

Parking Services Review Public Consultation

Attachment I – Parkade Employee Focus Group Notes
May 6 and 7, 2014



PARKADE EMPLOYEE FOCUS GROUP

Session #1: Tuesday, May 6, 2014, from 1 p.m. – 2 p.m.

Session #2: Wednesday, May 7, 2014, from 2 p.m. – 3 p.m.

Victoria City Hall

Two focus group discussions with parkade employees were held to discuss the proposed changes to improve parking downtown and how they thought the City could improve parking in parkades. Eight employees participated in the first focus group, and seven employees attended the second session for a total of 15 employees.

Both sessions were held in a boardroom at City Hall and were facilitated by Katie Hamilton, Director of Communications and Civic Engagement. Manager of Parking Services Ismo Husu participated and served as the technical expert. Communications Coordinator Michelle Harris recorded ideas on a flip chart.

Employee feedback from the two focus groups has been combined and categorized under the following key themes:

- recommendations
- common questions/complaints
- customer service
- safety/security
- signage (way finding and information/rates)
- parkade equipment/workplace

RECOMMENDATIONS

- First hour free now is an issue – confusion re: one-hour off. With proposed change, there will be no coupon and rates will be \$2/hr, so first-hour free is a savings of \$2 (not like only \$1 as things are calculated currently)
- 6pm – 8am free in parkades is good – customers won't get tickets
- Elderly complain about proposed increase of on-street rates to go to the doctor – some uncomfortable parking in a parkade
- Most problems will be solved by proposed changes
- More people will be parking for shorter times in parkades
- Should help bring people downtown

COMMON QUESTIONS/COMPLAINTS

- Are we open 24 hours?
- What are your rates and times, daytime versus at night?
- How long will you be in the booth?
- Hours of operation – how late are you open?
- Comment received: So glad you're a person to provide assistance (don't need to figure out machines)
- Rates – too expensive and unclear (first-hour free confusing currently)
- Can't find my car
- Cost – too high
- Cost: Some say wow, cheaper than at the hospital
- Broughton monthly parkers want to know in advance when afternoon performances at Royal Theatre will cause line-ups at exits (there are things we can do to communicate this)

CUSTOMER SERVICE:

- We'll need more people to help customers with the proposed new changes (Ismo)
- More people using the parkades, we'll need more people to assist (Ismo)
- Some people know we are City staff
- People are confused – all parkades are different:
 - When to pay (at entrance or at exit/arriving or departing)
 - Customer is always guessing
 - Envelopes are confusing
- Consistency among all parkades is needed to be helpful
- Some find automation confusing so will choose a staffed parkade
- Cash machines, ATMs at every parkade with signage directing public to them. Banks can be too far and paying by coin is difficult. No one carries cash (for night parking).
- Hand-outs to customers: rate sheets, make sure not to confuse, tear sheet/pad
- Make it a faster experience for the customer to find a spot and leave (fix machines)
- Gates are slow automatically – staff need to open manually – feels slow for the customer who then glare and blame staff – it's slow during printing process
- Introduce a Parkade parking card like a pre-loaded coffee card
- We don't take debit
- What do we enforce in parkades?
 - Staff need to physically go ask commissionaires to follow up with a customer
 - Small car spot is tough to enforce – need measurement or a painted line
 - Handicapped spots at Bastion
- How will we deal with coupons presented after the changes are introduced (if approved)?
- There will still be a grace period.
- Changes = easier math for customers
- Some staff rotate between parkades, while others work at one parkade
- Human aspect in parkades – shifting newbies into parkades – they will need assistance
- Bay parkade slips have been handed in (confused parkers)
- Timing of gates being up or down at Royal Theatre is confusing for public and night security

- Monthly Parkers:
 - No physical prompt for monthly parkers on how to use their card (to get in and out)
 - Not a lot of correspondence to monthly parkers
 - Some monthlies complain no longer an express swipe lane at Broughton but better to open it up for both swiping lanes as it is now
- How to improve customer service?
 - Smile – human contact – please and thanks is appreciated by customer
 - We give out doggie biscuits out of own pocket
 - New parkers get lost due to signage
 - Long-standing parkers more concerned with 1) security 2) line-ups and speed of exiting
 - Need to communicate "no in and out" privileges
- Night-time parking is the problem because the public is on their own
- Pay on Foot – need to make sure people know to hand paid ticket to attendant to exit
- The issue at night is the envelopes:
 - Can't pay with credit card with brown envelopes – if people have to leave due to no form of payment they can call in a credit card number or mail in a cheque
 - No receipt for night-time parkers
- Welcome everyone back to the parkades – it will need to be different
- Staff give out phone number of Manager of Parking Services, but many people are directed to Karen. Issues:
 - Brown envelopes
 - Didn't buy a ticket
 - Why can't we pay our brown envelopes online?

