

AGENDA FOR THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE PARKING ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO BE
HELD IN THE TRAINING ROOM, CITY HALL ANNEX, 238 FRANKLYN STREET, NANAIMO, BC
ON THURSDAY, 2010-FEB-11, COMMENCING AT 12:00 P.M.

1. **CALL TO ORDER:**
2. **INTRODUCTION OF LATE ITEMS:**
3. **ADOPTION OF AGENDA:**
4. **ADOPTION OF MINUTES:**
 - (a) Minutes of the Parking Advisory Committee, City of Nanaimo, held in the Board Room, City Hall, 455 Wallace Street, Nanaimo, BC, on Tuesday, 2010-JAN-05, at 12:00 p.m. Pg. 2-5
5. **DELEGATIONS:**
6. **CHAIR'S REPORT:**
7. **REPORTS OF ADVISORY BODIES:**
8. **STAFF REPORTS:**
 - (a) Parking Management Study Pg. 6-11
Staff's Recommendation: That the Committee consider the recommendations contained within the body of this report.
9. **INFORMATION ONLY ITEMS:**
 - (a) Parking Comments from "Parking Management Study" Pg. 12-19
10. **CONSIDERATION OF LATE ITEMS/OTHER BUSINESS:**
11. **NEXT MEETING:**

The next regular meeting of the Parking Advisory Committee will be held in the City Hall Board Room, 455 Wallace Street, Nanaimo, BC on date to be determined.
12. **ADJOURNMENT:**

PARKING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE PARKING ADVISORY COMMITTEE,
HELD IN THE BOARD ROOM, CITY HALL, 455 WALLACE STREET, NANAIMO, BC,
ON TUESDAY, 2010-JAN-05, COMMENCING AT 12:00 NOON

PRESENT: Committee Member (Chair) B. McGuffie
Committee Member R. Thurmeier
Committee Member K. Shaw
Committee Member J. Beekman

ABSENT: Councillor L. McNabb
Committee Member D. Klein
Committee Member S. Molchan
Committee Member M. Briggs

STAFF: I. Howat, Director, Legislative Services
A. Tucker, Director of Planning
R. Churchill, Manager, Bylaw Services
T. Davidson, Supervisor, Bylaw Services
M. Hutchinson, Economic Development Officer
T. Hartley, Director, Human Resources
S. Gurrie, Legislative Services (Recording Secretary)

OTHERS: G. Bray, Vancouver Island Health Authority
M. Hussmann, Downtown Nanaimo Partnership Society
C. Curley, Robbins Parking
A. Mears, Robbins Parking
D. Anderson, Robbins Parking

1. Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by B. McGuffie at 12:12 p.m.

2. Introduction of Late Items:

None.

3. Adoption of Agenda:

It was moved by R. Thurmeier and seconded by J. Beekman that the Agenda be adopted. The motion carried unanimously.

4. Adoption of Minutes:

It was moved by R. Thurmeier and seconded by J. Beekman that the Minutes of the Parking Advisory Committee, City of Nanaimo, held in the Board Room, City Hall, 455 Wallace Street, on Thursday, 2009-NOV-19, be adopted as circulated. The motion carried unanimously.

5. Delegations:

None.

6. Chair's Report:

None.

7. Reports of Advisory Bodies:

None.

8. Staff Reports:

None.

9. Information Only Items

(a) Parking Study – Review Draft Final Report

B. McGuffie asked to clarify the status of the Parking Study Draft Final Report in regards to the confidentiality of the report and its contents. I. Howat let the Committee know that Council has been provided a copy for their review and that the contents of the report can be shared; however, the Committee should ensure that the public knows it is a draft only, owned by the Committee. The report and its contents were discussed, with the following issues noted below:

- K. Shaw noted that the contents of the report were lacking in some details but agreed with the recommendations to improve signage, the City's website, brochures and any other incentives to improve downtown parking. There was other discussion amongst the Committee in regards to way finding and signage issues in the downtown area, including the Port of Nanaimo Centre, and Commercial Street.
- I. Howat said that the overall contents of the Draft Final Report were meant to draft policy guidelines to apply to the City's issues, rather than specific problem solving of individual issues. I. Howat advised that the Parking Advisory Committee had to first own the report, and then make their recommendations to Council.

The Parking Advisory Committee discussed a range of recommendations from the Draft Final Report, including:

- Angle parking on Commercial Street and Selby Street as well as the feasibility and safety of doing so. Driveways are a deterrent for angle parking and create safety issues.
- Meters versus no meters in the downtown area.

