



CITY OF VANCOUVER

POLICY REPORT TRANSIT AND TRAFFIC

Report Date: May 29, 2006
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RTS No.: 5633
VanRIMS No.: 13-5500-20
Meeting Date: June 13, 2006

TO: Standing Committee on Transportation and Traffic
FROM: General Manager of Engineering Services
SUBJECT: On-Street Disability Parking Provisions

RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT the Street and Traffic By-law 2849 be amended to allow vehicles used by individuals with a disability, and properly displaying an authorized disability placard, a three-hour exemption from resident parking regulations.
- B. THAT the Street and Traffic By-law 2849 be amended to allow vehicles used by individuals with a disability, and properly displaying an authorized disability placard, a 30 minute stopping exemption in passenger zones, general (non commercial) loading zones, and no parking zones for active loading and unloading of passengers or materials.
- C. THAT on-street disability parking spaces be installed in areas with high parking demands to provide a level of access of approximately 2% of total street parking spaces. This would include disability metered spaces in metered areas and designated zones in commercial or residential areas. The areas identified for installation include:

West End	Central Business District
Kerrisdale	Central Broadway
Yaletown	Kitsilano
Chinatown	South Granville
Commercial Drive	
- D. THAT staff install on-street disability spaces in other areas as required based on need and that they be monitored and adjusted as required.

- E. THAT Council authorize the Director of Legal Services to bring forward a by-law amending the Street and Traffic By-law generally as outlined in this report and in Appendix A including modernization of the provisions as indicated in Appendix A.
- F. THAT the \$70,000 cost of implementing the new on-street disability spaces be funded from an increase in the 2006 budget for parking meter revenues.

CONSIDERATION

- G. THAT the parking rate for disability metered spaces be set at 50% of the prevailing area rates at an estimated cost of about \$140,000 per year (prorated 2006 impact of \$70,000) to be funded by an anticipated increase in parking meter revenues. Therefore no adjustment to the 2006 budget for parking meter revenues is needed.

COUNCIL POLICY

Council has had a long standing policy of promoting measures to enhance the accessibility of the City to persons with disabilities.

SUMMARY

To improve access to on-street parking for people with disabilities, this report recommends designating on-street parking spaces for vehicles displaying an authorized disability parking placard. In residential areas, approximately 50 spaces are proposed in the Kerrisdale, West End and South Granville neighbourhoods where parking pressures are high. In several commercial areas, approximately 75 metered spaces have been identified for conversion for use by vehicles displaying an authorized disability placard. Additional on-street spaces will also be installed in other parts of the city as required. It is further recommended that vehicles displaying an authorized disability placard be permitted to stop in passenger zones, general (non-commercial) loading zones, and no parking zones for up to 30 minutes for active loading or unloading of passengers or materials.

The above recommendations are a result of a review of best practices and regulations, comparison with other cities, discussion with stakeholders, and a review of areas with high parking pressures. Support for increasing accessibility to on-street parking spaces for people with disabilities was received from the Social Planning and Research Council of BC, the City's Advisory Committee on Disability Issues, and BC Persons with Aids Society. The recommendations are consistent with the City's goal to be "livable" and "inclusive" for all citizens, and recognize the increasing need to properly accommodate residents with mobility challenges. If approved, implementation costs (\$70,000) can be funded from an increase in the 2006 budget using existing, higher than expected, parking meter revenues.

Council may wish to consider a 50% reduction in parking meter rates for meters specially designated for people with disabilities. This is in response to interest from some stakeholders for free parking at all metered locations. However, staff do not recommend any reduction in parking meter rates because it does not increase accessibility for people with disabilities, and it creates issues regarding equity with other groups, potential misuse, and budget impacts.

PURPOSE

This report reviews on-street parking provisions for people with disabilities and recommends changes to improve access.

BACKGROUND

The City of Vancouver has an active program supporting the removal of barriers for people with disabilities, including regulations to ensure that adequate special parking spaces are provided.

