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To: "Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"

CC: "City Manager's Correspondence Group - DL"

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Date: 8/24/2020 3:18:22 PM

Subject: Memo - Exemptions for Healthcare and Veterans - RTS 013550

Attachments: ENG - PMP - RTS 013550 Memo re Exemptions for Healthcare and Veter...pdf

Dear Mayor and Council,

Please see the attached memo from Taryn Scollard. A short summary of the memo is as follows:

- This memo provides background information on the limited current exemptions to pay parking regularly offered by the City.
- Staff is recommending that parking exemptions offered to healthcare and homecare workers during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic be discontinued at the end of August 2020.
- Staff is recommending that the City not proceed with year-round metered parking exemptions for veterans.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Lon LaClaire at 604-873-7336 / Lon.LaClaire@vancouver.ca or Taryn Scollard at 604-873-7789 / taryn.scollard@vancouver.ca.

Best,
Sadhu

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Pronouns: he, him, his



The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh peoples.

MEMORANDUM

August 21, 2020

TO: Mayor and Council

CC: Sadhu Johnston, City Manager
Paul Mochrie, Deputy City Manager
Karen Levitt, Deputy City Manager
Lynda Graves, Administration Services Manager, City Manager's Office
Rena Kendall-Craden, Civic Engagement and Communications Director
Rosemary Hagiwara, Acting City Clerk
Anita Zaenker, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
Neil Monckton, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
Alvin Singh, Communications Director, Mayor's Office

FROM: Taryn Scollard
Director of Streets, Engineering Services

SUBJECT: RTS 013550 – Exemptions to Parking Regulations and Fees – Healthcare Workers and Veterans

This memo provides an update on two issues concerning exemptions from parking regulations on City Streets – parking exemptions for essential healthcare workers during the COVID-19 Pandemic and free parking for military veterans.

Healthcare Workers

The City has provided exemptions to healthcare and homecare workers since early April 2020 to address the transportation challenges faced at the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic. When the exemption was made, there was uncertainty about the needs of healthcare workers and more limited transportation options for them. Staff plan to discontinue this exemption starting on September 1, 2020 for the following reasons:

- Other transportation options have returned and are being increasingly used by frontline workers – the current program creates inequity between different types of front line workers and disincentives more sustainable and equitable modes of transportation.
- The impact of the exemptions on neighbourhoods surrounding hospitals has increased.
- The cost and complexity of administering the program has grown.

Veterans

On November 26, 2019, Council asked staff to report back on providing free, year-round parking to veterans. After reviewing the motion, staff do not recommend that Council consider this action for the following reasons:

- The current exemption is consistent with other major urban centres.
- A veterans exemption would not align with current policy objectives around transportation options or effective management of curbside space.
- A full exemption for veterans could result in up to \$2M per year in forgone revenue.
- Veterans are not, on average, economically disadvantaged, so this does not support options for historically disadvantaged communities.

Existing Parking Exemptions

Pay parking influences transportation choices and is an important tool in the City's Climate Emergency Response (Big Move #2). It discourages driving and encourages the use of transit and active transportation. Pay parking also provides a service for individuals that still choose to drive as it promotes turnover and limits demand on parking spaces, which allows people to park closer to their destination. Overall, this reduces traffic congestion, provides safety benefits for everyone, and lessens greenhouse gas emissions.

Fees collected from pay parking are responsible for funding a substantial portion of the City's budget, reducing the burden on Vancouver taxpayers. In 2019, not including revenue from parking enforcement activities, metered parking generated approximately \$98M in net revenue for the City (on-street metered parking: \$60M, City-owned EasyPark lots: \$30M, Parks Board EasyPark lots: \$8M).

The City also collects fees for Residential Parking Permits (RPP) which manages residential street space and protects neighbourhoods from parking spillover from nearby commercial areas, and its associated traffic. In 2019, approximately \$1.4M in net revenue was collected from the RPP program.

Exemptions to parking regulations are difficult to remove once approved, as people begin to see them as a "right". Exemptions should be limited to avoid long-lasting issues for the City, which could include:

- Reduced effectiveness of parking regulations (not supporting businesses by creating parking availability and turnover);
- Equity between those with and without exemptions;
- Encouraging driving as a mode of transportation;
- High administrative costs – tracking, distribution, and monitoring of parking exemptions; and
- Lost revenue for the City.

Any exemption program related to parking regulations also has the potential for use outside of its intended purpose. The amount of abuse is relative to the size of the benefit, personal, cultural and societal views, and the potential for and severity of consequences. Regardless, any amount of abuse can impact the legitimacy and veracity of the parking system and the public's confidence in it.