- Rates of on-street and off-street parking facilities.
- Way finding issues
- Helping to promote a different outlook from the public in regards to parking issues and sustainability.
- Parking restrictions in the NRGH area and possible solutions. I. Howat commented on how the solution for one area, is not necessarily the solution for the other. He noted that those are the types of issues that need to be addressed, with recommendations brought forward.
- K. Shaw wanted to know if there was subsidized parking in the downtown area for employees working part-time. C. Curley of Robbins Parking said there used to be but that it hasn't been offered in the last couple of years. It was pointed out that it is still the Bylaw.
- I. Howat made the point that one of the reasons the downtown is great is because of the employees and if they are part-time or making minimum wage, they will need to be considered in parking recommendations.
- The Committee asked about construction projects in the downtown and if the City of Nanaimo was still making revenue from meters and spaces when construction projects are underway and utilizing vital parking inventory. The City of Nanaimo is still collecting revenue for such projects.

It was moved by R. Thurmeier made and seconded by K. Shaw that the Draft Final Report be received. The motion carried unanimously.

It was then decided by the Committee and I. Howat that the Committee would forward their concerns and recommendations from the Draft Final Report to I. Howat in order for him to do a Staff Report for the next Parking Advisory Committee Meeting, to be held in early February. At that point the Committee would review the Staff Report and the recommendations included in it, to then make recommendations to take forward to Council.

M. Hussmann, Director of the DNPS, will also take the Draft Final Report to his members and forward recommendations to I. Howat.

(b) Restructure – moving Parking from the Legislative Services Department to the Bylaw Services Department

- I. Howat advised the Committee as to the restructuring of the Parking Department. I. Howat said that after an internal review, and as a cost cutting measure, Parking would be transferred to the Bylaw Department and Risk Management would be dealt with in another way. There will not be a replacement manager hired.

Other updates from the Minutes of the Parking Advisory Committee, on Thursday, 2009-NOV-19, were as follows:

- I. Howat will use an alternative message on the LCD screen at the Conference Centre to publicize parking in the parkade.
- I. Howat made contact with TELUS in regards to their lot on Fitzwilliam and will keep the Committee posted on the progress.
- I. Howat also advised the Committee that the City of Nanaimo has provided the Howard Johnson Inn its one year notice of Termination for the parking lot Lease, to take effect December 31, 2010.

10. Consideration of Late Items/Other Business

None.

11. Next Meeting

The next regular meeting of the Parking Advisory Committee will be held at the City Hall Board Room, Nanaimo, BC on a date to be determined.

12. Adjournment

It was moved by R. Thurmeier and seconded by J. Beekman that the Meeting be adjourned at 1:14 p.m.

B. McGuffie, Chair

/sg

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COMMITTEE REPORT

FROM: I. Howat, Director of Legislative Services

RE: Parking Management Study

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Committee consider the recommendations contained within the body of this report.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The City, under the guidance of the Parking Advisory Committee undertook a Parking Management Study to determine the extent, if any, of the parking problems reported to the Committee, Council and staff. The report was received by the Committee at the beginning of January. The report did not reveal any new information, however it did confirm and quantify the extent of parking in the three focus areas (Downtown, Hospital, VIU). The Committee requested that staff prepare a report outlining recommendations for the study areas, which are outlined below.

BACKGROUND:

Any process that looks at managing parking is a series of compromises. Everyone has an opinion about how parking should be managed in City and rarely is there consensus on any particular direction.

The parking strategy has provided the PAC and the City of Nanaimo with quantitative data that will assist the Committee and Council with the appropriate plan of action. For the most part the recommended actions that are contained within the study can be supported by staff except for within the downtown. This exception is mainly due to specific circumstances that are outside good parking management practices and fall more closely in line with the City's initiatives around economic development and downtown revitalization. So, while the data is being used to formulate the staff recommendations for the downtown, most of the recommendations will be a departure from the strategy.

The strategy's recommendations relating to structure, management, enforcement methods and CPTED are all appropriately being considered at the staff level as a result of the internal restructuring, which placed the responsibility of parking enforcement within the Bylaw Services section of Development Services. Questions of parking policy will be referred to the newly formed Transportation committee.

1. A global recommendation that applies to this report is to provide some consistent regulations that are clear to end user. The City has some regulated on-street parking that is varying in times and days. Staff are recommending that all regulated on-street parking be consistent throughout the City. Varying points of views were provided ranging from unregulated parking on Sundays to unregulated on evenings in the downtown core. The consultant recommend one standard to make it less confusing to the end-user.

Staff recommend to change all currently regulated on-street parking to 8AM to 8PM Monday thru Saturday, unregulated on Sundays.

2. The Strategy integrates Transportation Demand Management (TDM) into many of the recommended solutions to parking demands.

