

Staff Report for Decision

DATE OF MEETING JULY 17, 2023

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SUBJECT PARKING BYLAW EXEMPTION

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report

To provide the Governance and Priorities Committee with additional information for consideration of supporting additional Staff resources to create and operate a Parking Bylaw Exemption Program.

Recommendation

That the Governance and Priorities Committee recommend that Council direct Staff to undertake a review of the parking requirements associated with Seniors Congregate Housing and how Transportation Demand Management tools could be used to more effectively reduce the financial burdens associated with personal vehicle dependency.

BACKGROUND

In November 2020, Council passed a motion asking Staff to prepare a report outlining potential options, which would allow residents to leave vehicles on City streets beyond the 24-hour time limit, which exists within the "Traffic and Highway Regulation Bylaw 1993 No. 5000". Staff provided two reports, Attachments A and B, to assist Council in understanding the need for the 24-hour restriction and subsequently the potential consequence if vehicles were permitted to be left beyond that time period. These reports generated further discussion and subsequent direction to Staff to provide greater detail of what an exemption process could entail, which would enable Council to determine if additional resources should be included as part of the financial planning discussion. Staff have also engaged McElhanney Consulting to provide a brief presentation (Attachment E) to provide a broader summary of parking in an urban environment.

DISCUSSION

In June and July of 2022, Staff presented reports to Council discussing the issues and concerns regarding the 24-hour Parking Restriction that exists within the Traffic and Highway Regulation Bylaw – Attachments A and B. In Attachment A – *24 Hour Parking Bylaw Exemption*, dated 2022-Jun-20, Staff provided background on what the 24-hour time restriction is, how it is used by Enforcement and Operations staff, and why municipalities need a tool such as this to manage community expectations and ensure a continuity of service. Upon receiving this report, Council asked for a follow-up report with greater detail and explicit consideration of applying a Bylaw exemption to areas that are already designated with "Resident Exempt" parking. In Attachment B – *Parking Bylaw Exemption*, Staff reviewed the potential impacts of allowing vehicles to be stored (without a time limit) on Selby Street while also highlighting newly adopted policies from City Plan that speak to the City's vision and values regarding parking.

As part of preparing information to respond to the recommendation in Attachment B, Staff reflected on the concerns that have been raised to ensure that the solution is suitable, and an approach fully informed.

Review of Needs, Current Conditions, and Options:

Through discussions with residents and Council, Staff understand that the primary concern is that some developments have been approved and do not have adequate parking to accommodate resident vehicles, which is forcing some to park on the street. Residents parking on street is not uncommon and is not typically problematic. In this case, residents of these subject sites use their vehicles very infrequently (see Attachment D – *Transportation Review*) and are now receiving tickets for parking longer than the 24-hour limit permitted within the Bylaw.

Two of the three sites which are being discussed were recently approved as “Seniors Congregate Housing” which is envisioned to offer some support to residents and is defined in the Zoning Bylaw as:

SENIORS’ CONGREGATE HOUSING - means a residential or institutional facility which provides sleeping units or dwelling units for persons all of whom are aged 65 or older, one or more meals per day and housekeeping services, contains a common dining area with a capacity sufficient to accommodate all residents of the residential facility, and may contain accessory personal service and accessory convenience store uses.

The current requirements for on-site vehicle storage for a Development are outlined in Attachment C - *Off Street Parking Regulations Bylaw 2018 No. 7266*. It is worth noting that this type of land use is envisioned to support residents who may have limited income or may have mobility challenges, which would make them less likely to have access to or be reliant on a personal vehicle, and as such only requires 0.3 parking spaces per dwelling unit. In addition, the sites that have been identified as being problematic are currently being operated as “Non-Market Housing” which further reinforces the assumption that residents are on a limited income.

City Plan has strong aspirations to reduce dependency on personal vehicles for transportation, not only for the health and environmental benefits, but also to reduce financial burden on its residents. This view does not resonate with all, and the idea of giving up your vehicle can also illicit feelings of reduced independence. There are circumstances where convenient mobility can be maintained at a lesser cost. This is reviewed in Attachment D – *Transportation Review*, and ultimately concludes that in circumstances where residents have such low demand for travel, car ownership is the least cost-effective option for travel within Nanaimo and could be replaced with a number of different options which vary in cost and convenience.

Table 1. Transportation Review Summary (2023)

Mode of Travel	Annual Cost	Degree of Convenience	Degree of Accessibility
Car Ownership	~ \$5,000	High	High
Transit Pass	\$480 - \$780	Low to Moderate	Low to Moderate

HandyDART	\$120	Moderate to High	Moderate to High
Care Share (MODO)	=< \$100	Moderate (downtown)	Moderate (downtown)
Taxi or Ride Hail	~ \$600	High	Moderate to High

Review of Impacts to the Community:

Prior to investigating potential transportation alternatives, was the question of impacts to allowing prolonged vehicle storage on-street. Staff previously outlined operational concerns (impacts to Snow and Ice Control or regular operational tasks) but did not elaborate on the direct or indirect financial costs to the community.

All parking has a cost associated with it, regardless of whether it is on-street, off-street, or within a structure. While the cost to create a parking area will vary between municipalities, the generally accepted values range from \$5,000 for on-street to \$50,000 or more for structured¹. The Off-Street Parking Bylaw 7266 values parking stalls at \$10,000 each.

In Downtown Nanaimo, parking rates range from \$9 per day for on-street parking to \$3 per day for off-street surface parking. Short term structured parking utilizes the same day rate as on-street with long term being managed through monthly contracts which range from \$75-\$110 per month based on location. Long term parking is not permitted on-street as this is deemed to be the highest value to the community.

