



**City of Richmond**

**Report to Committee**

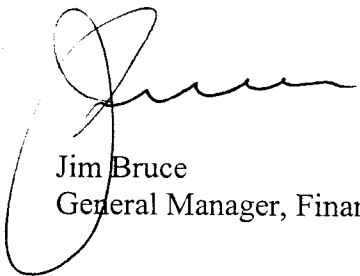
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**To:** General Purposes Committee  
**From:** Jim Bruce  
General Manager, Finance and Corporate Services  
**Date:** July 03, 2003  
**File:** 6455-05-01  
**Re:** **History of the City of Richmond Parking Program**

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**Staff Recommendation**

The report on the history of the City of Richmond Parking Program be received for information.



Jim Bruce  
General Manager, Finance and Corporate Services

## **Staff Report**

### **Origin**

The Finance Select Committee at its meeting of May 29, 2003 discussed the City's Pay Parking program and referred the matter to the General Manager of Finance and Corporate Services for an information report addressing the following items.

1. when the City Parking Program started
2. where the City Parking Program is now
3. the direction in which the City Parking Program is headed
4. the feasibility of removing obstacles from City property located in Steveston to allow parking in lanes
5. provide information relative to the disposition of a gate at "Steveston Station" and;
6. that the Manager of Communication and Public Affairs prepare a press release relative to the status of parking in Steveston lanes

This report addresses these issues.

### **Analysis**

This report will address each of the requested items in the order they appear above.

#### **1. Where the City Parking Program Started**

In 1989 the City established a Property Use Division in the Permits and Licences Department (formerly the Building Department). This Property Use Division had the responsibility for:

- i. property use inspections
- ii. parking patrol and enforcement

The duties of the division were to enforce all aspects of the City's Parking and Traffic related bylaws as well as to monitor property use infractions. A Municipal Ticket Information (MTI) system for parking and traffic infraction was adopted to help with the enforcement.

The main emphasis of the parking program related to the enforcement of timed parking violations and parking infractions that hindered public safety and could lead to liability issues. This program remained virtually unchanged until 1997. At that time, there was an organizational restructuring and the Property Use Division was amalgamated into the Urban Development Division (formerly the Planning Department) and the Property Use Section was split into two separate groups. One of these groups was established as the Parking Patrol Group. This group now had exclusive authority for the enforcement of the City's parking programs.

With this new emphasis on parking enforcement our ticketing initiatives became very aggressive. The City introduced a customer service assistance program which allowed parking violators to pay their ticket balance using an interactive voice response (IVR) system. These payment options have increased with the introduction of our computerized electronic commerce systems.

The number of complaints associated with our new aggressive ticketing policy continued to grow and it was soon realized that with our new corporate direction of customer service and the City Beautification Program that the ticketing program should be tempered down a bit. It was determined that staff should change from a 100% enforcement philosophy to a philosophy that saw us focus 90% of our efforts to parking education and 10% to enforcement. Although this new approach to parking enforcement reduced the number of complaints, it also had a negative impact on the revenue generation being realized.

In October 1999 staff reported to Council on an opportunity to address enforcement issues and generate revenue from an off-street pay parking program on City owned lots. Staff referred to this proposal as Phase I. of a Pay Parking Program. Four lots were identified for timed parking. These were:

- Gateway Theatre/Chapel/Family Place
- Brighthouse Park
- Lawn Bowling Green Road
- Gravel lot at Westminster Highway/Alderbridge Way

The City went to a Tender Call to have private contractors operate these lots and handle all aspects of enforcement. The Tender was awarded to U-Park who later became, through a takeover, IMPARK. This parking program provided the City with all the meter revenues while the contractor got all the enforcement revenue generated through ticketing initiatives.

There was some concern by Council about this new pay parking program and staff were instructed to minimize the impact by implementing a parking pass program for various categories of parking lot users (e.g. lawn bowlers, Gateway staff, Family Place members).

In 2002 staff approached Council with an option to enhance our pay parking revenue through an option that would add three more locations to the pay parking lot inventory. The three additional locations were:

- balance of Minoru Park parking lots
- City owned lots in Steveston
- Garry Point Park

A report also detailed a potential for new revenue through the introduction of timed “on street” parking. This program identified 11 areas for an on-street parking program.

Council on reviewing these two proposals instructed staff to go out for an RFP to handle all timed parking enforcement including both City owned lots and off-street areas. In the direction to staff, Council removed City owned lots in Steveston and Garry Point Park from the RFP and kept the four on street locations in the City Centre. Council also set up a Steveston Parking Task Force to review parking opportunities in the Steveston area including pay parking.

The RFP was split into two sections, namely, supply of equipment and enforcement operations.