Staff recommend that the Strategy be forwarded to the City's Transportation Advisory Committee for future reference and to the Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) to focus future transit planning specifically in the study areas of the Downtown, Vancouver Island University and the Nanaimo Regional General Hospital.

This report is broken down into the three main functional areas that are currently causing the greatest concern:

Downtown Zone

3. Despite the strategy's recommendation to standardize all of the regulated on-street parking to 2 hour, staff are recommending that Commercial Street, Bastion Street, and Church Street remain unmetered, but be changed to maximum 1 hour parking. The strategy revealed that these areas were in high demand, so to spread the demand out among the parking inventory in this vicinity the Committee can either consider metering these locations, which has received negative feedback, or shorten the duration of the stay in these locations with the hope that more people will utilize the parkades if they intend to stay longer than 1 hour.

Staff recommend that Commercial Street, Bastion Street, and Church Street remain unmetered, but be changed to maximum 1 hour parking.

4. The following areas are currently 1 hour parking:
 - Franklyn between Wesley and Robson.
 - Wesley between Milford and Victoria. (***Should we unrestrict?***)
 - Selby between Wentworth and Campbell.

Consistent with the strategy's recommendations these areas should be changed to 2 hour parking.

Staff recommend that the balance of the time restricted parking regulations in the downtown zone be standardized to maximum 2 hours.

5. Municipal roads serve many purposes beyond the efficient movement of cars. Those purposes include the safe passage of vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists; delivery of goods and services; storm water retention and flows, traffic calming and in this case, provide an alternative to consuming valuable real estate for parking. Roads are constructed for the public good and where municipalities restrict any of the municipal purposes of roads it impacts the public good by underutilizing public assets. Resident exempt parking zones, while an effective tool when used in the right locations, are contrary to the efficient use of public assets and contradicts the high value the community places on land. This type of regulation, if deemed absolutely necessary, is only effective when there are underutilized off-street parking opportunities that are able to accommodate the displaced traffic. Applying this tool in areas where off-street parking is at or near capacity or non-existent does not reduce parking problems; it merely

displaces them. In the downtown zone this has been a topical issue over the past year with Council applying resident exempt parking to the 300 block of Milton.

Staff recommend to not provide any further expansion of resident exempt parking regulations until there is sufficient off-street parking inventory to accommodate the displaced vehicles.

6. A great deal of feedback indicated the need to compete fairly with the malls that provide “free” parking. The development and management of parking is a costly proposition and the City cannot provide “free” parking without significant tax increases. The malls do not provide free parking. Mall parking is paid for by the retailers within the mall rather than the customers. The City can provide the same opportunity downtown one of two ways. The first, while not recommended, is the easiest for the consumer. It is to establish a specified area bylaw and annually tax the downtown property owners for the necessary funds to pay for the parkades and parking that would be deemed free to the consumer. This would also accommodate business owners, and their employees. Staff are not recommending this option because staff believe that this additional tax on the downtown businesses will have a counter effect on downtown revitalization efforts underway.

A solution more cumbersome to the consumer and the merchant, but is tied closely with their costs of goods sold is to provide the consumer with a discount or refund on their parking when they shop at a downtown merchant. This solution requires an integrated approach with the City and the downtown business community. Wide spread support from the downtown merchants would be necessary for this initiative to proceed without causing confusion and frustration for the consumer. Support from the DNBIA and the Chamber of Commerce is necessary. The City would convert the ticket spitters in selected City owned off-street parking lots and parkades to a split ticket. The consumer would leave one in their window and take the other portion into the merchant for a discount/refund. The portion of the ticket must be for valid parking and cannot be used after it has expired. As a longer term solution, if this option is successful, staff recommend converting the on-street meters to parking ticket kiosks that would serve the same purpose.

Staff recommend to commence discussions with the DNBIA and the Chamber of Commerce with the intent to implement a merchant-based refund of parking in the downtown core.

Staff recommend that if the above noted initiative is successful in one year that parking meter kiosks be considered in the “meter-exempt” portions of the downtown using the same initiative.

