

# **Parking Services Review Public Consultation**

## Attachment L – Media Articles (10)

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# Free parking is a positive

Kudos to Victoria city staff for backing away from a plan to extend pay parking into the evenings on downtown streets. Having to plug the meter after 6 p.m. would not have attracted people to the downtown.

City staff have been working on a number of parking proposals and last month suggested charging \$1 an hour for on-street parking between 6 p.m. and 9 p.m., as well as boosting some parking rates to \$3 an hour from \$2.50.

The proposal to charge for evening on-street parking was dropped, but among the recommendations sent to councillors this week is a suggestion to offer free evening parking in the parkades.

Parking meters are intended to create turnover, creating more traffic for businesses, but the evening trade tends to be more leisurely, with people wanting to take their time dining or strolling about without worrying about plugging the meter or moving their cars.

Removing evening fees from parkades should also attract people to the downtown and will keep them there longer.

Parkades have a reputation as dark, dirty places, but the city has worked to make them more safe and inviting. More people using the parkades will help make them safer.

Staff recommendations include revenue estimates, lost and gained, for each proposal, but as Mayor Dean Fortin points out, the focus on evening parking in the downtown should be about making it safer and not just about city finances.

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Article rank 27 Mar 2014 Times Colonist KATIE DeROSA and BILL CLEVERLEY  
kderosa@timescolonist.com bcleverley@timescolonist.com  
Times Colonist

# Parkade-theft calls down dramatically

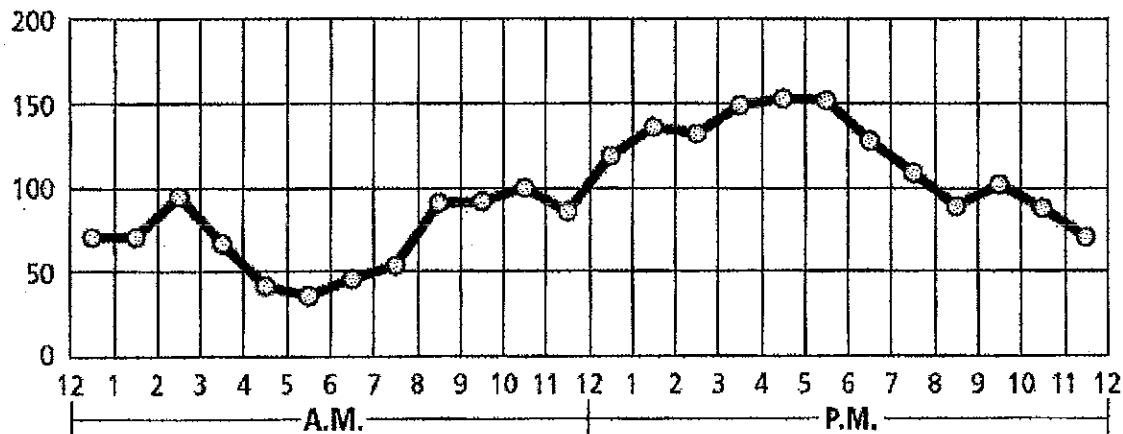
City and police take steps to improve feeling of safety

Theft and loitering generate the top police calls in Victoria's downtown parkades — but incidents are on a steep decline.

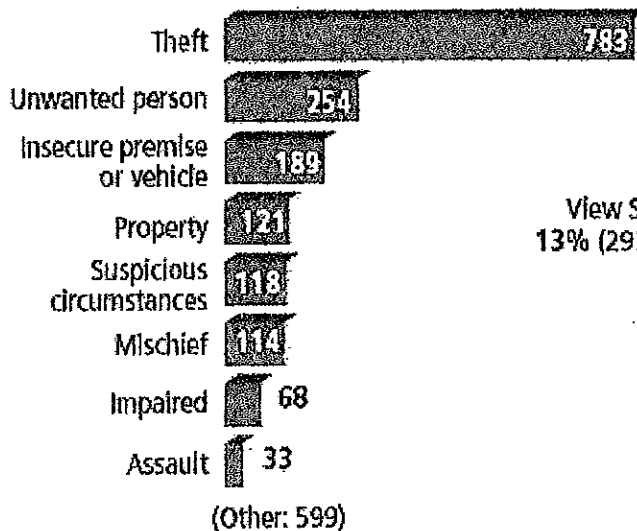
## POLICE CALLS TO DOWNTOWN PARKADES

2007 to 2013

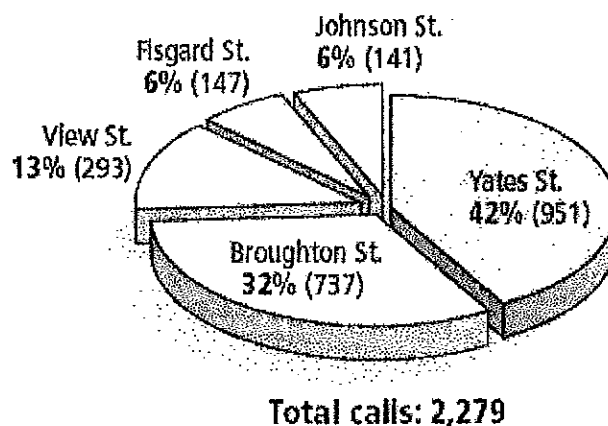
### BY TIME OF DAY



### BY TYPE OF CALL



### BY PARKADE



Total calls: 2,279

In 2007, just as the City of Victoria was beginning to tackle major safety issues in the city's five parkades, there were 241 theft-related calls to police. That dropped to 34 last year. Calls about an unwanted person numbered 93 in 2007 and just 22 in 2013.

