

Report to Council



Date: May 25, 2020
To: Council
From: City Manager
Subject: Update on Temporary Changes to Parking Operations
Department: Parking Services Branch (Real Estate)

Recommendation:

THAT Council receives, for information, the report from Parking Services, dated May 25, 2020, with respect to an update on temporary changes to parking operations;

AND THAT Council directs staff, until June 15, 2020, to permit any vehicle parking in an on-street pay parking stall within the Downtown Zone B, Downtown Zone C or the South Pandosy Urban Centre areas to do so without being required to make the payment as indicated in Traffic Bylaw No. 8120;

AND THAT Council directs staff to offer users of the mobile parking application, PayByPhone, the ability to use any on-street stall within the Downtown or South Pandosy Urban Centres for up to 30-minutes without charge, once per day for each customer, until August 31, 2020;

AND THAT Council directs staff to continue waiving the 30-day notice requirement for cancellation of monthly permits for holders that are not using their permit due to self-isolation, quarantine or working remotely until June 30, 2020;

AND THAT Council authorizes the Department Manager, Real Estate or Manager, Parking Services to make time sensitive or emergent parking modifications, until the Provincial State of Emergency has been rescinded, as/if required, to support the pandemic response;

AND FURTHER THAT Bylaw No. BL12047, being Amendment No. 37 to Traffic Bylaw No. 8120, be forwarded for reading consideration.

Purpose:

To provide Council with an update on temporary changes to parking operations that were implemented to alleviate concerns expressed by residents and local businesses and to present several additional recommendations for consideration to support the pandemic recovery and reopening.

Background:

In late March 2020, on street parking demand declined significantly due to the COVID-19 related temporary closures of some businesses, restrictions placed on others, and an increase in staff working remotely. To support businesses that remained open, the Downtown Kelowna Association requested temporary parking fee concessions. Council approved the temporary pause of on-street parking fees within the Downtown and South Pandosy town centre business districts effective March 24th, remaining in effect until May 31, 2020.

Following the temporary removal of on-street pay parking in these areas, the primary benefit of pay parking (i.e. turnover) was eliminated, resulting in the longer-term parking of vehicles becoming an increasing problem. In response, staff implemented a process to allow for the creation of temporary 5-minute pickup zones to support businesses that remained open by offering pick up and take out options. Based on feedback received by staff to date, this has been a successful program. In recent weeks, overall activity has continued to increase and some of the busiest blocks in the downtown area, such as Bernard Avenue, are now reaching 100% occupancy, with a strong upward trend (as shown in Figure 1 below).

Figure 1

BERNARD AVE 200-400 (ZONE A) OCCUPANCY (%)



Discussion:

Based on currently available data, COVID-19 and the associated contagion prevention measures initially resulted in Downtown and South Pandosy on-street parking and lot/parkade occupancy levels dropping by 60-70%. Staff have been monitoring occupancy levels and in recent weeks, a slow but continuous increase in use of off-street parking along with a more significant increase in on-street parking usage has been observed. In the Downtown "Zone A" on-street parking area (closest to the waterfront), peak occupancy rates exceeding 70% are now being recorded (Figure 2) and staff have

received information from downtown businesses that are observing on-street spaces being utilized for long-term parking. As the province begins to relax restrictions, demand is anticipated to increase as businesses begin to reopen and return to the “new normal”. A staged re-implementation of pay parking will re-establish on-street parking spaces as short-term customer parking and shift long-term parkers back into off-street lots and parkades, more suited for this use. The recommendations contained in this report are based on occupancy trends in each of the on-street pay parking areas.

