

Report to Council



Date: April 20, 2026
To: Council
From: City Manager
Subject: Accessible Parking Program Update
Department: Real Estate

Recommendation:

THAT Council receives, for information, the Report from the Parking Services branch, dated April 20, 2026, with respect to the Accessible Parking Program Update;

AND THAT Council endorses the implementation of recommendations outlined in the Accessible Parking Program Update;

AND THAT Bylaw No. 12888, being Amendment No. 46 to Traffic Bylaw No. 8120, be forwarded for reading consideration;

AND FURTHER THAT Bylaw No. 12889, being Amendment No. 43 to Bylaw Notice Enforcement Bylaw No. 10475, be forwarded for reading consideration.

Purpose:

To enhance the City's Accessible Parking Program with improvements to the management, design, and enforcement of accessible parking.

Council Priority Alignment:

Transportation

Background:

Accessible parking is a critical component of an inclusive transportation network. The City faces ongoing challenges related to the misuse of accessible spaces, abuse of permits, and the amount and design of accessible parking spaces in City parking lots and on City roadways. A comprehensive review was undertaken by Watt Consulting Group to assess existing policies, user experiences, and best practices from other municipalities in North America. Public and stakeholder consultation included two rounds of online surveys (with 158 and 97 responses, respectively) and interviews with relevant organizations. The

findings have informed recommendations aimed at improving the overall experience for accessible parking users. The key findings from the public and stakeholder consultation are noted as follows:



Discussion:

The review identified three key areas for improvement, with a number of associated recommendations to support the same, all of which were presented to the Accessible Advisory Committee of Council on January 6, 2026. The Committee was generally supportive of the proposed actions and emphasized the importance of ongoing engagement with residents with disabilities, continuous data collection, and ongoing program improvements.

Improvement Area 1: Accessible Parking Management

Recommendations:

- Partner with the Social Planning and Research Council of BC (SPARC BC) for permit issuance.
- Aim to ensure four per cent of on-street parking stalls are accessible.
- Collect real-time transactional occupancy data.
- Provide extra time for accessible users in standard spaces.
- Introduce pay parking for accessible stalls.
- Update maintenance and snow clearance policies.
- Conduct a curbside management review.

To implement the above recommendations over the next 6-12 months, the City intends to finalize its partnership with SPARC BC to streamline permit issuance and improve enforcement. Internally, Staff will coordinate efforts to achieve the four per cent target for accessible on-street parking, enhance curbside

management practices, and update snow removal policies, ensuring that accessible spaces remain clear and usable throughout the winter months. The City's snow removal policy will be updated to align priority with transit and active transportation facilities and ensure we maintain a clear path to the sidewalk.

Additionally, Staff recommend introducing pay parking for accessible stalls and provide extra time for accessible users in standard spaces, improving overall parking availability and convenience for those that need it, while also contributing to a shift towards providing real-time occupancy data, with the eventual goal of sharing publicly for accessible users to gauge where parking is currently available.

Introducing pay parking in accessible stalls is a crucial step towards enhancing their availability, enforcement, and effective management. By charging for accessible spaces, the City aligns with the practices of other municipalities such as Vancouver, Victoria, Vernon, and New Westminster. Pay parking, offered at a 50 per cent discount for hourly/daily parking with priority placement on waitlists for monthly permits, will support higher turnover, ensuring that accessible stalls remain available for permit holders when they need them, while also allowing users the flexibility to complete their activities without the undue pressure of a time restriction. This approach helps to deter misuse, promote fair access, and will help to fund ongoing improvements to accessible parking infrastructure and enhanced operational expenses.

Improvement Area 2: Accessible Parking Design

Recommendations:

- a. Adopt the new International Symbol of Access.
- b. Update design standards to include blue curbs.
- c. Designate a minimum of 10 per cent of accessible off-street and on-street spaces as van accessible.
- d. Improve signage and markings for access aisles.



Figure 5-1: International Symbol of Access

Old symbol (left) and new symbol (right)

To implement the accessible parking design recommendations over the next 6-12 months, Staff will initiate updates to signage, markings, and design standards, ensuring adoption of the new International Symbol of Access and blue curbs. Additionally, the City will designate at least 10% of spaces as van accessible to ensure a sufficient number of spaces are van accessible and collaborate with stakeholders to improve access aisle visibility and functionality.

Improvement Area 3: Accessible Parking Enforcement

Recommendations:

- a. Increase fine amount for parking in accessible stalls without a permit.
- b. Create a new violation for permit/program misuse.
- c. Update signage to show fine amounts.
- d. Undertake focused enforcement blitzes.
- e. Targeted communications with relevant communities.

The proposed bylaw amendments will increase fines and establish new penalties for permit misuse. Staff will update signage to reflect these changes and launch targeted enforcement blitzes and targeted communications with relevant stakeholders and communities to ensure the new measures are effectively communicated and enforced.

The Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) supports the proposed increases in fines in accessible parking violations as an important first step. The AAC encourages the ongoing review of fine amounts beginning in 2027 to further increase the compliance in accessible zones.

Conclusion:

The Accessible Parking Program Update presents a comprehensive strategy to address current challenges and enhance the accessibility of City parking facilities. The recommendations are informed by stakeholder input, best practices, and a commitment to continuous improvement. With plans to continue ongoing engagement with the Accessibility Advisory Committee, staff recommend that Council endorse the proposed actions and direct staff to proceed with implementation as outlined.

Internal Circulation:

Integrated Transportation
Infrastructure Operations
Bylaw Services
Communications

Considerations applicable to this report:

Legal/Statutory Authority:

B.C. Motor Vehicle Act; Section 124
City of Kelowna Traffic Bylaw No. 8120

Legal/Statutory Procedural Requirements:

Amendment to Traffic Bylaw No. 8120
Amendment to Bylaw Notice Enforcement Bylaw No. 10475

Financial/Budgetary Considerations:

The total impact of this initiative is anticipated to be approximately \$120,000, with \$70,000 in one-time costs and \$50,000 per year in additional ongoing operating expenses.

Consultation and Engagement:

Recommendations presented to the Accessible Advisory Committee and received general support. The committee stated they would be happy to assist with advocacy efforts and appreciated that the report included input from those with lived experience.

Stakeholder organization interviews and two public surveys informed the recommendations outlined in this report, with more information available here:

[What we heard: engagement summary](#) | [Accessible parking program](#) | [Get Involved Kelowna](#)

Communications Comments:

Targeted communications (letters, signage, etc.) for relevant audiences will be explored in the coming months. Will lean on stakeholders to help spread the message to their memberships and circles.

Considerations not applicable to this report:

Existing Policy

Submitted by: C. Passley, Supervisor, Parking Services

Approved for inclusion: D. Duncan, Manager, Parking Services
J. Säufferer, Department Manager, Real Estate

Attachments:

Attachment A – Review of Accessible Parking Permit Program – Executive Summary