The City has issued exemption decals since the 1960s and this system, last refreshed by Council in 2007, was developed to eliminate the effort involved in reimbursing parking fees. There are approximately 460 elected officials and City staff using this system to receive an exemption from metered parking charges while on official City business.

Outside of City staff and elected officials, exemptions from metered parking are also provided to:

- Eleven active Freedom of the City decals (note that as per Council's direction on January 16, 2018, no new Freedom of the City recipients will receive free metered parking);
- Five active disability decals issued to individuals that cannot manage coins or use a phone, but are the principal operator of a vehicle;
- Approximately 235 vehicles that have foreign representative plates (i.e. Consular red plates) in BC¹; and
- Actively rented car sharing vehicles for up to two hours (this action was in support of Climate Emergency Response, as individuals are typically paying for their car share use by the hour, there is an incentive to leave the space as soon as possible).

Healthcare and Homecare Worker Parking Exemptions During COVID-19

At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in mid-March, the City undertook some extraordinary and unprecedented measures to limit the spread of COVID-19 and to support healthcare workers.

Essential healthcare and homecare workers that needed to continue their work had reasonable concerns with using the transit system due to the unknown nature of the novel coronavirus and the potential exposure that it would have on them and the vulnerable populations they serve. This was most challenging for staff working in Vancouver hospitals as they are more reliant on the transit system compared to other hospitals in the region and throughout the province. Due to this reliance on the transit system, less parking is provided at Vancouver hospitals than at suburban hospitals.

Given that travel and parking activity in this period were significantly reduced, there was less need to regulate curbside space. Staff made the decision to cease parking enforcement of all metered parking areas and permit zone areas throughout the city. This allowed healthcare and homecare workers to use their personal vehicles to commute to work and park for no charge. This change occurred at the same time that BC Ministry of Health (BC MoH) announced that it was temporarily providing free off-street parking at hospitals.

On April 29, 2020, Council passed a motion to reinstate enforcement of pay parking and asked staff to consider specific pay-parking exemptions for essential and healthcare workers in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This motion can be found in Appendix A. To enable this, staff developed a rapidly deployable way to allow healthcare and homecare workers using the PayByPhone system to register their plates for parking exemptions in metered parking areas and residentially restricted areas.

¹ <https://www.icbc.com/partners/insurance-services/Documents/bulletin-19-foreign-representative-vehicles.pdf>

This system has been provided to staff working for Vancouver Coastal Health, Providence Health Care, Provincial Health Services Agencies, and a number of clinics and homecare facilities that serve vulnerable populations for the areas surrounding Vancouver General Hospital (VGH), St. Paul's Hospital, Women's and Children's Hospital, Mount St. Joseph's Hospital, and the Downtown Eastside.

Use of the exemption system has steadily grown. Today, we are recording over 600 uses of the system per day, with the majority of uses occurring around the VGH and St. Paul's campuses. If we assumed \$8 per parking session, this is equivalent to providing about \$5000 worth of parking value every day.

City staff have continued to maintain the exemption and have been monitoring the BC MoH's actions regarding onsite parking charges. Although the BC MoH has not reinstated parking charges at hospitals at this time, Staff plan to end the exemption program on September 1, 2020.

The rationale for this decision is that:

1. Transportation options are available:
 - TransLink has restored transit service to nearly pre-pandemic levels and is now following a Safe Operating Action Plan, which outlines the safe use of transit.
 - Active modes of transportation, such as walking and cycling, remain a safe mode of transportation.
2. Hospital operations are changing:
 - There are around ten COVID-19 patients in BC hospitals.
 - Many surgeries and services that were stopped during the height of the pandemic have now resumed, increasing parking demand in the areas surrounding the hospitals.
 - Shifts for healthcare workers are more predictable.
3. There are increasing complaints from the residential areas, in particular near VGH, affirming the influx of healthcare workers parking in their area.
4. The system developed by City staff focusses on rapidly providing parking exemptions to all workers and relies heavily on the communications efforts of healthcare organizations. There are two emerging issues with this:
 - Most workers that use the system do so successfully, but a small number of individuals make mistakes (over 400 ticket cancellation requests have been made).
 - Staff have uncovered several instances of exemptions being shared by individuals for unapproved personal uses (fraud). In order to curb this activity, the program would have to shift to a more costly and administratively complicated method.

The only other communities in Metro Vancouver that offered parking exemptions are Richmond and North Vancouver. This was instituted by dedicating a small amount of curb space near

hospitals in those communities – a much smaller scale than Vancouver’s program. Richmond has since ended this exemption and North Vancouver has reduced the area available.

Should the situation surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic change, staff can re-evaluate this decision.