7. **Staff recommend that off-street parking meters be standardized among the city owned lots and consider technologies that make it easier and more flexible for the consumer to pay for parking such as the use of cell phones, debit cards etc.**
8. Both the strategy and feedback from the public and the business community has indicated that the City could do considerably better in publicizing the location of parking in the downtown zone. **Staff recommend to:**
 - **Update the website to clearly identify graphically where public parking is located downtown.**

- **Provide parking diagrams to the DNBIA, Chamber of Commerce, Tourism Nanaimo, and businesses located in the downtown that wish to include this information on their website.**
- **Include parking wayfinding diagrams in the Visitor Guide.**
- **Consider a larger, backlit sign at ninety degrees to the Port of Nanaimo Centre parkade.**

Nanaimo Regional General Hospital Zone

The hospital zone poses a challenge for the City of Nanaimo. Parking demand is generated primarily by the hospital but also in part by the complimentary services that have located in proximity to the hospital. The hospital falls under Provincial jurisdiction (VIHA) and therefore local zoning requirements do not apply. The City has no policy mechanisms to require the hospital to provide a required level of parking. To date it has been through cooperation and VIHA's own determination that there is an ongoing need for off-street parking to service the hospital. It is noted that Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA) representatives on the Parking committee have shared the hospital redevelopment plans which include the construction of additional off-street parking. The acknowledgement from VIHA and their willingness to address the ongoing parking concerns of the neighbourhood should be noted.

9. The strategy has indicated that the hospital off-street parking is relatively underutilized and that on-street parking is in high demand. It's reported that the free on-street parking is considered first before people consider utilizing the pay parking on the hospital grounds. For several years the City has fielded complaints about the level of non-resident parking in the residential neighbourhoods surrounding the hospital. Consistent with staff advice in the downtown zone, any regulatory parking scheme considered needs to be accompanied by a viable alternative, which in this case is an adequate inventory of off-street parking.. Over the longer term, the City may wish to consider implementing metered parking in the areas currently defined as unregulated and marked in green. Metering would be to offset the additional costs to the City to enforce the newly regulated areas. Any proposed metering should have a rate consistent with the off-street parking rates.

Staff recommend implementing maximum 2 hour parking, resident exempt zones, identified in red on the attached plan A.

Staff Recommend that metering be established in the area identified as green or "unregulated" one year from Council's review of the Committee's recommendations pertaining to this strategy.

Vancouver Island University Zone

Vancouver Island University (VIU), not unlike the Hospital falls under Provincial jurisdiction and is exempt from local land use policies. Like the Hospital, the City relies on cooperation and good community relations to ensure that VIU comply with local land use policies that are of concern to the community. Unlike the hospital, VIU's off-street parking has reached a critically high level of use. Indications from the Strategy is that VIU's off-street parking is over capacity creating pressures and conflicts in the adjacent residential neighbourhoods. Unfortunately due to the doctrine throughout this staff report that if there are not viable alternatives/solutions readily available than any new regulatory regime should be postponed.

Staff recommendations for this area require the collaboration of VIU, and the RDN, with the City of Nanaimo. A multi-faceted approach is necessary to overcome the parking demands in this zone. **Staff recommendations are:**

10. Forward the Strategy to VIU and request that VIU consider adding to their off-street parking inventory or suggest another viable strategy to reduce parking demand in this zone.
11. Request the VIU and the RDN commence discussions on how the RDN's transit function can better serve the university.
12. Postpone any consideration of time restricted resident exempt parking until viable options are developed through discussions with VIU to relieve parking space demands.

