



**Council Member Motion
For the Committee of the Whole Meeting of November 7, 2024**

To: Committee of the Whole **Date:** November 1st, 2024
From: Councillor Gardiner
Subject: Downtown businesses and parking

BACKGROUND

Over the past several years, we have heard comments from downtown businesses about the need for parking for their staff and clientele/customers. Comments focussed on loss of parking due to dedicated bike lanes, the dieting of roadways, and the rerouting of traffic.

Following this Council’s significant raise of parking fees, we have heard from business owners of the about the impact of increased parking rates on business employees and customers.

An excerpt from a recent email sent to Councillors speaks to the exodus of businesses from downtown and parking as both a problem and mitigative tool. The writer states: *“This exodus from the city core is not sustainable, and, if not countered, will result in a massive problem for years to come. Some of the reasons for this exodus, being the lower traffic caused by the work from home movement, as well as the high-level of street disorder are not easy to counter at the city level. . . . **Parking is, however.** In the face of all the challenges occurring with the core, to charge additional parking fees for people to come downtown is a puzzling decision. These fees have a very real impact on families and individual’s interest in coming into the core for dinners, events, and shopping. The result is simply lower traffic, which is a further burden on retailers and restaurateurs operating in the core . . . The writer goes on to suggest: **Parking is a small change that can hopefully help business while we sort through the larger issues facing the downtown.**”*

Another person suggests: *“Please consider bringing back free one hour parking or anything to get the good people back to visiting our neighborhood.”*

Last week, at the Mayor’s *Reimagining Inclusive Safety and Wellbeing* conference, a business owner challenged me with a question. **Has the City surveyed the downtown businesses about business parking and street use needs?** While a survey may have been done a few years ago, the reality for downtown businesses since Covid-19 came to our city has changed.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council direct staff to survey businesses within the Downtown Core Area to assess their parking and street use needs.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized initial 'G' followed by a horizontal line.

Councillor Gardiner