Commencing in 1972, City Council implemented provisions for persons with disabilities in the Building By-law, the first municipality in Canada to do so. Similarly, under the Parking By-law, new developments are required to provide parking spaces for persons with disabilities. The Parking By-law specifies the size, location and number of spaces required. In general, between two and ten percent of the total parking spaces provided in a new development must be designated for people with disabilities, depending upon the specific use and size of the development. Both the Building By-law and the Parking By-law are updated on a regular basis. Most recently in 2001, Council reviewed and increased off-street disability parking space requirements within the Parking By-law.

Existing developments are also encouraged to provide adequate disability parking spaces. To facilitate this, the City considers new disability parking spaces provided in an existing development to count as two regular parking spaces to meet Parking By-law requirements.

On streets, in areas with high parking demands, the City has provided regulations including meters, time limits, or resident parking programs to better meet the needs of various user groups. For people with disabilities, only a few on-street spaces have been designated throughout the city, three of which are metered spaces within the downtown area.

The City also has a parking meter exemption decal program which grants those with severe disabilities free access to metered parking because of their inability to properly use the meter equipment.

DISCUSSION

A review of the provision of on-street disability parking spaces across North America found no consistent approach. In the United States, they have recently developed guidelines for discussion as part of the American Disability Act. In Canada there are no guidelines or regulations and each city has had to determine its own provisions.

Staff, with the help of a consultant, reviewed Vancouver's on-street disability parking needs. This review included the following:

- Review of literature for best practices and applicable regulations;
- Review of the practices of comparable cities;
- Discussion of issues with stakeholders; and,
- Review of locations in Vancouver where needs exist.

The consultant's report provided valuable information and recommendations on how the City can provide the best level of access on streets for persons with disabilities. Staff have expanded on this study and have developed more specific recommendations to create a comprehensive street access program.

Residential Areas

In residential areas with very high demands for on-street parking, residents or visitors with a disability can have difficulties finding an appropriate on-street parking space that is both accessible and convenient. In residential areas regulated by resident parking controls, it is recommended that a vehicle displaying an authorized disability placard be given a three-hour exemption from all resident parking regulations. This will allow visitors with disabilities to park on the street as close as possible to his or her destination in a resident parking zone.

To assist residents with disabilities in residential areas that have very high parking pressures, it is recommended that special on-street disability parking spaces be designated. These areas may or may not have resident parking controls already in place. If resident parking controls are not in place, then the spaces created could serve either visitors or residents with disabilities. The residential areas identified for installation of these spaces include:

- Kerrisdale multiple dwelling area
- West End
- South Granville

It is anticipated that approximately 50 specially designated spaces would be initially installed in the residential areas identified above, representing roughly 2% of the total on-street parking spaces. In other residential areas there may be a need to designate additional on-street parking spaces for people with disabilities. These will be reviewed by staff and installed on a case-by-case basis as required.

Commercial Areas

In many commercial areas it is difficult to find on-street parking spaces despite the presence of time limits or parking meters due to very high demands for parking. For people with disabilities, this is even more problematic if there is no off-street parking alternative that is in close proximity to their destination. To improve accessibility to these commercial areas, it is recommended that special on-street parking spaces be designated for vehicles displaying an authorized disability placard. In most cases these are in metered areas and therefore specially designated metered parking spaces for people with disabilities will be created. The commercial areas identified for installation of these special meters include:

- Central Business District
- Central Broadway
- Yaletown
- Chinatown
- Kerrisdale
- Commercial Drive
- Kitsilano

It is anticipated that approximately 75 metered spaces designated for persons with disability will be initially installed in the commercial areas identified above. It will represent roughly 2% of the total on-street parking supply in those areas. If there is a need for additional on-street disability parking spaces in other commercial areas, these will also be reviewed by staff and installed on a case-by-case basis as required.

