

From: ["Mochrie, Paul" <Paul.Mochrie@vancouver.ca>](mailto:Paul.Mochrie@vancouver.ca)

To: ["Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"](#)

Date: 9/10/2021 4:30:22 PM

Subject: [Memo - West End Parking Strategy Project and Participatory Budget Update](#)

Attachments: [Memo - West End Parking Strategy Project and Participatory Budget Update.pdf](#)

Dear Mayor and Council,

Please see the attached memo from Lon LaClaire. A summary of the memo is as follows:

- This memorandum provides a joint update from Engineering Services, Civic Engagement and Communications and Finance on the status of the West End Parking Strategy (Strategy) approved by Council in 2017.
- In early 2019, Council approved changes that allowed long-term residents of the West End (prior to September 2017) to purchase a new permit below market price if they had never purchased permits. Given the low number of long-term permit sales and the declining number of long-term residents, staff believe that this change will not compromise the overall Strategy objectives, while providing relief to residents who need it.
- In 2017, City Council approved a Participatory Budgeting Pilot (PB Pilot) in the West End. The community generally expressed positive feedback towards the PB Pilot. The costs of running the PB process slightly exceeded the funds disbursed to the community.
 - a. Staff would not recommend implementing a PB process in the West End on an annual basis, but rather when parking revenues would have been accumulated to create a larger budget to offset administrative costs.
 - b. The staff would not recommend adopting a city-wide PB process until further trials and study have been completed. Due to current resource constraints, it is recommended to defer initiating new PB pilots at this time.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Lon LaClaire at 604-873-7336 or lon.laclaire@vancouver.ca.

Best,
Paul

Paul Mochrie (he/him)
City Manager
City of Vancouver
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The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

MEMORANDUM

September 10, 2021

TO: Mayor and Council

CC: Paul Mochrie, City Manager
Karen Levitt, Deputy City Manager
Katrina Leckovic, City Clerk
Lynda Graves, Administration Services Manager, City Manager's Office
Maria Pontikis, Director, Civic Engagement and Communications
Anita Zaenker, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
Neil Monckton, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
Alvin Singh, Communications Director, Mayor's Office

FROM: Lon LaClaire, General Manager, Engineering Services
Maria Pontikis, Director, Civic Engagement and Communications
Patrice Impey, General Manager, Financial Services

SUBJECT: West End Parking Strategy Project and Participatory Budget Update

RTS #: N/A

Purpose

This memorandum provides a joint update from Engineering Services, Civic Engagement and Communications and Finance on the status of the West End Parking Strategy ("Strategy"), which was approved by Council in 2017. Specifically, this memorandum will provide summary of the:

1. Impact of the introduction of a non-market permit rate for long-term residents in 2019; and,
2. Results and lessons learned from the Participatory Budget ("PB") process pilot that has taken place in the West End ("PB Pilot").

Strategy Background

In 2017, the Strategy was approved (RTS 11712) as a multifaceted approach to address long-standing on-street parking issues identified in the West End Community Plan, with a primary goal of making it easier to find parking in the West End permit zone without encouraging more driving overall.

One of the biggest issues in the West End permit zone is that the number of permits sold far exceeds the number of on-street spaces available, leading to low on-street parking availability. There is, however, not a shortfall in number of parking space. Data collected during development of the Strategy indicates that there are nearly 22,000 off-street residential parking spaces in the West End. Thousands these spaces go unused, as there are only around 16,000 total registered vehicles in the neighbourhood. In order to reduce the number of permits sold and encourage people to use the off-street options available to them, a key action of the Strategy is to charge a market rate (currently \$382.03 + GST/year) for new parking permits, while charging a non-market rate (currently \$86.60 + GST/year) to existing permit holders and low-income households.

The market rate acts to balance demand for on- and off-street parking, reducing the incentive for people to park on the street instead of in off-street parking due to cost. Consequently, on-street parking spaces will become available for the people who need it.

The Strategy directs that incremental revenue generated through the program be spent in the West End and that staff pilot a participatory budgeting process to determine where to spend the funds. In late 2017, City Council approved the Participatory Budgeting Pilot (RTS 13681) in the West End to explore a process to reinvest up to \$175,000 of revenue generated from the West End Parking Strategy back into community projects, through a series of community engagement and localized community improvement projects.