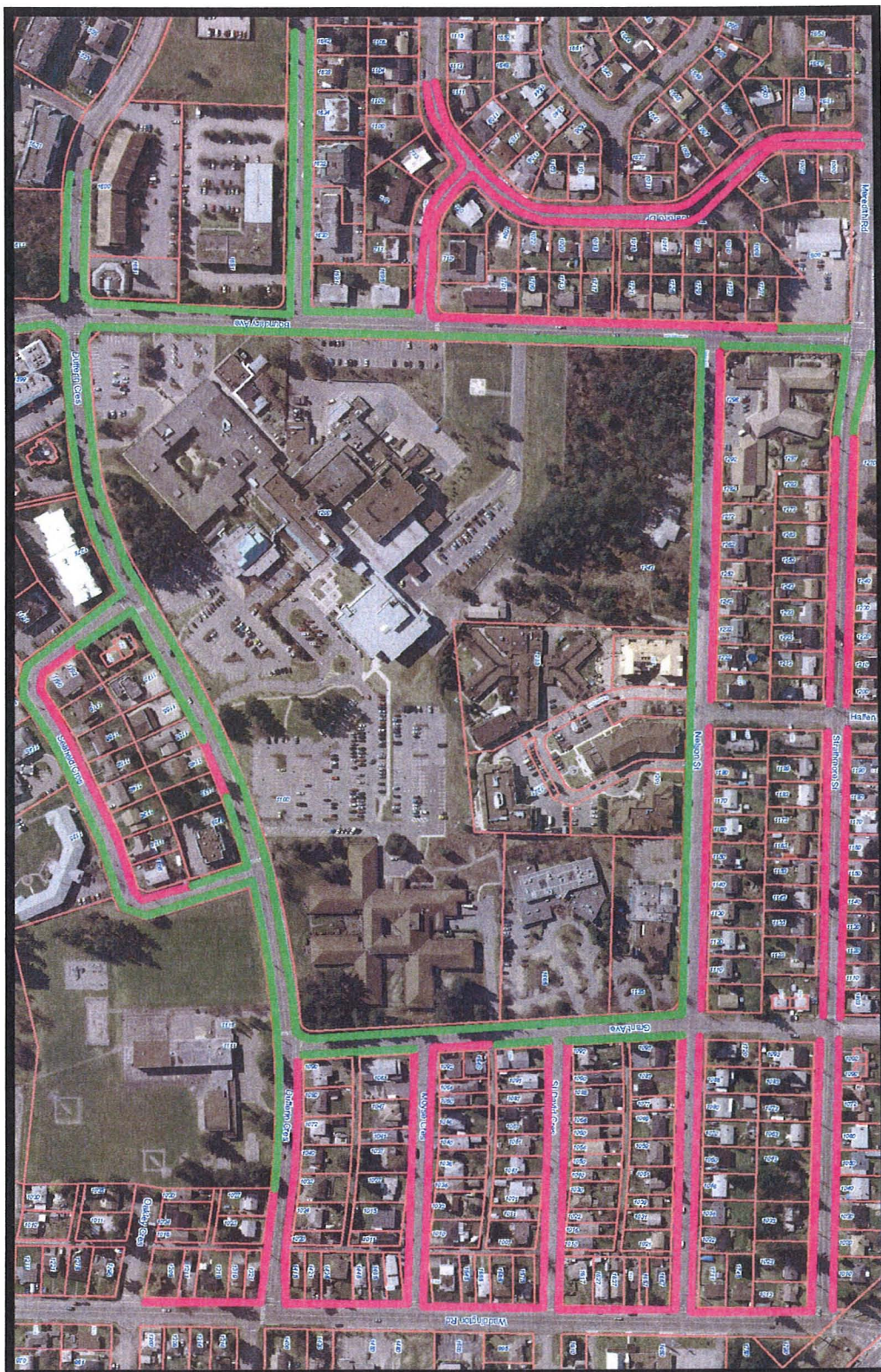
BC Ferries – Departure Bay

Staff do not recommend any changes to the current parking regulations in this zone.

Respectfully submitted,

I. Howat
Director of Legislative Services

SCHEDULE "A"



Regulated 2 hour (Resident exempt)

Unregulated

Parking Comments

Comment #1

- Agree with trying to maintain a consistent parking rules between the downtown and Old City Quarter – i.e. 2 hr parking Monday-Saturday.
 - There is still no mention of a new parkade needed for the Old City Quarter. I am often asked by shoppers where they can find a parkade in this area so that they can stay for the day. This is a big issue with the Old City Quarter Association and the board has requested numerous times for more parking in the area.
 - Agree with making the streets around the university and hospital areas 2 or 4 hour parking – residents exempt
 - What about charging for resident exempt passes?
 - Also some areas need to be looked at where resident exempt passes are being used – perhaps more streets need to be identified in order to shift some of the resident exempts from one street to another (ie Selby Street – I have an apartment there with some tenants using resident exempt passes, in the mean time I'm building another apartment on Selby in the same block, the back street, Richards Street, should perhaps become resident exempt parking to allow some of the tenants to park on this barely used back street instead of everyone parking on Selby Street which is a busy street).
 - The BC Ferries problem has always been a problem but seems to have somewhat gotten better since the resident exempt rules were established many years ago.
-

Comment #2

City Hall has parking lots for staff.... Do they pay to park as employees?

Comment #3

T markings need to be put in parallel parking areas so drivers know what parameters they have to park their vehicles.

Right now one vehicle can take up two spaces!

Comment #4 - Summary from DNPS

From former business owner (art business)

- There is public frustration with pay parking when parking at malls is free. Need to keep downtown on equal footing with malls.
 - Robbins Customer Service is not great... As employee, often got tickets because meters were broken, wouldn't take coins.
 - As store owner, #1 customer complaint is parking. Less about the fact that you have to pay, but more about the time limit. Time pressure on customers is a problem. She looked into technology that allows time to be added by phone.
 - Downtown shops not much of a draw, add parking woes and it's easy to rationalize not coming downtown.
 - Transit should be part of the overall plan.
 - To help foster later store hours in the summer, make parking cheap or free at night.
 - Please treat downtown equally with the malls.
-

Question: Do city employees pay for their parking in city lots?

