

Temporary Reserved Parking Program Review

ISSUE

A review was undertaken on the Temporary Reserved Parking (TRP) Program, previously referred to as meter hooding, to ensure it continues to meet program objectives in a cost-effective manner.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Standing Policy Committee on Transportation recommend to City Council:

1. That program amendments on the Temporary Reserved Parking Program, as outlined in this report, be approved;
2. That Administration develop a policy, for approval by City Council, that focuses on administering the Temporary Reserved Parking Program;
3. That the City Solicitor be requested to prepare the proposed amendments to Bylaw No. 7200, the Traffic Bylaw, 1991; and
4. That current Temporary Reserved Parking rate reductions continue for special events, food trucks and parking patios, until the development of a corporate subsidy policy.

BACKGROUND

The [TRP Program](#) allows parking spaces to be reserved in pay parking areas for non-standard purposes including construction, business or service needs.

City Council, at its Regular Business meeting on August 18, 2010, adopted changes to the Parking Meter Hooding Program, now referred to as the TRP Program, to allow for special event, 11-hour and 24-hour reservations and identified associated fees and discounts for these activities. The approved changes became effective January 1, 2011, and have not been adjusted since.

On March 27, 2017, City Council considered provisions to allow for the establishment of parking patios within paid parking spaces. A reduced rate for parking patios was approved in consideration of broader public benefits facilitated through parking patios.

On April 24, 2017, City Council considered provisions in establishing a food truck policy and approved reduced TRP fees for on-street food trucks.

On May 23, 2017, City Council resolved that Administration will not charge any parking fees within Special Event enclosures until further review of the TRP policy, in consultation with user groups, Tourism Saskatoon and the Downtown YXE.

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Current Fee Structure

Current standard TRP fee rates are outlined below:

- \$30 dollar administration fee for every booking;
- \$25 – per space, reduced to \$18 after 30 days (daily 7:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.); and
- \$35 – per space, reduced to \$25 after 30 days (24 hours - 7:00 a.m. – 7:00 a.m.)

Discounted TRP fees for uses including food trucks, parking patios and outdoor events are outlined (see Appendix 1).

Public Engagement

Input on the TRP Program review was initially gathered in late 2019, through six focus group meetings, with frequent program customers. In total, 20 people participated representing hotel and entertainment accommodations, outdoor events, City of Saskatoon workgroups, construction/development, infrastructure and maintenance work as well as funeral services. Those unable to attend had the opportunity to provide written responses to the questions discussed at the focus group meetings. In total, seven written responses were received, resulting in a final engagement response rate of 48%.

Most of the feedback focused on operational concerns including signage and information sharing. Some participants noted there can be a significant impact on the local community and businesses resulting from the reduction of available parking supply for TRP reservations, construction work zones and outdoor events in pay parking areas.

Participants involved in outdoor events provided comments specific to TRP fees and situations which participants felt should be exempt from payment requirements. For example, some felt they should not have to pay any fees, but if they were charged, there should be consistency in fees paid between events; and that event parking fees should not be the same as those fees charged to the for-profit developers. Focus group participants noted that by not seeking payment for each stall for outdoor special events, Saskatoon has a competitive advantage that aligns with branding Saskatoon as a festival city.

Due to the delay in bringing forward proposed program changes, since the 2019 consultations, focus group participants were re-engaged in early 2022 and advised of the proposed program changes. Meetings were also held with the Downtown YXE, Broadway and Riversdale Business Improvement Districts, Tourism Saskatoon and the Saskatoon Construction Association. No concerns on the proposed program changes were received, though Tourism Saskatoon expressed interest in maintaining the current TRP fee structure for outdoor events.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

A review of the TRP Program was undertaken by Administration. Primary objectives of the TRP review were to:

- Offer appropriate reservation options that meet customer needs;
- Establish an appropriate fee structure to ensure costs associated with the set-up and administration of the program are being recovered; and
- Identify program amendments that facilitate a modern customer service offering and continues to effectively and safely manage supply of parking.

External Scan

An external scan was undertaken by Administration focusing on how other cities administer similar programs; results are included (see Appendix 2). Of the cities reviewed, there is a large variance in administrative costs charged per application, although parking space costs generally ranged from \$20 to \$30 per parking space.

Proposed Changes

The TRP review identified several ways in which the current program could be enhanced. This includes formal policy development, operational improvements and the development of an appropriate rate structure which includes an approach to address user groups that have historically received reduced TRP rates.

Policy Recommendations

Policy recommendations include:

1. **Formalizing the TRP Program Through the Development of a Council Policy:** The TRP Program lacks an overall policy framework. Provisions for the TRP Program are pieced together through various City Council resolutions resulting from Administrative reports, as noted in the background section of this report. This approach makes it difficult to communicate or maintain a record of updates and changes to the Program. Also, some of the provisions for certain types of uses requiring reserved parking spaces, such as parking patios and mobile food trucks, are contained within other policies or bylaws. A Council Policy can result in administrative efficiencies and would provide greater transparency for customers, relative to the existing approach.
2. **Implementing a Reduced-Rate Overnight Reservation Option:** Customer input received identified the benefits of a nighttime option. The main benefit would be a potential reduction in customer parking charges. Instead of requiring a 24-hour reservation to cover off needs after 6:00 p.m., the nighttime reservation approach would offer a reduced rate to encourage participants to occupy parking spaces during low-demand periods. This would offer an incentive to maintain daytime parking supply. Naturally, the overnight rate would apply to TRP bookings between 6:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m.