Free Year-round Parking for Veterans

On November 26, 2019, Council directed staff to report back by October 2020 with recommendations and plans to provide free parking for veterans at City parking meters, Easy Park lots, surface lots, and Park Board operated parking facilities, including Stanley Park, Queen Elizabeth Park, the Vancouver Aquatic Centre, and all Vancouver Community Centres. This motion can be found in Appendix B.

Currently, veterans are exempted from on-street parking meter fees during Remembrance Week, which occurs from November 4 to November 11 each year. These privileges were established by Council in October 2007. The staff report at that time recommended that on-street parking be free of charge for veterans only on November 11.

The proposal for free year-round parking for veterans would be significantly larger than any other exemption offered by the City. Just under 2% of the population of BC (90,000 people) has veteran status² ; assuming the distribution of veterans is equal across the province, this equates to approximately 48,000 veterans in Metro Vancouver and 12,000 in Vancouver. Eighty percent of veterans are under the age of 80 and are still likely to be driving. This number does not include family members or close friends, who could also use this privilege, as there is no practical way to limit use. This could easily double or triple the effective exemption.

Staff recommends that Council does not proceed with providing this parking exemption for the following reasons:

1. Misalignment with current policy objectives:
 - Providing free parking encourages driving as a mode of transportation. This is counter to long-standing transportation policy and the City’s climate goals.
 - This action does not align with the City’s Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Framework. There is no clear financial need for free parking for veterans – according to a 2016 Veteran Affairs Canada Life After Service Survey³, 4% of veterans experienced low income; this was lower than Canadians of comparable age and sex (14%). A large percentage of veterans are also white males – this program also wouldn’t target racialized and/or vulnerable communities.
2. Significant financial impact:
 - It is difficult to project the financial impact of this action. Assuming that veteran use of vehicles is similar to that of the general population, and due to the attractiveness of this benefit, forgone revenue would be in the range of approximately \$2M per year.
 - At least one Full-Time Exempt position would be required to support this program, as well as fees associated with software support (PayByPhone).

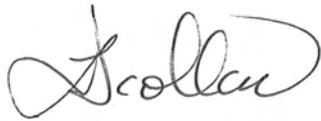
² <https://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/about-vac/news-media/facts-figures>

³ <https://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/about-vac/research/research-directorate/publications/reports/lass-2016>

3. Fairness with other groups:
 - If free parking is provided to veterans, other groups that serve the community could question whether they should receive similar privileges. This could include firefighters, police, frontline healthcare workers, and other first responders, who are all known for their service and sacrifice to the community. Council could face pressure from other groups as a result of this change and granting further exemptions to other groups will exacerbate the issues.

4. Current privileges are consistent with other large urban centres:
 - Free parking for veterans exists in a few communities (See Appendix C). Where exemptions do exist in major urban areas, it is limited either by specific date (similar to what is already offered in Vancouver) or value (set number of hours or dollars per year). If free unlimited parking were granted to all holders of veteran plates in Vancouver, it would likely be the most beneficial program in all of Canada.

If you have any questions or would like more information, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.



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Appendix A

At a meeting of the Council of the City of Vancouver held on Tuesday, April 28, 2020, the following motions were approved:

- A. THAT, in response to the unique circumstances created by the COVID-19 pandemic, Council approve, in principle, the amendment to Tax Penalty By-law No. 9284, generally as outlined in Appendix A of the Report dated April 6, 2020, entitled "COVID-19 Pandemic Impacts: Financial Update and Short-Term Actions", to adjust the remittance due date for the July main property tax notices from July 3, 2020, to September 30, 2020.
- B. THAT the Director of Legal Services bring forward for enactment a by-law generally in accordance with A above.
- C. THAT Council direct staff to include in the mitigation plan deferral of service level increments, deferral of capital projects and reduction of the operating budget in order to achieve a balanced budget in 2020.
- D. THAT Council direct staff to reinstate enforcement for pay-parking, and metered parking, city wide as soon as possible;

FURTHER THAT Council direct staff to communicate to the public, the return of pay parking enforcement city wide, and also the importance of parking revenue in the City of Vancouver budget;

AND FURTHER THAT Council direct staff to consider specific pay parking exemptions for essential and health care workers during the timeframe of the City of Vancouver's State of Emergency, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Appendix B

At a meeting of the Council of the City of Vancouver held on Tuesday, Tuesday, November 26, 2019, the following motions were approved:

WHEREAS

1. The City of Vancouver issued an Information Bulletin on November 1, 2019, stating that all vehicles with BC veteran license plates will be exempt from parking fees from November 4 to 11 to mark Veterans' Week. The reasons included: "to recognize the service and dedication of Canadian military personnel to our country";
2. For many years the City of Vancouver has offered free parking on Remembrance Day and during Veterans Week for vehicles with valid BC Veteran License Plates parked at City of Vancouver parking meters, Easy Park lots, surface lots, and Park Board operated parking facilities; including Stanley Park, Queen Elizabeth Park, the Vancouver Aquatic Centre, and all Vancouver community centres;
3. The City of Surrey carried policy recommendations in a report dated November 3, 2008, to adopt as a policy that vehicles bearing a "veteran" license plate be granted complimentary parking on a year round basis at all City of Surrey on street parking meters";
 - i) The report and recommendations in the report titled Complimentary Parking for Veterans at On-Street Parking Meters in Surrey, states that in analysis of previous data, allowing Veterans to Park for free at on-street parking meters, when comparing to subsequent years "there was no significant impact on parking meter revenues";
4. Examples of other municipalities across Canada and their commitment to providing free parking for veterans include:
 - i) The City of Red Deer: The City provides a parking pass program for Veterans (plates issued by all provinces). This program is administered by the Canadian Legion and is free of charge to the Veteran unless a replacement hang tag is required and then \$20 is charged by the City. The passes are good for five years and then must be re-applied for. This pass allows the Veteran to park at a street parking meter for the time restriction in that area. With the Legion's administration, they ensure that the person is a Veteran and is responsible for verification of any documentation;
 - ii) The City of Regina, Saskatchewan allows a veteran to park at a meter if they have a valid, properly displayed Veteran Design License Plate issued by the Saskatchewan Government Insurance or the equivalent in other provinces in Canada;
 - iii) The City of White Rock offers four hours a day of free parking in pay parking areas for all veteran plates; Council Meeting Minutes, November 26, 2019 30
 - iv) The City of London, Ontario: Holders of a veteran's license plate can park at any on-street meter without depositing coins for the limit of the meter;

5. The ICBC website states “In recognition our Canadian veterans, we’ve created a special plate to honour your service.” It lists the following requirements for eligibility for veterans plates in B.C. as follows: You are eligible to apply for veteran license plates if you own or lease an eligible vehicle, and were honourably discharged from, or are currently serving in one of the following:

- i) WWII, Korea, Gulf War, the Balkan Wars, Afghanistan, or other UN Peacekeeping Missions as a member of:
 - The Canadian Armed Forces, or
 - An Allied Force, or
 - The Canadian or Allied War Time Merchant Navy
- ii) A member of the Canadian Armed Forces, Regular or Reserves, who successfully completed basic training
- iii) UN or NATO Operations as a member of:
 - The Canadian Armed Forces, or
 - A UN or NATO Alliance Force serving in an Operation with the Canadian Armed Forces
- iv) Similarly qualified member of a British Commonwealth of Nations Armed Force who are honourably discharged. Unfortunately, currently serving members are not eligible.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council direct staff to explore the possibility of a process to allow eligible holders of a BC veterans license plate and current serving members of the Canadian Forces to park their vehicle for free, subject to the time limits already in place, at City of Vancouver parking meters, Easy Park lots, surface lots, and Park Board operated parking facilities; including Stanley Park, Queen Elizabeth Park, the Vancouver Aquatic Centre, and all Vancouver Community Centres;

FURTHER THAT Council direct staff to report back to Council by October 2020 with recommendations and plans to deliver a process by November 11, 2020, for year-round free parking for Veterans and current serving members of the Canadian Forces, at all parking locations currently offered by the City of Vancouver during the week of Remembrance Day

Appendix C

Major Urban Centres

City	Free Parking for Veterans?	Notes
Calgary, AB	Yes - Value Limited	With a valid plate free credit of \$10 / month of parking credit
Edmonton, AB	No	-
Montreal, QC	No	-
Halifax, NS	No	Free parking granted up until March 31, 2006 in recognition of Year of the Veteran in 2005.
Ottawa, ON	Yes - Date Limited	Free on Nov 11 (downtown)
Toronto, ON	Yes - Date Limited	Free on June 6, Sept 17, and Nov 11
Vancouver, BC	Yes - Date Limited	One week leading up to November 11
Winnipeg, MB	Yes - Value Limited	Free on April 9, June 6, Nov 11 and receive 20 hrs of complimentary free parking at meters (Scratch card)

Smaller Municipalities

City	Free Parking for Veterans?	Notes
Burnaby, BC	No	-
Fredericton, NB	No	-
Kingston, ON	No	-
Regina, SK	Yes	-
Red Deer, AB	Yes	-
Richmond, BC	Yes	Free parking year round for veterans that reside in Richmond
Surrey, BC	Yes	Free parking year round for veterans
Waterloo, ON	No	-
White Rock, BC	Yes	Free parking for 4 hours a day for all veteran plates in pay parking areas