Accepting that each parking space in Nanaimo has a direct or indirect monetary value attached to it, means that providing an exemption to park for a time beyond what is allotted to all other members of the community, effectively means that the City is creating a subsidy to that benefiter.

Creating an exemption may be a path Council chooses. Should this be the path forward, guidance or confirmation will need to be provided to Staff on the selection criteria.

Staff currently understand that income and mobility are the two primary drivers for this conversation; however, it is unclear if they are mutually exclusive or need to be considered in combination. In regard to evaluating income capacity, Staff would propose to use the existing LEAP program². To evaluate mobility, the Provincial SPARC program³ would be used. Neither of these explicitly distinguish age of applicants, which may not align with Council's vision. Incorporating these two programs would ensure that the core issues of financial capacity and mobility are addressed.

Should these criteria be used independently it is important to know that there are currently over 500 LEAP participants and 5000 SPARC placard holders which could result in as many as 5500 applicants for an exemption.

¹ <https://www.strongtowns.org/journal/2018/11/20/the-many-costs-of-too-much-parking>

² [https://www.nanaimo.ca/parks-recreation-culture/recreation-facilities-schedules/leap-\(leisure-economic-access-pass\)](https://www.nanaimo.ca/parks-recreation-culture/recreation-facilities-schedules/leap-(leisure-economic-access-pass))

³ <https://www.sparc.bc.ca/parking-permits/>

Should Council wish to see the criteria used in combination, the number of potential applicants should not exceed 500.

If Council were to direct staff to create a Parking Bylaw Exemption program, it is possible that other groups within the community may petition Staff or Council to be included, which may have an unintended consequence.

OPTIONS

The recommended Option is to undertake a review of the application of the “Zoning” and “Off Street Parking” Bylaws, as they relate to Seniors Congregate Housing and Non-Market housing, as there appears to be inconsistencies between the intent and how they are being operationalized. This review would include updates to bylaws and policies which could require the applicant to incorporate more Travel (Parking) Demand Management Strategies to ensure the success of a lower on-site parking rate. Attachment E – Transportation Demand Management for Developments in Vancouver is an example of a guiding document during the review process. To address the existing issues, Staff would facilitate workshops with the operators or representatives of each of the developments, BC Transit/RDN, and Modo to provide awareness of options and review potential changes that could enable residents to become less car dependant.

The second Option would be for the Governance and Priorities Committee to add Staff resources to the Parking Administration group within Bylaw Service as part of the 2024-2028 Financial Planning process, which would enable the creation and operation of a Bylaw Parking Exemption program. This approach has not gone through public engagement but would be assumed to use the LEAP and SPARC programs as mechanisms for selection. This approach would put additional burden on the administration section of the Bylaw Service Department; therefore it is expected that the equivalent of a 0.5 FTE would need to be integrated into this group which would include a start up cost of approximately \$7,500 and an annual cost of approximately \$60,000.

A third potential option, not recommended, is to expand resident-exempt parking areas in complaint-driven locations, noting that this does not address the 24-hour time limitation, and may displace other user groups from access to parks, visitation or businesses. Trying to manage retrofit parking situations from decades past ends up trading off other values as the City evolves, which staff attempt to accommodate where possible.

In summary, the options proposed are:

1. That the Governance and Priorities Committee recommend that Council direct Staff to undertake a review of the parking requirements associated with Seniors Congregate Housing and how Transportation Demand Management tools could be used to more effectively reduce the financial burdens associated with personal vehicle dependency.
 - The advantages of this option are that it aligns with City Plan policy, reduces the financial burden to those with limited income, and does not create an additional burden; either reduced on-street parking capacity or financial burden to other members of the community.

- The disadvantages of this option are that it requires residents of non-market housing to re-assess how they value mobility and the opportunity of owning a personal vehicle.
 - Financial Implications: None as Staff are already reviewing and updating Policy and Bylaw documents following the adoption of City Plan.
2. That the Governance and Priorities Committee recommend that Council direct Staff to undertake the tasks included in Option 1, as well as include a decision point in the 2024 – 2028 Financial Plan deliberations for additional support within the Parking Administration group to support a Parking Bylaw Exemption program.
- In addition to those advantages noted in Option 1, Option 2 would allow current residents with limited mobility and income to have easier access to on-street parking, which could reduce the burden of needing to move a vehicle once per day.
 - The disadvantages of this option are that allowing vehicles to be stored on-street may impact municipal operations, equitable access to street parking for other members of the community, as well as potential perception of vehicle ownership subsidization.
 - The Financial Implications of pursuing this option are the direct costs of hiring an additional staff member to create and manage the program (~ \$60,000/yr) as well as the potential indirect costs or lost parking revenue, depending on where the applicant resides.
3. That the Governance and Priorities Committee provide alternative direction to Staff. |

SUMMARY POINTS

- Staff and Council have been made aware of the impacts of allowing reduced parking rates for non-market housing, specifically “Seniors Congregate Housing”, and will need to review the expectations and process of approving future Development applications.
- Car ownership provides a sense of freedom and independence but can be a significant financial burden to those on limited income. For those that are not high users, there may be options that are equally convenient at a lower cost.
- Creation of a Parking Bylaw Exemption Program may address the concerns of some, but will create additional financial commitments to the City, which will be borne by all residents and may have unintended consequences that could further frustrate the community.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A — 2022-JUN-20 Staff Report – 24 Hour Parking Bylaw Exemption
Attachment B — 2022-JUL-18 Staff Report – Parking Bylaw Exemption
Attachment C — Transportation Review
Attachment D — Transportation Demand Management for Developments in Vancouver
Attachment E — Nanaimo Parking Presentation |

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