



SUBJECT: 90 Minute Waived Parking Fees

TO: Community Planning, Regulation & Mobility Cttee.

FROM: Transportation Services Department

Report Number: TS-05-20

Wards Affected: 2

File Numbers: 745-01

Date to Committee: April 6, 2021

Date to Council: April 20, 2021

Recommendation:

Approve the extension of the 90 minute waived parking fees pilot program by 3 months of continuous business operation in the “red zone” or a less restricted level and report back to Council at the end of June 2021.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the 90 minute waived parking fees program.

Vision to Focus Alignment:

Focus Area 5 – Delivering customer centric services with a focus on efficiency and technology transformation. The downtown business community as our customer, has requested a change in the parking service provided.

Background and Discussion:

On November 5, 2020, the Downtown Parking Advisory Committee (DPC) recommended the City of Burlington waive parking fees for 90 minutes in any public on-street and off-street parking asset in the downtown as a temporary COVID emergency recovery measure.

At the regular meeting of Council on November 23, 2020, the following staff direction was approved:

Approve a Pilot Project to temporarily amend Parking By-law 39-2016 to accommodate for 90 minutes of waived parking fees within the Burlington Downtown Business Area boundary until April 20, 2021; and

Direct City Staff to draw from the Downtown Parking District Reserve Fund to offset the impact of the associated loss of revenue; and

Direct staff to report back on the metrics with respect to the 90 minutes of waived parking fees, by April 2021; and

That metrics from the Burlington Downtown Business Association and Downtown Parking Committee be reported to Council on a regular monthly basis.

That the amendment take effect as soon as operationally possible with the understanding that the BDBA and DPC will continue to monitor and review 15 the changing needs of small local business during the declared emergency.

On December 1, 2020, the waiving of 90-minute parking fees in downtown Burlington, maintaining the minimum payment (.25 cents) requirement was in effect.

The intent of the program was an immediate emergency measure to help inspire customer confidence in the business community and to mitigate the loss of revenues expected in 2021 for downtown businesses.

On December 26, 2020, the Province of Ontario ordered a lockdown, preventing restaurants and retail stores to be open to the public and on January 14, 2021 the Province of Ontario declared an emergency stay-at-home order. Unfortunately, due to these measures, the 90 minute waived parking fees was not afforded the intended opportunity to be successful nor are staff able to effectively evaluate the program. Staff will continue to monitor the daily fees and permits sales.

Strategy/process

The Burlington Downtown Business Association (BDBA) proposed this program to the DPC who then made the recommendation to Council with three primary desired outcomes in mind:

1. reduce the proportion of stays exceeding the legal limit
2. increase the median and mean length of stays within the legal limit
3. determine the impact of this approach to pricing on the total fees collected

At the February 11, 2020, Downtown Parking Advisory Committee (DPC) meeting the status of the 90 minute waived parking fee program was discussed. DPC members believe that the impact of the City being moved into the “grey zone” significantly impacted the demand for downtown parking and has made it challenging to evaluate the intended purpose of the program.

The DPC believes that the impacts of this program on both visitor behaviour and resulting revenues will not be evident until at least three months of data is collected with business operating in the “red zone”. On this basis the DPC recommends the extension of this program, until the end of June 2021, with the intent of gathering meaningful data from this program that will support future decisions on the post-pandemic recovery of downtown business activity.

Options Considered

Not applicable

Financial Matters:

At this time, due to the impacts of the provincial restrictions, it is premature to determine the impact of the 90 minute waived parking fee program to the Parking Reserve Fund.

Total Financial Impact

Not applicable

Source of Funding

Any revenue shortfalls will be offset from the reserve fund to ensure that the downtown parking service continues to be self-sufficient.

Other Resource Impacts

Not applicable

Climate Implications

Not applicable

Engagement Matters:

Staff will work with the Corporate Communications and Engagement to develop appropriate communication and media releases regarding the extension of the program.

Conclusion:

In consultation with the DPC, staff recommend the extension of the 90 minute waived parking fees pilot program by 3 months of continuous business operation in the “red zone” or a less restricted level and report back to Council at the end of June 2021.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Steven,
Chair, Downtown Parking Committee

Hayley Parkinson
Supervisor of Parking Services
905-335-7600, x 7692

Notifications:

Downtown Parking Committee

Report Approval:

All reports are reviewed and/or approved by Department Director, the Chief Financial Officer and the Executive Director of Legal Services & Corporation Counsel.