To further assist people with disabilities, it is recommended that vehicles displaying an authorized disability placard be permitted to stop in passenger zones, general (non-commercial) loading zones, and no parking zones for up to 30 minutes for active loading or unloading of passengers or materials. Currently there is a 3 - 5 minute maximum for all vehicles in these zones for active loading and unloading of passengers. The extension of the time limit recognizes the fact that people with disabilities may require more time to load and unload from a vehicle.

Parking Meter Rates

Some cities provide free parking at meters for people with disabilities, but have no designated on-street disability parking spaces. Free parking does not help to make the streets more accessible because it does not guarantee a space for people with disabilities. With free parking, people with disabilities are still competing with the general public for the same metered parking spaces. Given the fact that we already provide free access to individuals with disabilities who cannot properly use our parking meter equipment, the rationale to provide free parking at all parking meters for all people with disabilities appears to be largely economic.

The provision of free parking for people with disabilities at all metered locations may have the following impacts:

- generates additional requests for free parking from many other worthy groups;
- creates potential misuse of the disability placard;
- generates lost meter revenues in the order of \$500,000+ per year;
- promotes auto use and only benefits those who use a vehicle;
- encourages long-term parking in commercial areas where short-term parking is desired.

Rather than provide free parking for people with disabilities at all parking meters, Council may wish to consider a reduced rate for the metered spaces that are specially designated for people with disabilities. A reduced meter rate of about 50% of the prevailing rate for the initial 75 metered disability parking spaces proposed would mitigate some of the impacts listed above and reduce the lost meter revenues to about \$100,000 to \$150,000 per year. This option is presented for consideration as staff have received requests for free metered parking from some members of the Advisory Committee on Disability Issues; however, it is not recommended by staff for the reasons listed above.

Design Guidelines for On-Street Disability Parking Spaces

To assist in selecting appropriate locations for on-street parking for people with disabilities, the following guidelines will be used:

- Disability parking spaces will be located as near as possible to public facilities or multiple dwellings that may generate a higher proportion of use by people with disabilities (e.g. hospitals, medical clinics, and seniors' residences).
- Disability parking spaces will be installed, whenever possible, at the end of a block or near a driveway to provide additional space for off-loading from the rear of the vehicle and to provide ramp access to the sidewalk.
- Disability parking spaces located on one-way streets will be placed on the left side of the road to provide sidewalk access on the driver's side of the vehicle.
- Disability parking spaces will be both visibly signed and marked on the pavement.
- Disability parking spaces will be avoided on streets with rush hour regulations to reduce the potential for tows that greatly inconvenience the mobility impaired.

With the introduction of the proposed on-street disability parking program in residential and commercial areas as described in this report, staff will monitor and adjust the program as required, and report back if necessary.

CONSULTATIONS

In addition to discussions with other cities and municipalities, the on-street parking situation was discussed with both SPARC BC (Social Planning and Research Council of BC), who manages the Provincial disability parking placard program, and the City's Advisory Committee on Disability Issues.

In particular SPARC noted that the City of Vancouver has been a model city in its approach to meeting the needs of people with disabilities when it comes to off-street parking. However, the on-street parking provisions within the city are limited and should be increased, and in particular in the Downtown area. They have reviewed a draft version of the recommendations in this report and support the proposed program to improve on-street accessibility.

On March 7, 2006, the City's Advisory Committee on Disability Issues, after reviewing the draft recommendations with staff, expressed general support for the project.

The BC Persons with Aids Society have also expressed support for the proposed draft recommendations.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The implementation of this new program has several financial implications. The cost to install the on-street disability spaces in residential and commercial areas identified in this report is estimated to be \$60,000. The cost for communications and outreach for the program is estimated to be \$10,000. It is recommended that the total cost of \$70,000 for the program be funded from an increase in parking meter revenues apparent since the recent increase in parking meter rates and that the revenue budget for parking meter revenues will be increased accordingly.

If Council approves a 50% reduced rate for parking meters designated for people with disabilities, parking meter revenues are estimated to be reduced by about \$140,000 per year (prorated 2006 impact of \$70,000). This potential loss in revenues can also be offset by the additional increase in parking meter revenues resulting from the recent increase in parking meter rates. This results in no net change to the budget.

