

STAFF REPORT

THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF COBOURG



Report to:	Mayor and Council Members	Priority:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Low
Submitted by:	Laurie Wills, Director of Public Works lwills@cobourg.ca	Meeting Type:	Open Session <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Closed Session <input type="checkbox"/>
Meeting Date:	January 4, 2021		
Report No.:	Public Works-003-21		
Submit comments to Council			

Subject/Title: Approval to Resume Parking Fare Collection and Resume Regular Transit Operating Hours and to Collect Transit Fares

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT COUNCIL approve the re-implementation of parking fee collection and By-law enforcement of downtown parking meters and parking lots effective January 26, 2021; and

FURTHER THAT Council consider implementing a \$2.00 cash fare per ride for transit until a contactless/online fare payment system is implemented or until Victoria Hall is open to the public to sell passes; and

FURTHER THAT Council direct Staff to re-implement normal operating hours for conventional transit service.

1. STRATEGIC PLAN

Not Applicable.

2. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Not Applicable.

3. PURPOSE

Determine re-implementation timelines for collection of parking and transit fares.

4. ORIGIN AND LEGISLATION

November 2, 2020 Council Resolution:

WHEREAS at the Committee of the Whole Meeting on Monday October 26, 2020, Council considered a memo from the Director or Public Works, regarding approval to resume Parking Fare collection Downtown and in Parking Lots in the Town of Cobourg;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council extend the suspension of parking fee collection and By-law Enforcement of Downtown Parking Meters and Parking Lots until January 4, 2021; and

FURTHER THAT staff bring a report to the Committee of the Whole meeting on January 4, 2021 regarding the resumption of parking fee collection in the Town of Cobourg.

5. BACKGROUND

The closure of Victoria Hall due to the pandemic limited residents to obtain parking passes online and transit passes are not available online so both have been free since March.

Municipal Law Enforcement Department resources were also lower than usual due to the constantly changing guidelines and regulations related to physical distancing and gatherings in public places making coin collection and parking enforcement difficult to keep up with.

Although the Enforcement of downtown paid parking was on hold and suspended since March, safety-related parking restrictions has continued, in order to maintain emergency access and traffic flow.

This includes enforcement for the following:

- No Stopping signs;
- No Parking signs;
- Accessible Parking signs;
- Fire Hydrants;
- No parking within 10 metres of an intersection;
- No parking in alleys unless active loading/unloading is taking place;
- Unregistered vehicles parked on the street.

In addition to the above, the Municipal Law Enforcement Department continued to receive complaints by the public related to other parking related issues which were investigated and enforced at the Officers discretion.

Transit riders to date have been satisfied with reduced service given that service is free.

6. ANALYSIS

Upon suspension of the pay parking for the Downtown parking regulations under the Town of Cobourg Parking By-law, Staff observed many vehicles parking in the pay parking zones for extended period of time which are likely vehicles of people who have continued to work in the downtown area or are residents of the residential units above the many storefronts. Municipal Enforcement believes that with the reinstatement of pay parking requirements and enforcement, parking turnover will increase and free up parking spaces to be once again utilized by patrons wishing to contribute economically to the Downtown Businesses.

With businesses and other services now being open, there has been a noticeable increase in parking demand in pay parking zones in the downtown area, including at meters and in municipal parking lots. It is now an appropriate time to evaluate the Municipality's go-forward plans with respect to pay parking requirements and parking time restrictions.

Staff does recognize that with COVID-19 cases now increasing again, and the fact that Victoria Hall has remained closed to the public, Staff are recommending that parking passes resume being sold online and implement a call-in payment option as well. Members of the public who choose not to or cannot pay by credit card can drop off payment by cash or cheque in a drop box at Victoria Hall. Once payment is received, a pass will either be emailed, mailed, or picked up at the Public Works and Parks Joint Operation Facility, if necessary.