Figure 2

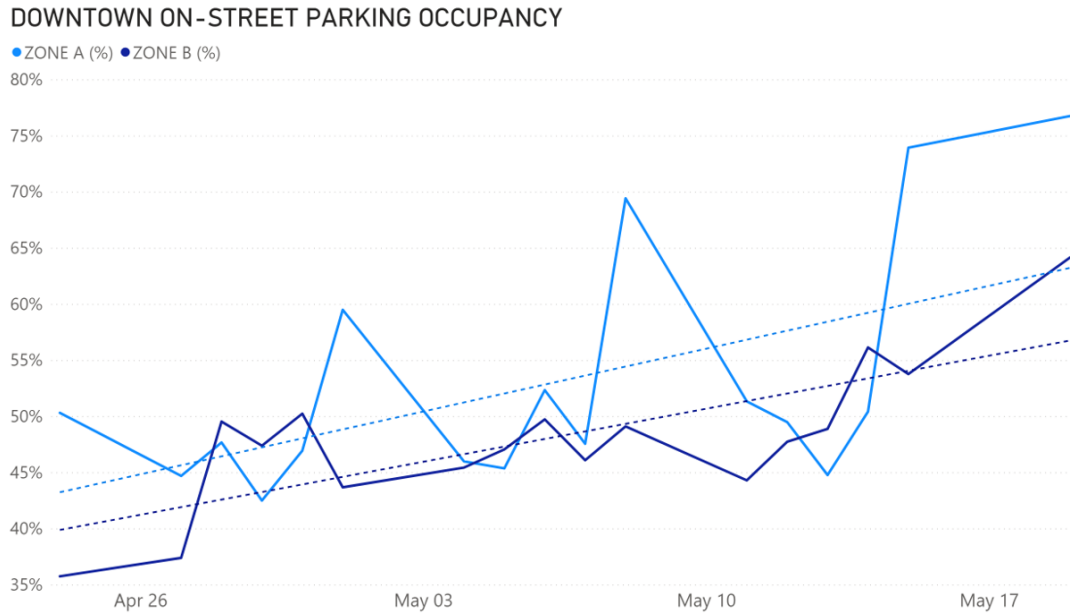
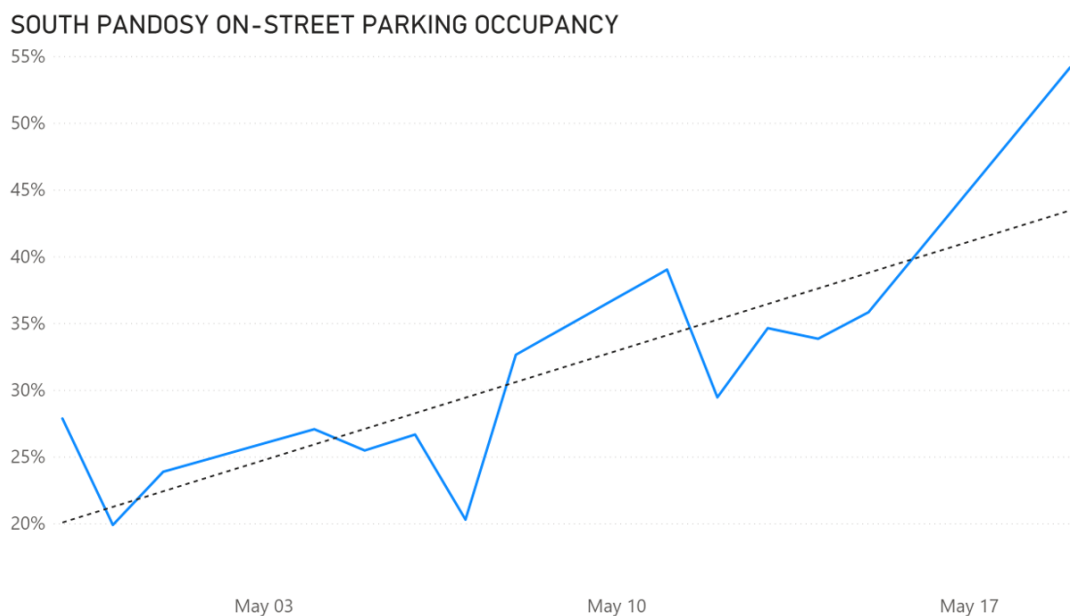


Figure 3



Recommendations:

In response to increasing parking demand, and to support re-opening of local businesses, staff is recommending the following changes:

