenue	18,800	100,400	119,200
Temporary Reserve Parking Revenue	2,100	8,700	10,800
TOTAL Foregone Revenue	\$60,100	\$312,200	\$372,300
Estimated Savings			
Bank fees	\$(3,100)	\$(12,800)	\$(15,900)
Operating Costs	(1,000)	(5,500)	(6,500)
TOTAL Savings	\$(4,100)	\$(18,300)	\$(22,400)
Net Impact	\$56,000	\$293,900	\$349,900

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Revenues contribute to reducing the mill rate, and covering the costs of operating the Pay Parking Program and funding capital parking initiatives. In addition, a portion of the Revenues gained through paid parking and Temporary Reserve Parking fees are allocated, as per the parking meter revenue allocation formula, to fund the streetscape program and a grant to the BIDs. Suspension of pay parking requirements on Saturdays will result in an overall reduction of \$94,000 (\$16,000 in 2020 and \$78,000 in 2021) of funding to the streetscape program. With respect to the BID grants, historically the City has not reduced the budget amount for the BID grant if actual parking revenues are lower than budgeted, as the BIDs rely on this money for base funding. If Council chooses to reduce to the BID grant, as a result of reduced revenues in suspending pay parking on Saturdays, this would amount to a total reduction of \$4,600 in grant funding to the BIDs (\$800 in 2020 and \$3,800 in 2021).

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Two other areas of potential indirect impacts, related to the suspension of requirements for pay parking on Saturdays, include:

1. Impact on parking lots operated by third party or private operators
Commercial parking lots operated by private operators will continue to require payment for parking, including some city-owned parking lots managed by a third-party operator. This would include surface parking lots at River Landing and the underground parking lot at Remai Modern. As experienced during the free parking period earlier this year, these lots can expect to see decreased revenue on Saturdays as people may choose to park on-street to take advantage of the free parking.
2. Reduced parking and ticket revenues on weekdays
Some people may choose to delay a trip to a commercial area on a weekday to a weekend, to take advantage of free parking. As a result, the City as well as private parking lot operators may see decreased parking and ticketing revenues on weekdays. Such potential losses are difficult to estimate.

NEXT STEPS

If approved, Administration will implement the process to suspend pay parking requirements and anticipates this could take effect for December 12, 2020. This includes working with the contract service providers to reprogram the FlexParking terminals and WayToPark app, carry out system testing, and make appropriate operational adjustments.

Administration will work with Communications staff to provide notice to the public of the suspension of pay parking requirements on Saturdays through the specified period. The public will be reminded of the need to adhere to all other bylaw requirements when parking, including ensuring vehicles are not parked for longer than time permitted. A variety of communication methods will be used to ensure this information is widely advertised, including social media, updates on the City's website and public service announcements. Information can also be provided to Council members and stakeholder agencies, such as the BIDs and Tourism Saskatoon, in a format that can be readily forwarded to their network of contacts.

To ensure the public are given adequate notice, additional communications will be undertaken in early April 2021 in advance of reinstating pay parking requirements on Saturdays.

REPORT APPROVAL

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SP/2020/CS/Regular Council/Suspension of Saturday Pay Parking Requirements/gs