Additional revenues from the increase in parking meter rates this year were originally estimated to be about \$600,000. Based on the tracking of current performance, it is anticipated that there would be additional revenues in the range of \$140,000 that could be used to fund the revenue impact of the recommended option as well as the consideration item.

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

This initiative supports Vancouver's goal to be a "livable" and "inclusive" city for all citizens, regardless of their differences including physical abilities, language, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status. The report recommendations strengthen the City's measures to enhance the accessibility of the City to persons with disabilities. The recommendations also recognize that Vancouver has an aging population, and there will be an increasing need to ensure the City properly accommodates residents with mobility challenges.

COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

If approved by Council, staff will work with the City's Corporate Communications Division and appropriate agencies including SPARC BC to ensure that those with a disability are aware of Vancouver's new on-street disability parking program. It is recommended that \$10,000 be approved to assist in communications and outreach.

CONCLUSION

A review of the on-street parking provisions for people with disabilities identified several areas for improvement, resulting in the following recommendations:

- The installation of approximately 125 on-street parking spaces for people with disabilities in residential and commercial areas where there is a high parking demand;
- The provision of a three-hour exemption for vehicles displaying an authorized disability placard from resident parking regulations;
- The ability for vehicles displaying an authorized disability placard to stop in passenger zones, general (non-commercial) loading zones, and no parking zones for up to 30 minutes while actively loading or unloading passengers or materials.

The cost of implementing this new program is estimated to be \$70,000 and it is recommended that it be funded by an increase in the 2006 budget using existing, higher than expected, parking meter revenues. A 50% reduction in meter rates for parking meters designated for people with disabilities is presented to Council for consideration, but not recommended by staff because it does not increase accessibility and results in issues regarding equity with other groups, potential for misuse, and budget impacts.

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APPENDIX A

Street and Traffic By-law

1. Amend the following sections to read substantially as follows:

Sections 21.1, 21.2, 21.3, and 21.4

21.1 A person must not stop a vehicle in a passenger zone except, for no more than three minutes, to load or unload passengers.

21.2 Despite section 21.1, the driver of:

- (a) an armoured vehicle, used to convey cash and other securities, may stop in a passenger zone while picking up or delivering such cash or securities;
- (c) a commercial vehicle may stop in a passenger zone, before 12:00 noon on any day, for no more than 30 minutes, while loading or unloading materials; and
- (c) a custom transit vehicle or a vehicle that displays a disabled person's parking placard authorized by the city may stop in a passenger zone, for no more than 30 minutes, while loading or unloading persons or materials.

21.3 A person must not stop a vehicle in a loading zone except, for no more than three minutes, to load or unload passengers, and, for no more than 30 minutes, to load or unload materials.

21.4 Despite section 21.3, the driver of a custom transit vehicle or a vehicle that displays a disabled person's parking placard authorized by the city may stop in a loading zone, for no more than 30 minutes, while loading or unloading persons or materials.

Section 23.1

23.1 If:

- (a) the City Engineer designates any street or part of a street for the parking of vehicles only of residents who live in a particular area of the city;
- (b) the City Engineer identifies any such street or part of a street by posting on it signs indicating a prohibition on parking except for a vehicle that displays a permit authorizing parking in that area; and
- (c) a person driving a vehicle that displays such a permit complies with all other parking restrictions that apply in that area;

such a person may park that vehicle on any such street or part of a street.

23.1A Despite section 23.1, a person driving a vehicle that displays a disabled person's parking placard authorized by the city may park that vehicle on a street or portion of a street referred to in section 23.1 for no more than three hours.

2. Also amend the definition of "park", and include an appropriate section, to allow vehicles to stop for up to 30 minutes for active loading and unloading of passengers or materials in No Parking Anytime zones.

3. Make such other amendments as may be necessary to implement the Recommendations approved by Council.