	Recommendation	Rationale
1	Effective June 1 st , 2020, vehicles utilizing on-street parking in the Downtown "Zone A" pay parking area and Rose/Abbott KGH frontages will again be required to make payment.	Downtown Zone A Occupancy Rates are in the 43-77% range and trending upward with weather related spikes. Rapid growth expected as businesses re-open. Rose Ave and Abbott St KGH frontages often at 100% occupancy.
2	Effective June 15 th , 2020, vehicles utilizing on-street pay parking in all other areas (Downtown Zones B & C and the South Pandosy Urban Centre) will again be required to make payment.	Downtown Zone B occupancy rates are in the 36-64% range and trending upward. South Pandosy on-street occupancy rates are in the 20-54% range and trending sharply upward. Continuous growth is expected as area businesses re-open.
3	Continue to support existing 5-minute temporary pickup/loading zones while restaurants and other businesses are reliant on the pickup/takeout operating model.	This initiative has been well received and successful in supporting businesses offering take out and pickup options.
4	Until August 31, 2020, offer the first 30 minutes of on-street parking each day, within the Downtown and South Pandosy on-street parking areas, at no-charge to all customers utilizing the PayByPhone system.	Encourage use of the mobile application to promote customer visits and reduce the amount of contact with hard surfaces on pay stations and parking meters.
5	Defer the 2020 CPI adjustment that is applied annually to all parking fees and charges on June 1 st , until June 2021.	Deferring this annual fee increase results in a 2020 "discount" to all parking rates and fees of approximately 2.28%.
6	In areas where seasonal parking rates apply, maintain off-season rates throughout the summer of 2020.	Staff anticipates lower demand this summer reducing the need for "high-season" rates. Maintaining off-season rates will result in a 15% (approx.) discount in the Downtown A & B Zones and over 50% at the Cook Rd boat launch.
7	Monthly permit customers not utilizing their pass due to self-isolation, quarantine or working remotely may continue to cancel their permit without providing 30-days' notice until June 30.	Staff are now receiving inquiries from new customers requesting monthly permits. Continuing to allow cancellation of unused monthly permits will increase opportunities for new customers to obtain permits.
8	Resume enforcement of time restricted parking zones and the 24-hour maximum time limit for all City streets, effective June 1 st , 2020.	Enforcement was relaxed to support residents required to self-isolate. As the situation normalizes, controls are needed to create residential short-term parking opportunities and prevent long-term on-street storage of vehicles.
9	Continue Council authorization for staff to make changes to parking restrictions and facility use as required, until the Provincial State of Emergency is rescinded.	Will continue to allow staff to respond to emerging issues and operational challenges in support of the pandemic response and recovery efforts.

Conclusion:

Similar measures have been/are being implemented by municipalities throughout North America, and staff believe these changes are in line with the current best practices articulated by the Provincial Government. Any changes approved by Council will be further reviewed as necessary.

Should Council endorse staff's recommendations, implementation would be effective on the dates indicated or as soon as required system changes can be made.

Legal/Statutory Authority:

BC Motor Vehicle Act, Section 124
Traffic Bylaw No. 8120

Financial/Budgetary Considerations:

As Parking Services is a self-funded department with revenues supporting parking operations, maintenance and future infrastructure, any reduction in department revenues is offset by anticipated contributions to parking reserves and has no direct impact on taxation. 2020 budget adjustments for the reduction in revenue related to these recommendations are not necessary at this time as adjustments made to parking revenue budgets at final budget, combined with the staff recommendation to restore on-street parking rates beginning June 1, 2020 will offset the expected revenue reduction.

Communications Comments

Staff will coordinate with key stakeholders (including the Downtown Kelowna Association) to ensure the details of the recommended changes are appropriately communicated to the public.

Considerations not applicable to this report:

Internal Circulation
Legal/Statutory Procedural Requirements
Existing Policy
External Agency/Public Comments

Submitted by: D. Duncan, Manager, Parking Services

Approved for inclusion: J. Säufferer, Department Manager, Real Estate

Attachments: 1. Attachment A – Letter from the Executive Director, Downtown Kelowna
2. PowerPoint

cc: M. Antunes, Acting Manager, Financial Planning
G. Foy, Manager, Transportation Engineering
T. Wilson, Media Relations Manager
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