As the pandemic has progressed, all businesses including the Town have had to adapt their processes to include the use of technology in order to continue to conduct business. The pandemic has forced society in general to rely more heavily on technology and with this turn of events it actually is increasing the efficiency of doing business for the most part. For example, the Town has been able to move most accounts receivable and payable to electronic funds transfer instead of the labour intensive process of issuing and depositing cheques. The Town only recently purchased the online capability to purchase and print parking passes so this is a great opportunity to educate and encourage that small remaining percentage of the public who are not yet using the online service, to give it a try. Patrons can also call into the Town and request help from staff to fill in the online application and those without computers are able to access one at the Library if needed. Pre-COVID-19, parking passes were sold online more than they were paid for in person so it is not anticipated that this new process will put a strain on resources. The Municipal Law Enforcement Department now have the resources, appropriate PPE and sanitizer to conduct coin collection regularly from parking meters and enforce non-payment.

Ridership on transit continues to be low which is expected of conventional due to there being limited capacity on buses as well as reduced hours of operation.

- Average Daily Conventions 2019 224
- Average Daily Wheels 2019 23

An online payment system through an existing service provider is being investigated by Staff as well as there being another online payment option that will be available through the on demand booking system that is being proposed as a

pilot project in 2021 should it be approved by Council. Until an online system is up

Month	% Decline		Daily Average Ridership	
	Conventional	Wheels	Conventional	Wheels
March	45%	86%	126	3.3
April	60%	93%	93	1.8
May	62%	91%	92	2.2
June	57%	87%	106	2.9
July	48%	84%	128	3.8
August	40%	77%	115	4.5
September	34%	74%	162	6
October	37%	68%	155	7
November	36%	70%	128	7

and running, it will not be possible to sell transit passes without Town buildings being open to the public.

Staff are proposing that Council consider implementing a cash only pay per ride in the amount of \$2.00. Riders would also be permitted to use up their transit tickets. Discounted tickets are being phased out and will no longer be sold.

Staff will work with communications to provide public notice of the reinstatement of pay parking requirements and the need to ensure vehicles are not parked for longer than permitted. A reminder of the need to adhere to all bylaw requirements when parking their vehicles will also be provided. In addition, the Town will communicate to the public on the various options to pay for parking once reinstated.

A variety of communication methods will be used to ensure this information is communicated and a grace period will be implemented for the first two (2) weeks with the assistance of the Cobourg Police Auxiliary to By-law Enforcement which will involve the placement of reminders on vehicles prior to issuing tickets as a reminder that paid parking is now in effect.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS/BUDGET IMPACTS

The declaration of the Provincial State of Emergency, and the local Health District Health Unit directives for people to stay home and businesses to close, had an immediate impact on pay parking and transit revenues.

In suspending pay parking requirements, it was understood that this would result in additional financial implications. A review of the parking revenue as projected in the 2020 Budget compared to the actuals for 2020 indicates the following:

- Parking Revenue (Budget / Actual)
- Parking Passes – \$70K (budget) \$8,650 (actual)
- Parking Tickets - \$100K (budget) \$41,767 (actual)
- Downtown Meter Revenue - \$187,500K (budget) \$35,245 (actual)

- Transit Revenue (Budget / Actual) \$116,500
- 2019 \$156,900 (budget) / \$137,529 (actual)
- 2020 \$116,500 (budget) / \$26,663 (actual)

8. CONCLUSION

THAT Council approve the re-implementation of transit fare collection, parking fee collection and By-law enforcement of downtown parking meters and parking lots and further that Council consider implementing a \$2.00 cash fare per ride for transit and further that Council direct staff to re-implement normal conventional transit operating hours.

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Approval to Resume Parking Fare Collection and Resume Regular Transit Operating Hours and to Collect Transit Fares
Attachments:	
Final Approval Date:	Dec 28, 2020

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Brent Larmer, Municipal Clerk / Manager of Legislative Services - Dec 28, 2020 - 9:28 AM

Tracey Vaughan, Chief Administrative Officer - Dec 28, 2020 – 11:00 AM