- Percieved lack of parking and cost of parking are issues.
 - People feel entitled to free parking
 - Suggests converting portion of Bastion/Port Theater parkades into free, time-limited parking
-

From Medical clinic

- Patients get 2+ hour consultations/treatments. Dealing with patient's cars during treatment is big problem.
 - MultiCultural Centre overflows from their lot into private lots, also takes up a lot of on-street. Need better coordination of supply & demand.
-

From small retail business owner

- Parking study was a waste of \$. "Everyone knows" where the problems are, and the solutions have already been discussed.
 - Commercial vehicle parking is one problem
 - Lack of good signage is big problem. Customers don't know about Bastion or Port Theatre parkades. The study's lack of a short-term recommendation to improve signage is a real flaw.
 - Need to stop owners and employees from parking on the street.
-

- Promote under-utilized parkades
 - Establish a validation program to encourage people to go into stores to get their validation and make purchases
 - As part of the push to promote the parkades, make it 6 months free parking
-

- Make the one-hour parking two hours. Keep Sunday parking free. Leave the 4 hour-resident exempt parking alone.
 - Don't increase the meter rates, use the new \$15 fine to ensure compliance
 - The new fine will also increase parkade use.
 - Contract parking will be cheaper than if the city takes it in-house
 - Do not use parking boots
 - Introduce pre-paid cards
-

From a salon owner

Need to have three hour parking limit so customers can complete their sessions

From 300 block Franklyn

The one hour parking is working well

Comment #5

Simplify existing restrictions to ease enforcement and increase uniformity:

- a. Make one-hour parking restrictions two hours
- b. Change two-hour, Monday to Saturday restrictions to a general two-hour restriction
- c. Change four-hour, Resident exempt restrictions to two hours.

Comments:

- a. Agree
- b. Disagree, Sunday should remain open.
- c. Disagree

Increase parking meter rates on Chapel and Skinner Streets to encourage turnover and increase use of parkades.

Comments:

Disagree, the early payment of fines has/will increase(d) from \$7.50 to \$15.00 which should encourage use of parkades as it will be far cheaper than getting a ticket.

Could also look at increasing the overall fine.

Restructure Bylaw 5000 to separate the traffic and parking functions into two separate bylaws.

Comments:

Makes sense to do so

Consider in-house parking enforcement and management.

Whether such a branch could be sustained financially, is the real question? Contracting out is likely far less expensive and sustainable.

Improve communications about parking.

- a. Overhaul the City website to better describe availability, regulations, and the role of parking as a city asset.
- b. Develop an on-line and hardcopy parking brochure
- c. Improve signage and wayfinding
- d. Communication with residents that parking is a shared asset and is not "free"

Comments:

Agree

Long-Term Changes:

Consider installation of parking meters on Commercial Street between Bastion and Albert Streets to increase turnover and encourage use of off-street lots.

Comments:

Only if they are free on Sundays

Consider introduction of parking boots to increase collections from scofflaws.

Comments:

Disagree

Consider implementation of pay-by-space, pay-by-display, and prepaid parking.

Comments:

Like the prepaid parking card idea as it also allows use of coins.
Not so hot on the other options.

Comment #6

Improve communications about parking.

- a. Overhaul the City website to better describe availability, regulations, and the role of parking as a city asset.
- b. Develop an on-line and hardcopy parking brochure
- c. Improve signage and wayfinding
- d. Communication with residents that parking is a shared asset and is not "free"

Comments: Communication about the available parking in the downtown core is essential to drawing more people to the area. This could be done by having notices in the newspaper as well as updating the City's web site.

Long-Term Changes:

Consider installation of parking meters on Commercial Street between Bastion and Albert Streets to increase turnover and encourage use of off-street lots.

Comments: I would like to see parking meters all along Commercial street or pay by display and have 2 hour free parking in the parkades. This would draw people into the parkades where there is lots of parking and the street parking which is very convenient would be used by those who would pay for this convenience. This would generate more income for the city and create more of a turnover of people to the downtown. In my view a lot of people who are not familiar with the downtown think that there's not a lot of parking but that is because they think that they have to park on Commercial St.

Comment #7

I closed my business last year, and hope that your study does take into account that the public is frustrated by pay-parking, simply because they may park for free at malls, where corporate business booms, while many small businesses have closed.

The idea that Robbins Parking offers "good customer service" would be disputed by most of the Nanaimo public. I had ample issues myself, before the machines in the Bastion Parkade were changed. I received countless tickets because their machines would not take my change. I would lose change in the machine (Say, a \$4.00 option for the day, would take \$1.25, then stop working, but only gave me parking for \$1. Then, I would receive a ticket. Eventually, I gave up fighting with Robbins, and started writing letters. I attended a Parking Committee meeting years ago, and was seated at the edge of the room, but not one person on that committee made a comment about my issues)

The number one reason my clients said they hated shopping downtown, and rarely visited, was due to parking. It's not that they were angry about paying, it was the fact that if they were late getting back to their car, they were fined.

