



City of Richmond

Report to Council

To: Richmond City Council
From: Councillor Rob Howard
Chair, Community Safety Committee
Date: July 20, 2006
File: 10-6455-01/2006-Vol
01
Re: **COMPLIMENTARY PARKING – VETERANS' PLATES**

The Community Safety Committee, at its meeting held on Tuesday, July 18th, 2006, considered the attached report, and recommends as follows:

Committee Recommendation

That the existing Complimentary Parking program for vehicles displaying veterans' plates and decals be retained on a year-round basis.

Councillor Rob Howard, Chair
Community Safety Committee

Attach.

VARIANCE

Please note that staff recommended the following:

That the existing Complimentary Parking program for vehicles displaying veterans' plates be retained on a permanent basis for the month of November.

Staff Report

Origin

On October 11, 2005, Council passed the following referral motion:

"That the proposal to permit year-round free parking within the City for those automobiles carrying veteran's licence plates, be referred to staff for review and report to Council on:

- 1. the number of veteran's licence plates issued to Richmond residents,*
- 2. the financial impact of permitting such a proposal, and*
- 3. the feasibility of identifying those individuals currently issued with veteran's licence plates who were veterans of wars or other peacekeeping efforts, and developing an implementation strategy for such identification, to ensure that only these people benefited from year-round free parking.*

Analysis

To respond to each aspect of this referral, in order:

1. ICBC has advised that the number of policies issued in Richmond under the Veterans' category is approximately 450. Once plates are on a vehicle, there is no way of confirming that the vehicle belongs to a resident of Richmond.
2. Given the configuration of the City's on-street and off-street parking facilities and the limited resources available to assess the usage by vehicles displaying veterans' plates, it is difficult to accurately calculate the financial impact of the City's present November program or a year-round program. Studies in neighbouring municipalities have shown approximately a 3% decrease in revenue could be attributed to complimentary programs for veterans' plates. The actual meter collection decreased in November 2005 by \$1,170 compared to the results for November, 2004.

The following chart shows the nature of existing complimentary parking programs for 2006 for vehicles displaying Veterans plates in neighbouring municipalities. Many of the listed programs were instituted during 2005 – the Year of the Veteran – but for limited or trial periods. In the case of New Westminster, this program is re-visited every January for the coming year.

City / Municipality	Number of Plates Registered	Complimentary Program	Term	Ending
Richmond	450	Yes	Full Month of November	Every Year
Burnaby	n/a	No	--	--
Coquitlam	n/a	Yes	Nov 11 th only	Every Year
Delta	460	No	--	--
New Westminster	220	Yes	Annual	Dec 2006
Surrey	1,560	No	--	--
Vancouver	640	No	--	--
White Rock	n/a	No	--	--

The recent adoption of a replacement program by White Rock, for their original year-round provision of free parking for any vehicle displaying a veterans' plate, has involved the implementation of a program to minimize the effect on the Municipality's revenue by recognizing veterans who specifically live in White Rock. The impact from the original program, launched in March 2005, came up in budget discussions for 2006 and the program was amended ahead of schedule to mitigate the financial impact. The original annual program had reduced the City's revenue by approximately \$30,000 in less than a year. Under the revised annual program, veterans who are residents of White Rock and have veterans' plates will be issued, free of charge with a resident's decal (normally \$20 per year) that must be displayed on the windshield of the vehicle and these veterans are exempted from pay parking in certain areas of White Rock. However, the enforcement will not be based on the veterans' plates.

- Identification of the valid applicants for the veterans' plate category rests with ICBC. According to their web site, these plates are only issued to honourably discharged Canadian or Allied Force veterans of WWI, WWII, the Korean War, the Gulf War and UN or NATO Operations. The plates can be used on motor homes, motorcycles and most passenger vehicles such as SUV's, sedans, convertibles, vans and small trucks.

For enforcement purposes during November of each year, the City permits complimentary parking for any vehicle displaying Veterans' plates. As such, the City's program is potentially open to a total of over 3,300 vehicles from Richmond and its neighbouring municipalities.

Options

The options available for Council to address the recognition of veterans through the City's Pay Parking Program are:

Option 1 – No Recognition

Given the public recognition and appreciation for the veterans' efforts and the positive message from the existing program, staff does not recommend this option.

Option 2 – Annual Program

Based on Richmond's experience and the expectation that usage under an annual program by vehicles displaying veterans' plates would require a reduction to the Parking Program's revenue of \$10,000 for 2006 and \$25,000 for 2007, staff does not recommend an annual program. This option would also require amendments to the existing Traffic Bylaw # 5870 and the Parking (Off-Street) Regulations Bylaw # 7403.

Option 3 – Permanent, November Program (*Recommended*)

This option, which is a continuation of our present program, implemented in 2005, would strike a reasonable, efficient and cost-effective compromise between the recognition of veterans' efforts and the impact on the City's revenues. The existing revenue targets for the Parking Program for 2006 have already been adjusted for the expected impact of a November program, which requires a minimal amount of administration and enforcement.

Financial Impact

Option 1 – No Recognition

This option would restore the present cost of approximately \$ 2,000 per annum to the Parking Program's revenue.

Option 2 – Annual Program

This option would translate into an annual cost in 2006 of \$10,000 for a year-round program based on historical use and, should Council decide to implement this program on a year-round basis, the target revenue in the Parking Program's budget would have to be reduced by an amount of \$10,000 for 2006 and by an amount of \$ 25,000 in 2007.

Option 3 – Permanent, November Program (*Recommended*)

Continuing the City's existing program for the month of November each year, would result in a financial impact on the City's Parking Program of approximately 3% of the gross revenue or \$2,000 and this amount is expected to rise, as more veterans become aware of the benefit. Based on the review of comparable, neighbouring municipalities programs, this is considered generous.

Conclusion

Based on the reputation of the City's Complimentary Parking program as one of the most generous and cost-effective in the Lower Mainland, staff recommends maintaining the present, November program on a permanent basis.



Wayne G. Mercer
Manager, Community Bylaws
(604.247.4601)

WGM:wgm