



## REPORT

Report Date: October 8, 2021  
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Meeting Date: October 19, 2021  
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TO: Vancouver City Council

FROM: General Manager of Engineering Services

SUBJECT: Parking Fee Exemptions for Vehicles Displaying Veteran or Memorial Cross Licence Plates

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- A. THAT vehicles displaying veteran or Memorial Cross licence plates be exempted from parking meter fees, subject to time limits, at all on-street metered parking spaces and at City-owned off-street parking facilities in Vancouver.
- B. THAT Council approve, in principle, changes to the Parking Meter By-law as generally outlined in Appendix A;  
  
FURTHER THAT Council authorize the Director of Legal Services to prepare and bring forward for enactment amendments to the Parking Meter By-law as generally outlined in Appendix A.
- C. THAT Council direct the City Manager to inform the Vancouver Park Board of Council's decisions on parking fee exemptions for vehicles displaying veteran or Memorial Cross licence plates so that they can consider similar actions for Park Board facilities.

### **COUNCIL AUTHORITY/PREVIOUS DECISIONS**

On October 18, 2007, Council declared that vehicles displaying veteran licence plates be exempted from parking meter fees from November 4 to 11, 2007, and the same week each year thereafter.

On November 26, 2019, Council directed staff to explore and report back on a process to allow eligible holders of a BC veterans licence plate and currently serving members of the Canadian Forces to park their vehicle without a fee. This process would be 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. At this time, Council also directed staff to report back with plans and recommendations to deliver a process by November 11, 2020 for year-round parking fee exemptions for veterans and currently-serving members of the Canadian Forces.

On October 15, 2020, Council approved a one-year trial for year-round parking meter fee exemptions for vehicles bearing veteran plates at on-street metered parking spaces and off-street City-owned parking facilities in Vancouver.

### ***CITY MANAGER'S COMMENTS***

The City Manager recommends approval of the foregoing.

### ***REPORT***

#### ***Background/Context***

Prior to October 2020, veterans were exempt from on-street parking meter fees during Remembrance Week, which occurs from November 4 to November 11 each year. Council established these privileges in October 2007. The staff report at that time recommended that on-street parking be free of charge for veterans only on November 11 of each year.

On October 15, 2020, Council approved a one-year trial for year-round parking fee exemptions for vehicles bearing veteran licence plates at metered on-street parking in the City of Vancouver. An amendment to the Parking Meter By-law was enacted on November 5, 2020. Similar provisions were put in place at City-owned off-street parking facilities and at Vancouver Park Board controlled facilities. Staff were to monitor impacts to the on-street parking network, and to report back in 2021 on potential uptake of the new free year-round parking policy.

#### ***Strategic Analysis***

Staff reached out to Veteran Affairs Canada to ask for feedback regarding the free parking policy but received no formal response back. Feedback from the Royal Canadian Legion branches were generally neutral, as many of the veterans were unaware of the parking exemption policies.

Staff conducted spot daytime and evening occupancy checks of on-street parking in Q1 and Q2 of 2021 for all metered parking in the city, including identifying the number of veteran plates observed. Fewer than five veteran plates in total were observed during the data collection over each quarter. Anecdotal data from EasyPark also indicated there was very little veteran plate activity observed in their off-street facilities. Since there was a negligible number of veteran plates observed both on-street and off-street, it can be inferred that the uptake of the parking fee exemption continued to remain low.

Staff also reached out to ICBC regarding the number of veteran plates issued to vehicles registered in Vancouver and the Lower Mainland. While the number of vehicles with veteran plates has increased (see Table 1), a corresponding impact to on-street parking has not been observed.

*Table 1. Number of Vehicles with Veteran Plates*

<b>Year</b>	<b>BC</b>	<b>Lower Mainland</b>	<b>Vancouver</b>
<b>2020</b>	14,000	4,800	380
<b>2021</b>	16,000	5,100	530
<b>Change</b>	+2,000	+300	+150
<b>% Change</b>	+14%	+6%	+39%

*Source: Contains information licensed under ICBC's Open Data Licence*

During the trial period, staff received inquiries from holders of Memorial Cross licence plates about whether parking fee exemptions applied to these vehicles as well. The Memorial Cross (more often referred to as the Silver Cross) is an award that is granted by the Government of Canada since 1919 to the loved ones of Canadian armed forces personnel who died in service or whose death was attributed to their service. In the past it had only been given to mothers and widows, however, recent changes now allow Canadian Forces members to designate up to three Memorial Cross recipients. Information from ICBC indicates that the number of Memorial Cross plates in BC is low. As such, staff do not anticipate a significant impact to on-street parking should fee exemptions be extended to vehicles bearing Memorial Cross plates.

Recognizing that the trial took place during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, staff will continue to monitor the use of on-street metered parking by vehicles displaying veteran or Memorial Cross licence plates and will report back to Council if further impacts are seen.

***Financial***

As the number of vehicles with veteran plates utilizing on-street parking spaces is low, no material impacts to on-street parking meter revenue are expected in the near term.

***CONCLUSION***

Based on the data and feedback collected, staff are not concerned about an immediate impact of this program to the management of on-street parking in Vancouver. Due to the low observed impact and Council direction to provide an exemption of parking fees for veterans, staff recommend that parking fee exemptions for vehicles displaying veteran or Memorial Cross plates be made permanent.

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**APPENDIX A – Draft By-law Amendments**

**DRAFT**

*Note: A By-law will be prepared generally in accordance with the provisions listed below, subject to change and refinement prior to posting.*

**BY-LAW NO. \_\_\_\_\_**

**A By-law to amend Parking Meter By-law No. 2952  
Regarding Veteran's Parking**

1. This by-law amends the indicated provisions of the Parking Meter By-law No. 2952.
2. Council strikes subsection 6(7) and replaces it as follows:  
  
“(7) Motor vehicles bearing a Veteran's or Memorial Cross licence plate shall be exempt from any parking fees imposed at any parking meter under this By-law for a period up to the parking time limit.”
3. A decision by a court that any part of this By-law is illegal, void, or unenforceable severs that part from this By-law, and is not to affect the balance of this By-law.
4. This By-law is to come into force and take effect on the date of its enactment.

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