In early 2019, Council approved changes to the Strategy (RTS 12878) that allowed long-term residents (residents of the West End prior to September 2017) a one-time opportunity to purchase a new permit below market price if they had never purchased permits. At that time, Council also directed staff to report back on the impact of this change and to summarize feedback from some residents who suggested that the Strategy is discriminatory to newer West End residents.

Impact of the Non-market Permit Rate for new permits for Long-term Residents

The introduction of non-market permits for long-term residents who had not previously had a permit has not had a significant impact on overall permit sales. Since 2019, they represent about 2% of total permits sold. This change to permit eligibility has provided relief for many residents that, due to unforeseen circumstances such as the death of a long-term partner, have had to transfer vehicle ownership and residential parking permits into their name. Given the low number of long-term residents that are purchasing new non-market permits and the fact the number of residents that have lived in the neighbourhood continuously since September 2017 will continue to decrease, staff believe that this change to the residential permit parking system will not compromise the overall Strategy objectives.

As part of this change, Council directed staff to summarize feedback from the residents suggesting that the 2019 amendments to the strategy are discriminatory. Since its implementation there have been very few complaints specifically related to the changes made in 2019. The most common complaint (received about 10 - 15 times per year) regarding the pricing of permits in the West End has come from non-market permit holders that allow their permits to lapse more than 90 days and are displeased that they are no longer eligible for the lower rate. A less common complaint (received about 5 - 8 times per year) is from new residents displeased about having to pay the market rate.

The Strategy predicted that fewer non-market permits would be sold as people with non-market permits decide not to own a vehicle or leave the West End. After four complete permit-years¹ the number of non-market permits has dropped by approximately 50%. This downward trend is expected to continue in future years, which will improve the effectiveness of the program.

Additional details are provided in **Error! Reference source not found.**

Results of the Participatory Budgeting Pilot

The West End community generally expressed positive feedback towards Participatory Budgeting (PB) as a process during the pilot. The three projects selected by the community will be completed within the 18-month commitment timeframe, demonstrating tangible benefits available from the PB process. The community improvement projects completed to date include two \$10,000 grants (for a total of \$20,000) to local schools to conduct their own “mini-PB process” for fitness equipment and \$30,000 for sidewalk improvements. The third project, a \$50,000 calisthenics park, is expected to be completed by October 2021.

These benefits, however, are offset by the resources required run the PB process, where the costs required to support the community engagement in running the West End pilot of approximately \$107,000 exceeded the value of funds disbursed to the community (\$100,000). In addition, significant community capacity in the form of volunteer and community leadership time was required, as well as significant city staff time from various departments not quantified in the figure above. The high resource requirement to implement a successful community participatory budgeting process is consistent with findings from other jurisdictions who have also implemented participatory budgeting.

Consequently, staff would not recommend implementing a PB process in the West End on an annual basis. Instead, staff would recommend considering a modified PB process or another type of more efficient community engagement for the neighbourhood between 2023 to 2025, when parking revenues would have been accumulated between \$0.5 to \$1 million to create a larger budget to offset administrative costs.

The West End was an ideal community for the PB trial due to manageable geographic size and strong community networks to undertake localized community engagement within the City of Vancouver. In order to assess the effectiveness of the PB process as a policy to be applied city-wide on various projects, additional pilot projects that involve communities with different community capacity and larger capital budgets to distribute are required. The staff would not recommend adopting a city-wide PB process until further trials and study have been completed.

To implement additional PB pilots, resources would need to be added for internal staff in the form of additional FTEs and/or budget for external consultants. Due to current resource constraints, it is recommended to defer initiating new PB pilots at this time.

The City of Vancouver recently developed an equity framework, which includes embedding an equity lens into budget decisions as a category of action. Staff would recommend including equity considerations, particularly around the neighbourhoods and participants identified, into

¹ Permit-years in the West End permit zone run from June 1 until May 30 the following year

future PB trials to advance equity goals and ensure a diversity of neighbourhoods and voices are included.

Regards,



Lon LaClaire
General Manager of Engineering Services



Maria Pontikis
Director, Civic Engagement and Communications



Patrice Impey
General Manager of Finance, Risk, and Supply Chain Management