3. **TRP Booking Day Adjustments:** Program adjustments are recommended with daily rental charges for parking spaces being based on the total number of calendar days which parking spaces are being used, rather than only the number of days where pay-parking is applicable. This method better serves to manage parking supply in high-demand areas as it incentivizes a shorter TRP duration and is anticipated to result in greater parking availability on Sundays and holidays.

Fee and Rate Recommendations

Fee and rate recommendations include:

1. **Administrative Fee:** It is recommended that the administrative fee be increased from \$30 to \$75. The administrative fee accounts for application review, set-up, and decommissioning of the TRP zone and any on-going inspections. The fee has not been increased since 2011 and the increase will assist in addressing inflationary pressures associated with administration of the TRP Program.
2. **Nighttime TRP rate:** It is recommended that a new nighttime TRP rate, at a rental cost of \$10 per parking space, be implemented in conjunction with the introduction of a nighttime reservation option.
3. **Existing Daily and 24-hour rates:** It is recommended that the daily and 24-hour rates remain at \$25 and \$35 respectively, with the same reductions applying after 30 days.

Subsidized/Discounted TRP Fees

Previous City Council motions have offered a program subsidy to specialized activities by reducing TRP rates, (e.g., parking patios, food trucks and outdoor events). While these subsidized rates will continue to be offered in the short term, Administration is working on developing an overall corporate user fee and subsidies policy that offers a principle-based approach for applying subsidies for various programs. Although, this would not apply to the fees charged for program administration, it would apply to the variable parking rates typically charged in the absence of a subsidy. This is not to say that these subsidies will be removed, but rather it would offer principles and criteria for which to evaluate potential program subsidies. More details on the development of this proposed policy will be shared with City Council in the coming months.

Operational Improvements

Based on feedback received during consultations, operational improvements have already been implemented by Administration. These include:

- Allowances for TRP set-up and removal on Sundays to increase parking availability on the weekends; and
- The implementation of signage changes that better delineate the reserved parking area and are more robust to withstand inclement weather and tampering.

Additionally, more detailed tracking and reporting on discounted TRP areas, such as food trucks, parking patios, and outdoor events, will be undertaken by Administration to

provide greater clarity to City Council and parties that benefit from the discounted parking rates.

During consultations, participants also indicated a preference for an online application process. This item, in addition to other parking permit application types, will be addressed through the Parking Technology Capital Project which is anticipated to start in Q4, 2022.

Bylaw Amendments

Through the TRP review project, housekeeping amendments are recommended to [Bylaw No.7200, the Traffic Bylaw, 1991](#), to remove references to reserving parking through the hooding of parking meters, which is a redundant practice.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

With a proposed implementation date of January 1, 2023, in 2023, assuming no change in volumes, revenue from TRP administrative fees is projected to increase from \$10,100 to \$25,200 as a result of the proposed fee increase. Implementation of a nighttime TRP rate is anticipated to result in a reduction of \$7,500 in TRP revenue. In total, an additional \$7,600 above current budgeted revenues for the TRP Program is anticipated in 2023 if the proposed changes are approved.

It is also noted that the nighttime TRP rate will facilitate a greater availability of parking space utilization during the day, helping to off-set the projected TRP revenue reduction resulting from the implementation of the nighttime rate.

Over the last five years, there has been a total of \$1.2M in TRP revenue (an average of \$240,000 per year), with the majority stemming from charges for reserved parking spaces. An estimated \$76,000 per year in foregone parking revenue is anticipated because of continuation of TRP fees being waived for special events. Administration has not tracked parking revenue impacts associated with reduced fee offerings for food trucks and parking patios, though plans to do so for the purpose of providing a more comprehensive depiction of the true financial impacts.

COMMUNICATION PLAN

Community Standards will work with Communications and Public Engagement Department on the development of a communication plan to inform stakeholders of the proposed program and policy changes.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

There are no privacy, legal, social or environmental implications identified.

NEXT STEPS

If the recommendations are approved, a TRP Policy will be developed, to document the program scope and fee considerations, and brought forward for City Council approval in Q3, 2022. An amendment to the City's Traffic Bylaw removing reference to the previous

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meter hooding program would also be brought forward at this time. If approved, the new fee structure will be implemented effective January 1, 2023.

APPENDICES

1. Temporary Reserved Parking Fee Structure
2. Temporary Reserved Parking Review - External Scan
3. Summary of Temporary Reserved Parking Council Policy Provisions

REPORT APPROVAL

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SP/2022/CS/Trans/Admin Report - Temporary Reserved Parking Program Review/cm