Assaults in parkades are a rare occurrence, peaking at eight incidents in 2010. Three assaults were reported last year.

Many people who spoke to the Times Colonist about their reluctance to use parkades did not cite specific incidents of violence or break-ins, but rather the feeling that they're less safe because of dark corners and limited visibility from the street.

Victoria police said they have been working with the City of Victoria over the past six years to reduce crime and improve the feeling of safety in downtown parkades through environmental design consultations. Initiatives have included better lighting, around-the-clock security and the threat of bait cars to deter thieves.

"The nice thing about what we're doing here is it's not just lip service," said Victoria police spokesman Const. Mike Russell. "There are actually functional, credible things we're doing in the parkades."

In 2008, the department received extra funding for more beat and bike officers to focus on the downtown core.

The bait-car program was introduced in parkades the next year, sending "a chill through the community of thieves, we're hoping," Russell said.

The city has spent \$5 million in recent years on fresh paint, blocking off areas where people tend to congregate and having stairwells cleaned daily. The city will also start advertising a new service that has security guards escort people to their cars.

Greg Jenion, who teaches crime prevention, crime mapping and community safety at Kwantlen Polytechnic University in Surrey, said there are myriad variables that come into play when looking at safety of public places like parkades.

"There is enormous variety that can happen depending on what spatial location you're dealing with and some of the unique mechanisms you're dealing with in that car park," he said. "Does it have good lighting? Does it have [video surveillance]? Does it have a local security presence? Is it access-controlled? How is the visibility? The list goes on and on."

Statistics Canada data from 2008 show that public spaces such as parks or parking lots have nowhere near the level of crime as commercial establishments or private residences.

"When it comes to the outdoor public space, like parking lots, only 14 per cent of all the crimes were in an outdoor public space," Jenion said.

"So in terms of location, it isn't any more risk, necessarily, than other places that are around."

The parkade with the most calls to police was the Yates Street location near Bastion Square. It had 55 calls for service last year, a dramatic drop from 2007 when there were 250 police calls.

The Broughton Street parkade saw 180 police calls in 2007, which dropped to 67 calls in 2013.

It's worth noting that both violent crime and property crime in Canada have been on a downward trend in the last decade.

The majority of police incidents — 36 per cent — happen in the afternoon, with a peak between 4 and 6 p.m. About a quarter of the calls come in the evening, 17 per cent happen overnight and 20 per cent happen in the morning.

Russell said the peak in the afternoon could be because that's when parkades are busiest, with people shopping or running errands downtown.

Jenion said it's incumbent on officials who are claiming an area is safe to make sure it actually is.

"When you address the perception of fear, you better be dang sure that the crime is low. If you don't get it right, you actually could make things worse," he said.

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Article rank 28 Mar 2014 Times Colonist BILL CLEVERLEY bcleverley@timescolonist.com Times Colonist

# Evening pay parking off limits — for now

Victoria city staff to examine issue more closely; other proposals being sent to public for feedback

Evening pay parking on city streets is probably in Victoria's future, but the time is not yet right for the change, city councillors agreed Thursday.

"When you look at other cities, I think we're going to get there, but I don't think this is the time," said Coun. Charlayne Thornton-Joe, adding there needs to be more incentives — not fewer — for people to come downtown.

The circumstances will change as more and more people move into the downtown, she said.

Most other councillors agreed.

Coun. Ben Isitt argued in favour of introducing paid evening parking in the downtown zone, saying it was "more sound from a policy viewpoint."

City director of engineering Dwayne Kalynchuk said staff want to undertake more monitoring of evening and Sunday parking to "get a better handle" on the situation.

With the hope of increasing street-parking turnover, city staff had proposed boosting some daytime meter rates and extending pay parking into the evening, charging \$1 an hour between 6 and 9 p.m., and making parkades free for the first hour and in the evenings.

But after hearing from business representatives, they backed off. A revised plan reviewed by councillors Thursday still proposes free parking in parkades for the first hour and after 6 p.m.

The proposal also includes raising metered street parking rates to \$3 an hour from \$2.50 in areas within a three-minute walk of a parkade.

"The whole intent is to increase the availability of on-street parking. So by providing the first hour free in the parkades, we're trying to get people to make that decision and that choice," Kalynchuk said.

Best practices would suggest a goal of 85 per cent or less parking occupancy on any block at any given time.