RATES:

- Currently, explaining the "first-hour free" equivalency is confusing to motorists
- New proposed first-hour free will be easier to explain/calculate
- Will there be changes to the monthly parker rates?
- Will there still be a grace period of 15 minutes?
- Grace period during the day but not at night. Current signage doesn't make sense. (This won't be an issue at night based on the recommendation.)
- Two different prices for same period of time
- Just need one coupon for one-hour free
- Rate changes should help with calculations

SAFETY/SECURITY:

- 24/7 security – customers ask them questions before approaching parkade staff in booths but they can receive bad information:
 - Day security staff are more informed
 - Opportunity to learn more for night security staff
 - One security person pretended they didn't speak English to avoid assisting a customer
 - Security guards (night staff) have language barriers and sometimes don't know parkades well
 - Security guards (day staff) knowledge is great, perfect versus night staff who don't understand they don't have to do their rounds and can stay and assist when it's busy
- Need new and/or more paint, painted ceilings to increase feeling of security
- Need better lighting in some areas
- Clean and safe – they are but public don't think so
- Calls for service decrease discussed
- There is a local business ad about broken window glass in parkades
- People think security guards are City staff

Safety: Bastion Square Parkade

- Who has the right of way on the ramp? It's not intuitive. Need a review of the signage. Two yield signs? Confusing
- Line-ups on ramp in parkade difficult to see tires as the background used to be painted yellow but now black
- Cameras – for staff to see line-ups on ramps
- Need to look at improving signage
- Timing of flipping of gate – too slow

Safety: Johnson Street Parkade

- Johnson is scary looking (front-end work and painting to take place this year - Ismo)
- Can we get white ceilings?

Safety: View Street Parkade

- Concern about pedestrian safety at entrance/exit of this parkade
 - Staff ask customers to watch for pedestrians
 - Not gate, what to do?
- Timing of flipping of gate – too slow
- No gate – some people are not paying (there is no current plan to improve View with a gate and would need to extend sidewalks to accommodate a gate, Ismo)

SIGNAGE (Way finding / Information)

- Need map of each parkade posted at each level
- People pull-up to security booth instead of at staffed kiosk to pay (can we move it?)
- Sign need to inform "pay by coin" at night / if changes approved – need new signage about rates and free parking at night
- How to Pay signage needed (methods of payment day versus night)
- Sign to say what we take and what we don't take
- Larger signs to clearly state where to pay
- Too many signs – nobody reads them, people don't read signs
- Challenge – how to provide information and provide a balance of signs
- Need signage for: increased security on site, call buttons, escort to car service (day and night)
- Need sign "Please have ticket and payment ready."
- Fix signage re: payment
- Way finding signage tour/analysis – please include parkade staff
- Remove exclamations from parkade signs!
- Need new signage to communicate new first-hour free (no coupon)
- Signage instructions needed re: prompt for cash transactions on machines – how to get a receipt at Broughton outside lane
- Lights with arrows on ground directing drivers
- How to get people to read the signs?
- Motorcycle designated parking signs needed
- Differentiate signs for pedestrians and motorists
- Tour of parkade via car and on foot
- Do people know they're in a City parkade? sometimes, yes
- Need new parkade entrance signage to brand the parkades as City of Victoria parkade
- "Out" and "In" signage is confusing. Should read "Exit" and "Enter".
- Can we state/show each parkade level with coordinated colours and elevators?

Signage: Bastion Square Parkade

- Two-way is confusing

Signage: Broughton Street Parkade:

- 15km sign needed for safety
- Motorcycle parking sign needed
- Way finding signage needed (vehicles re-entering because go the wrong way)
- One person per shift at Broughton loses his/her car.
- Hard to find your car at Broughton
- Broughton is confusing
- Broughton – people can't find their way out

Signage: Centennial Parkde

- "Do Not Enter" sign is confusing at Centennial Parkade. It is bigger than the "Enter" sign and not well-placed.

Signage: View Street Parkade:

- Way finding signage needed (vehicles re-entering because go the wrong way)
- No gates – need to look at how to improve, needs different treatment
- People go up the down ramp by accident (helpful to have attendants)
- Need signs to indicate Handicapped parking
- View is confusing

Signage: Bastion Square Parkade

- "Small Car" parking spot sign needed

PARKADE EQUIPMENT/WORKPLACE

- Equipment is old and needs maintenance, ticket machine jams
- New Pay on Foot machine at Bastion (not yet turned on, located at 2nd floor elevator):
 - Will there be more pay on foot machines – one at every level at that parkade for customer convenience?
 - Need a sign to explain methods of payment at this machine
- Tills need to be updated, wrong since 1999 (charging extra 25 cents) but this will be fixed if the new rates are approved (machines couldn't handle graduated changes, Ismo)
- "Up" button on machines is irritating
- "Motorcycle" button needs to be looked at
- Need fresh coat of yellow or other colour of paint on booths and concrete
- Need to polish up booths for consistency, professionalism, functionality
- Gate issue – staff hit themselves on the head repeatedly (not so much the customer)
- Upgrade our computers
- Need to spruce up equipment and workplace
 - Youngin's don't know how to troubleshoot the old equipment
 - 1999 system is very slow, cursor and "up" button issues
- Refresh booths
 - Brighter, painted booths would be nice, more professional
 - Need boards to pin up information
 - Lockers at View to reduce clutter
 - Hooks for jackets
 - A place to store emergency kits that are dirty/dusty
 - Update the "Parkade Bible"
- Concern about jobs/staffing after 6pm