Pay Parking in our downtown "small business" core means social habits of shoppers are monitored, and makes them feel that they are shopping in a "police-state." I worked at Walmart for over four years, and our customers would wander around aimlessly, browsing, trying on clothes, and spending money. When I had my business downtown, I noticed and had lots of feedback from clients who felt they were under time-pressure to shop. Sometimes, a client would run from my business, as they'd just realized their parking was due. This does not invite the public to shop locally. It deters them.

Our society is adjusted to nickel and diming, but is also getting very frustrated. I'm sure you're aware of the back-lash against the new parking tax to be implemented in Vancouver.

To increase meter rates, means people will just avoid and boycott. After all, our downtown lacks a department store (such as Sears, or the Bay) - and unfortunately, the specialty shops do not offer enough of a draw for a modern public who lives on convenience. I personally park in parkades, as I also believe less cars on the street make for a more beautiful experience when browsing downtown, however, as I sold large pieces of artwork, people did require access to my store-front, in order to load pieces into their vehicles. I also needed this access, when I needed to transport pieces to the post office for shipping.

I do hope this study will contemplate our "culture" of convenience, and consider the ramifications these changes will have on locally-owned small businesses. Unfortunately, the downtown is in constant competition with the mall parking lots.

Parking was my number-one client complaint. There was a group of women who came downtown once a month to meet for lunch, and one of their friends refused to attend, as she'd had parking tickets. It's a deterrent...not an invitation, to support a local area.

Campbell River has free parking, and the downtown businesses have survived and prospered for years. Perhaps it would be valuable to study some of these communities who have figured out ways to "think outside of the box" and encourage locals to shop locally.

Victoria and Vancouver small business has been arguing against Pay-parking vs availability for years. I understand the need to monitor street parking, but there are also new technologies available for increasing parking time via a cell phone (Verrus?) - can't quite remember, but I did look into it when I had my business. If parking costs are reasonable, people WILL come downtown more often, if they are free to browse without the constant "clock-watching-gotta-run" experience most encounter.

It would be wonderful if transit was as efficient as it is in Europe, where people find it easier to take transit than a bus. Unfortunately, the lay-out of our town does not invite the public to take transit. I do believe our culture needs to rethink this, for green initiatives, however, it's not going to happen over night. I believe increasing parking costs for the downtown will effectively kill off everything that is left.

Until malls have pay parking, the competition is unequal for downtown. We need to make our downtown lively, exciting and inviting. Increasing parking costs is not the answer. Inviting the public to come and browse, however, IS. Let the parkades fill up, by offering the public a "deal." They are paying, to visit their local area, or can park for free at Walmart. They need to have a reason to need their downtown, and if parking is "reasonable," they will shop locally more often. Most of my clients were hotel guests, or on yachts. Very few of them were local. I find that demoralizing and sad, as I've now closed my business and run it online, with visitors who don't live here. That's hardly something for Nanaimo to feel proud of. We should be welcoming our locals as much as visitors are welcomed. My clients, on boats, would wander around our downtown aimlessly spending money. The revenue collected from this, should surely be taken into account!

One more thought....I've visited Yucatan, Mexico on several occasions. They do not have street parking at all in the city of Merida, but parkades are so cheap. In that city, the parkades are full, and the streets are busy with delivery trucks, and pedestrians. There is a night-culture, and that responsibility here increases in summer (meaning, small businesses need to recognize their responsibility, to remain open at night when the weather is warm.) - I often increased my open-hours in the summer, due to yachters. Many of them with young children complained about the lack of activity downtown. There are some compromises that need to be made, between local business owners, and the parking situation.

In this study, perhaps some of the cultural activities of society need to be addressed, via parking. For example, if parking was decreased at night, more people may come downtown to socialize in the evening, and coffee shops would find a financial benefit for remaining open as long as Starbucks...after all, Starbucks are all located in areas with free parking, and are busy well into the evening....(As with Tim Hortons.)

Place our local downtown area on an equal scale, PLEASE!

Comment #8

The recommendations I have about parking downtown were not a part of the recommendations presented in the study. None in the study solved the major issues we face. Here are some of the ideas that I would like considered.