Prior to the RFP being sent out, Council felt the need to have some revenue figures that could be used to justify the implementation of the off-street pay parking program. The company PARK SMART was hired and they undertook a very cursory study and provided the City with information that would lead one to believe the program implementation was sound financially. The RFP was then distributed to six companies. Three were interviewed in May of 2002. Staff reported to Council that the parking enforcement program should be turned over to a company called EASY PARK, a non-profit society founded by the City of Vancouver.

CUPE Local 718 appeared before Council and expressed concern that the work being contracted out was Local 718 work and their members should be given the work. Council directed staff and the Union to jointly review the matter and report back on a potential solution to resolve the matter.

In June 2002 staff and the Union reported out to Council that they had reached an agreement. This agreement saw the Contractor assume the responsibility for all "off street" and "on street" metered infractions and City staff to assume the responsibility for all timed (non-metered) "on street" and "off street" infractions as well as all safety and liability infractions.

Council then awarded a one year contract to EASY PARK. Under this program, the City is to get all revenues and from this to pay all operating, administrative and enforcement costs of EASY PARK. This contract expires on July 31, 2003.

## **2. Where is the Parking Program?**

The Parking Program is now divided into 2 separate organizational units, the City unit and the Contract unit.

The City unit is operated by the City staff within the Community Safety Division and is responsible for the enforcement of all parking regulations relative to safety and liability infractions and all off and on street timed parking locations through three temporary full time staff.

The Contract unit is also administered by the Community Safety Division working through our contractor EasyPark. The contractor is responsible for all aspects of metering, enforcement and revenue collection for parking operations at all on and off street parking locations. The City is responsible for all costs incurred by EasyPark in the delivery of the contract service.

**3. The direction in which the City Parking Program is headed**

Council has dealt with various reports directly related to the Pay Parking Program and referred the matter to staff for a report on future directions. This report will be dealt with during the July 7, 2003 Closed General Purposes meeting.

**4. Feasibility of removing obstacles from City property located in Steveston to allow parking in lanes.**

The problem associated with parking in lanes in Steveston has now been referred to the Steveston Parking Task Force. Ticketing in the area has been suspended awaiting the Task Force report.

**5. Provide information relative to the disposition of a gate at "Steveston Station"**

The merchants in the area had concerns relative to late night problems in the parking area and approached the City for suggestions to help rectify the problems. The City staff, Steveston merchants and RCMP met to discuss the issues and a determination was made to close off the area as the best and easiest solution. This, unfortunately, reduced access to parking spaces and contributed to the parking problems in the area.

If the merchants would like to revisit the closure decision, staff would be happy to facilitate a meeting with all the affected partners including the Steveston Parking Task Force.

**6. That the Manager of Communications and Public Affairs prepare a press release related to the status of parking in Steveston lanes.**

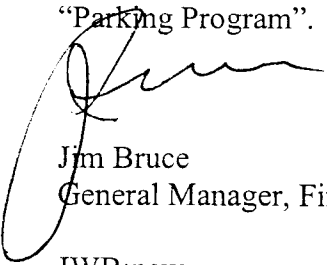
This has been completed and a copy of the press release is attached.

**Financial Impact**

There is no financial impact directly associated with this report. The financial impact associated with the Pay Parking Program is detailed in the companion report "Parking Program".

**Conclusion**

That this report be received for information and that the follow up of the City's Pay Parking Program be considered when the General Purposes committee deals with the companion report "Parking Program".



Jim Bruce  
General Manager, Finance and Corporate Services

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June 3, 2003

**For Immediate Release**

## **Steveston laneway parking ticketing suspended**

The City of Richmond will temporarily suspend ticketing vehicles parked in laneways in the Steveston business area.

The issue of laneway parking will now be considered by the Steveston Advisory Task Force on Parking. The task force was established by Council last year with a mandate to study a wide range of parking issues in the Steveston area. The task force is expected to make its final recommendations to Council in either July or August.

Earlier this year, the City began formally enforcing bylaw regulations that prohibit parking in the lane ways. The ticketing of vehicles had caused considerable concern among Steveston area merchants and their customers who have been allowed to park in the laneways, without penalty, for many years.

City staff met with the Steveston Advisory Task Force on Parking on May 27, 2003 to discuss the issue. Task Force members provided significant feedback and agreed to provide a recommendation in the Task Force's report to Council on accommodating some parking in laneways where there are no safety concerns.

Effective May 28 parking patrol officers have been instructed not to issue tickets to vehicles parking in the laneway in Steveston until further notice.

This measure only applies to the Steveston area. In all other areas of Richmond, parking in laneways is not permitted, with the exception of **commercial vehicles** engaged in the loading or unloading of materials for a period of time not to exceed 30 minutes, or where parking is designated by sign or road markings.

Even though commercial vehicles are the exception, they must not obstruct traffic. Clear lanes facilitate movement of emergency vehicles for the safety of Richmond residents.

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