



TRANSIT AND PARKING MEMORANDUM

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TO: MAYOR, J. LEHMAN AND MEMBERS OF COUNCIL

FROM: B. FORSYTH, DIRECTOR OF TRANSIT AND PARKING

NOTED: R. JAMES-REID, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ACCESS BARRIE

RE: EVENING PAID PARKING INVESTIGATION DEFERRAL

DATE: MARCH 28, 2022

The purpose of this Memorandum is to provide members of Council with an update concerning the evening paid parking investigation deferral. The Transit and Parking Department brought forward the 2020 Parking Strategy to Council on October 19th, 2020, with Staff Report TPS006-20. The report outlined key strategic changes for the parking system, including recommendations on parking devices, technologies, rules and restrictions, forecasted future demand and supply, and financial interventions required to ensure the parking rate is sustainable, which included approved pricing changes. Most of these recommendations have been implemented, including several milestones to digitize the parking system.

One of the key financial recommendations was the extension of paid parking into the evening during weekdays until 9:00pm. Understanding the extension of paid parking into the evening would be a significant change to our existing parking system. Council directed staff to further investigate this option to understand the evening utilization, municipal comparators, impact on users and businesses, and the necessity based on the financial condition of the parking reserve. The following motion was passed, "That the extension of paid parking to include weekday evenings in the Downtown area be referred back to staff in the Transit and Parking Strategy Department for further investigation and to report back to General Committee in the third quarter of 2021."

With the ongoing impacts of the pandemic, heightened safety concerns, cancellation of events, increase in work from home, lowered or redirected enforcement, economic recovery of the downtown, and overall reduction in travel, staff submitted a Council Memorandum requesting a deferral to 2022 to properly investigate evening paid parking, as the impacts of the pandemic were ongoing, and we had not yet returned to normal conditions. Omicron has resulted in further business closures into 2022, that weren't anticipated, at the time of the previous communication to Council.

As we finally appear to be reaching the end of COVID-19, or the state of the pandemic that will become the new normal, staff need time to analyze whether the impacts will be temporary or permanent on the parking system, both positively and negatively. These may include the following:

- The continued impact on downtown activity levels as more people work from home and feel less comfortable attending larger events;
- Activity levels at the waterfront parks and beaches as restrictions loosen and residents seek to travel more; and
- Funding programs available from upper-level government.

In consultation with Economic and Creative Development, staff do not recommend new parking interventions, such as evening paid parking, which could have a further impact on the recovery of businesses in the downtown. The increased waterfront revenue and funding received through the Safe Restart Agreement has allowed the Parking Reserve to minimize deficits. Monitoring the parking system for another year will allow staff to better assess the financial condition of the parking reserve and bring back recommendations that are built upon the most accurate and recent conditions.



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Staff will report back with recommendations to Council in 2023, unless directed otherwise by Council. Performance of the parking rate and reserve forecasts will be communicated through the annual Business Plan to Council.