1.) *Promote the currently unused and inexpensive parkade behind the downtown museum. (and any other downtown parkades that are currently underutilized)*

2.) *Implement a parking validation program for people to use parkades to park rather than driving up and down the streets praying for one of the few open spaces, while encouraging people to come into the shops to have their parking stubs stamped.*

3.) *Part of the parkade push...have the city, the partnership and/or the merchants promote a 6 months of free parking campaign in parkades to try and finally squash the age-old reputation that most Nanaimoite's hold that parking downtown is the biggest deterrent to shopping downtown.*

Comment #9

We face a challenge with both the current and the proposed parking recommendation. Our business operates on Prideaux Street along one of the ONLY "gray" (2 hours - residents exempt) zones.

Our patients typically come for a 2+ hours consultation or a 2-3 hour treatment. We have often had to move patients cars due to this constraint.

The second concern is that the Multicultural Centre overflows and occasionally utilizes our private parking area. They utilize the majority of the area parking as well. I believe that the "planners" do not always consider the use and utilization of the various businesses and services to the available parking. Numbers are numbers - but not a reality check unless you quantify

them with use factors - not just public use - but the "semi-resident" use - those who go to an 8 hour a day job and require adequate parking.

I hope that more comprehensive thinking be placed within the reporting mechanism than the current limited thinking.

Comment #10

I think the study was a total waste of money. Everyone knows what and where the problems are and all the suggestions for improvement have been talked about before. There is nothing new in this report. We have had a very lazy Parking Committee at City Hall. Do they even hold meetings anymore? First off, I didn't read anything about commercial vehicle parking issues in the Downtown core Secondly, 6.7 Signage and Way Finding. Short Term, no recommendations! Excuse me! To me, this is a major problem. Over half my customers don't know that the Bastion St. Parkade exists. There is NO signage. Also, the signage for the Convention Centre is insufficient. One of the short term goals should be better signage to the parkades and other off-street parking. The next step would be to stop employees and business owners from parking on the street. On my end of Chapel street, I would change the last three or four meters to 15minute parking only. Is there going to be a DNPS Committee meeting to discuss this report? If so, I would like to attend.

Comment #11

My opinion is that parking is an impediment, perceived or real, that prevents people from coming downtown more frequently. This impediment is due both to the perceived lack of parking and the cost.

As cheap as the parking is at the Bastion parkade, a lot of people still feel entitled to free parking.

My suggestion is to convert part of the Bastion and/or Port Theatre parkades into free (time limited) parking to encourage more shoppers/patrons/visitors to the downtown of Nanaimo. Promote this properly, and the downtown will grow even more in popularity.

Comment #12

Change to note that Robbins currently uses the wireless handheld devices for ticketing.

Comment #13

Having advocated for a creative approach to parking regulation and enforcement for a number of years, and having worked to encourage the City to engage a consultant for such a review, I am disappointed, as I often am with consultant reports, that the recommendations show a complete lack of ingenuity and if followed, will lead to the same old, same old parking formulas.

Along the way I researched all kinds of unique 'out of the box' systems that in a variety of ways transform 'parking enforcement' into 'city ambassadors' and use as their fundamental premise 'customer service' and 'user-friendliness' such as pay as you leave parkades so that people can relax without worrying about getting ticket for staying 10 minutes too long, and meter technology and graduating rates that allow you to park anywhere for as long as you like with the proviso that in some locations, like parkades, the rate goes down the longer you stay and in some locations like Commercial St., the rate goes up the longer you stay, etc.

Another issue that I don't see addressed beyond token reference to CPTED, is safety and security in parkades. I've made the argument over and over that the issue for the consumer is not whether they pay \$3 or \$9 but whether they have a \$500 broken window or a stolen car. The response has always been that the revenues aren't high enough to warrant the improvements. To which I say, improve the product, raise the prices and the users will respond positively—The worse it is, the less you charge, the fewer people come...

A final frustration is that, I have for years advocated that the terms of reference for such projects should specify that we want to be compared to 'best practices' and not just to 'other communities in BC.' Looking around, I'm pretty sure that most communities in BC generally DO NOT qualify for a list of 'best practices' in the majority of categories... We will never be considered 'one of the most desirable, livable small cities in North America' by emulating Kamloops and Prince George...and what they do in a city the size of Vancouver has only marginal application to our community.

Comment #14

I understand the RCMP may be asking for further taxi zones because of the way cabbies are parking all over the place, outside bars, at night near closing.

Rather than give taxis dedicated stands, I would recommend thinking about three public parallel spaces which are only designated for cabs during certain late-night time periods; 11:00pm-2:30a.m.?

To control this mess late night the RCMP, Robbins or Bylaw should be ticketing cabbies who double-park and block traffic, stop in the middle of the street and pull up on nodes or sidewalks. The cabbies are out-of-control during late-night hours currently.