

APPROVAL REPORT

Free Parking on Holidays in Lieu

ISSUE

This report addresses City of Saskatoon (City) [Bylaw No. 7200, the Traffic Bylaw, 1991](#) (Traffic Bylaw), provisions for free parking on occurrences where statutory holidays fall on a weekend, and where many public institutions take the next weekday as the holiday in lieu.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Standing Policy Committee on Transportation recommend to City Council that the current parking enforcement practices for holiday days in lieu of Statutory holidays, as outlined in this report, with Administration utilizing an enhanced communication plan for all applicable days, be approved.

BACKGROUND

Current Status

The City's Traffic Bylaw outlines exceptions for when payment for parking is not required, including the applicable hours of the day, Sunday as free parking and free parking on statutory holidays, observed by the provincial government. The Traffic Bylaw includes the following statutory holiday days:

- New Year's Day;
- Family Day;
- Good Friday;
- Victoria Day;
- Canada Day;
- Saskatchewan Day;
- Labour Day;
- Thanksgiving Day;
- Remembrance Day; and,
- Christmas Day.

Holidays such as Easter Monday, Boxing Day and National Truth and Reconciliation Day are federal holidays and are not identified as free parking days within the Traffic Bylaw. While they are not statutory holidays in Saskatchewan, they may be recognized by workplaces who observe federal holidays, and in some cases being specifically included within their respective collective bargaining agreements.

Free parking in the City's Traffic Bylaw is provided on the specific day the holiday falls on, and allowances for free parking are not extended to situations where a holiday falls on a weekend and is observed on the following Monday. A few City facilities, including City Hall, are typically closed on these days, and this can lead to confusion from the

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public on whether or not payment for parking is required in these instances. For example, in 2021, Christmas Day fell on a Saturday and free parking was provided on that day. City Hall and other civic facilities were closed on the following Monday, December 27, though paid parking requirements remained in effect.

Further to this, the Traffic Bylaw also includes allowances for free parking on days declared as civic holidays by City Council which may differ from the statutory holidays noted above.

The number of occurrences where a statutory holiday falls on the weekend varies year-to-year. Table 1, below, identifies recent and upcoming occurrences.

Table 1 – Statutory Holidays on Weekends

Year	# of Occurrences	Statutory Holiday
2018	2	Canada Day, Remembrance Day
2019	0	NA
2020	0	NA
2021	1	Christmas Day
2022	2	New Year's Day, Christmas Day
2023	3	New Year's Day, Canada Day, Remembrance Day
2024	0	NA
2025	0	NA

City of Saskatoon's Current Approach

Details on adjusted City services on holidays, such as facility closures and pay parking requirements, are typically provided to the public via social media and public service announcements (PSA). In 2018, Canada Day fell on a Sunday and on Monday, July 2, the holiday in lieu of Canada Day, 588 parking tickets were issued, which is a higher-than-normal issuance of parking tickets. It was this situation that precipitated the subsequent review and this report back on the matter.

In more recent years, the City has launched a more robust approach to publicizing this information and notifying people about the need to pay for parking on days other than the actual statutory holiday day. With this approach, where holidays are held in lieu of statutory holidays that fall on a weekend, parking ticket issuance has generally been at, or below, typical non-holiday volumes. For example, on Monday, January 3, 2022, which was observed by many public institutions as a holiday in lieu of January 1, a total of 150 parking tickets were issued.

All parking pay stations, as well as the parking app display messaging indicating there is no charge for parking on days when parking is free.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

Approaches in Other Jurisdictions

A review of practices utilized in other Canadian municipalities identified a variety of different approaches on this issue. Where a statutory holiday falls on a weekend, Winnipeg and Regina accommodate 'free parking' on both the actual holiday date and on the following Monday. Alternatively, Edmonton and Victoria accommodate 'free parking' only on the actual holiday date. Toronto does not accommodate 'free parking' on any holiday.

OPTIONS

Administration has identified two potential options to address the issue.

Option 1 - Status Quo with Enhanced Communication Plan

Status quo would involve a continuation of current administrative practices in which details, such as paid parking requirements, are communicated to the public through PSA's and social media. Payment for parking would still be a requirement and parking tickets would still be issued for parking violations, including those related to unpaid parking time.

With the status quo approach, Administration notes increased communication efforts could be utilized to help reduce confusion on paid parking requirements, including additional PSA reminders and boosted social media posts to ensure messaging reaches a broader audience.

Advantages:

- No additional loss in parking revenue; and
- Consistent with current Traffic Bylaw provisions.

Disadvantages:

- Opportunity for public confusion related to paid parking requirements; and
- Does not align with the closure of some City facilities, such as City Hall.

Option 2 - Traffic Bylaw Amendments

City Council could choose to amend the Traffic Bylaw to accommodate free parking on holidays held in lieu of statutory holidays that fall on a weekend.

Administration notes, in the event where a holiday falls on a Saturday, it is suggested free parking would be accommodated on both Saturday and the following Monday. In instances where a holiday fell on a Sunday, where free parking is already accommodated on Sundays, then free parking would be in effect for the following Monday.

While parking may be free on holidays, motorists are still bound to other parking requirements, including those related to parking time limits.

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Inclusion of an additional 'free parking' day is anticipated to result in approximately \$17,000/day in foregone parking revenue and \$10,000/day in potential parking ticket revenue. The number of occurrences where a statutory holiday falls on a weekend varies year-to-year. In 2023, there will be three occurrences resulting in approximately \$51,000 in foregone parking revenue and \$30,000 in potential foregone parking ticket revenue is anticipated.

Advantage:

Option 2 reduces impacts related to public confusion on free parking allowances on holidays days in lieu of statutory holidays that fall on the weekend.

Disadvantage:

This option results in an estimated parking revenue loss of \$27,000 for each additional day that free parking is offered.

RATIONALE

Administration is recommending approval of Option 1. Administration notes minimal feedback or concern has been received on this issue in recent years which, in part, is due to infrequency in which these situations can arise and an elevated public awareness on this item through continued communication plans.

Administration notes there is significant loss in parking revenue with each free parking day provided and is of the view that a more extensive communication plan to continue to improve public clarity on this subject is a more cost-effective approach.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The cost of boosted social media posts, which facilitate a wider reach, is estimated at \$500 per campaign.

Costs associated with Option 2 are noted above in this report.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

There are no additional implications or considerations.

NEXT STEPS

If Option 1 is chosen, Administration will proceed with the noted communication plan and parking enforcement approach for upcoming holidays in lieu. If Option 2 is chosen, Administration will work with the City Solicitor's Office to table necessary bylaw amendments on a future City Council agenda.

REPORT APPROVAL

Written by: Matt Grazier, Director of Community Standards
Approved by: Lynne Lacroix, General Manager, Community Services