"What that shows is there is turnover available," he said. "A rule of thumb is on every block there should be at least one space available."

City staff recommend developing "a proactive communications and customer-service program" on various aspects of parking downtown, including improved safety in parkades.

Plans call for a variety of improvements, such as a review of the contract with the Corps of Commissionaires, development of a payby-cellphone app, a review of parking office operations, with an eye to improving customer relations, expanding payment options in parkades, and improved signs and mapping.

Other key recommendations to now go to the public for feedback include: • Variable hourly rates (from \$1.50 to \$3 an hour) for street parking with time limits ranging from 90 minutes to all day. • Free parking in parkades after 6 p.m. Monday through Friday. • Eliminating about 200 street parking permits issued to Greater Victoria elected officials. • Making the first hour free in all city parkades. • Streamlining and reducing parking rates in parkades. • Moving monthly, longterm parking to higher floors of parkades.

# City puts boots to evening pay parking

Daniel Palmer  
*News staff*

City of Victoria staff are reversing a recommendation to charge for evening on-street parking after pushback from downtown stakeholders.

As part of an attempt to increase evening use of city parkades, staff had initially suggested charging for on-street parking between 6 and 9 p.m. while making parkades free after 6 p.m. Parkades are currently \$2 for evening parking.

But concerns voiced from the Downtown Victoria Business Association, Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Victoria convinced city hall to nix the proposal.

Council discussed the report at a committee meeting after the *News*' deadline.

*dpalmer@vicnews.com*

Vic News

Mar 28, 2014

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Article rank 29 Mar 2014 Times Colonist

# Use one flat rate for downtown parking

Re: "Victoria retreats from idea of paid parking at nights," March 25.

What are Victoria city staff thinking with their proposed parking rates? While it's welcome news they have backed away from extending pay parking in the evenings, the proposed day rate changes are nothing short of a head-scratching mystery.

It's doubtful that these multi-layered rates will motivate anyone into using the parkades. If anything, it will have the opposite effect by pushing people further away from the downtown core. One only has to take a trip along Tyee Road to see vehicle after vehicle parked one after the other. And pity the poor unsuspecting tourist who gets caught up in this proposed quagmire.

It seems to me that a single flat hourly rate, no matter where one parks within the downtown core, is a heck of a lot better than these pie-in-the-sky rates. Shirley Waldon Victoria

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Article rank 30 Mar 2014 Times Colonist

# No such thing as free parking

Re: "Free parking is a positive," editorial, March 27.

There is no such thing as free parking. Everyone pays to park their cars — even at home.

Because one does not reach into their pockets each time at grocery stores and malls, parking is not free. These businesses buy land for car parks. They pay property tax, liability insurance and maintenance for these car parks. At places like Uptown Centre, parking spaces can cost up to \$40,000 to build. Street parking on public land incurs costs.

The costs are pushed along to the public through increased prices and higher taxes. We all pay, and we are paying excessively. Parking is anything but free.

Once we all realize and recognize that we are always paying for parking, we will finally relax and will no longer waste time arguing about parking charges and trying to chase the impossible dream called free parking. Robert Townsend Victoria

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# TIMES COLONIST

## Victoria wants to know your thoughts on parking plans

Times Colonist  
April 11, 2014 09:37 PM



Changes are being proposed in an effort to get more drivers using parkades. Photograph By LYLE STAFFORD, Times Colonist

Victoria wants to know what you think of proposed changes to parking downtown.

Residents are invited to complete an online survey by May 2 or to attend an open house on April 25 from 8 to 9:30 a.m. in the city hall antechamber, 1 Centennial Square.

The city's parking strategy hopes to free up more street parking by encouraging people to use parkades.

Some proposed incentives include offering the first hour free, providing free evening parking Monday to Saturday in all city parkades, and reducing and standardizing parkade rates.

Proposals also includes raising metered street parking rates to \$3 an hour from \$2.50 in areas within a three-minute walk of a parkade while reducing rates in less central areas.

Key recommendations include:

- Variable hourly rates (from \$1.50 to \$3 an hour) for street parking with time limits ranging from 90 minutes to all day.
- Free parking in parkades after 6 p.m. Monday through Friday.
- Eliminating about 200 street parking permits issued to Greater Victoria elected officials.
- Making the first hour free in all city parkades.
- Streamlining and reducing parking rates in parkades.
- Moving monthly, long-term parking to higher floors of parkades.

Other recommendations focus on areas such as new training for all city parking staff and commissionaires, and improved signage and parking information online, on-street and in parkades.

For more information and the online survey, go to the **city's website (<http://www.victoria.ca/EN/main/departments/engineering/parking/parking-services-review.html>)**. Print surveys will also be available at Victoria City Hall and at the Crystal Pool and Fitness Centre.

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Article rank | 12 Apr 2014 | Times Colonist | Times Colonist

# What are your thoughts on parking plan? 2

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The online survey can be found through the city's website at [victoria.ca](http://victoria.ca). Print surveys will also be available at Victoria City Hall and at the Crystal Pool and Fitness Centre.

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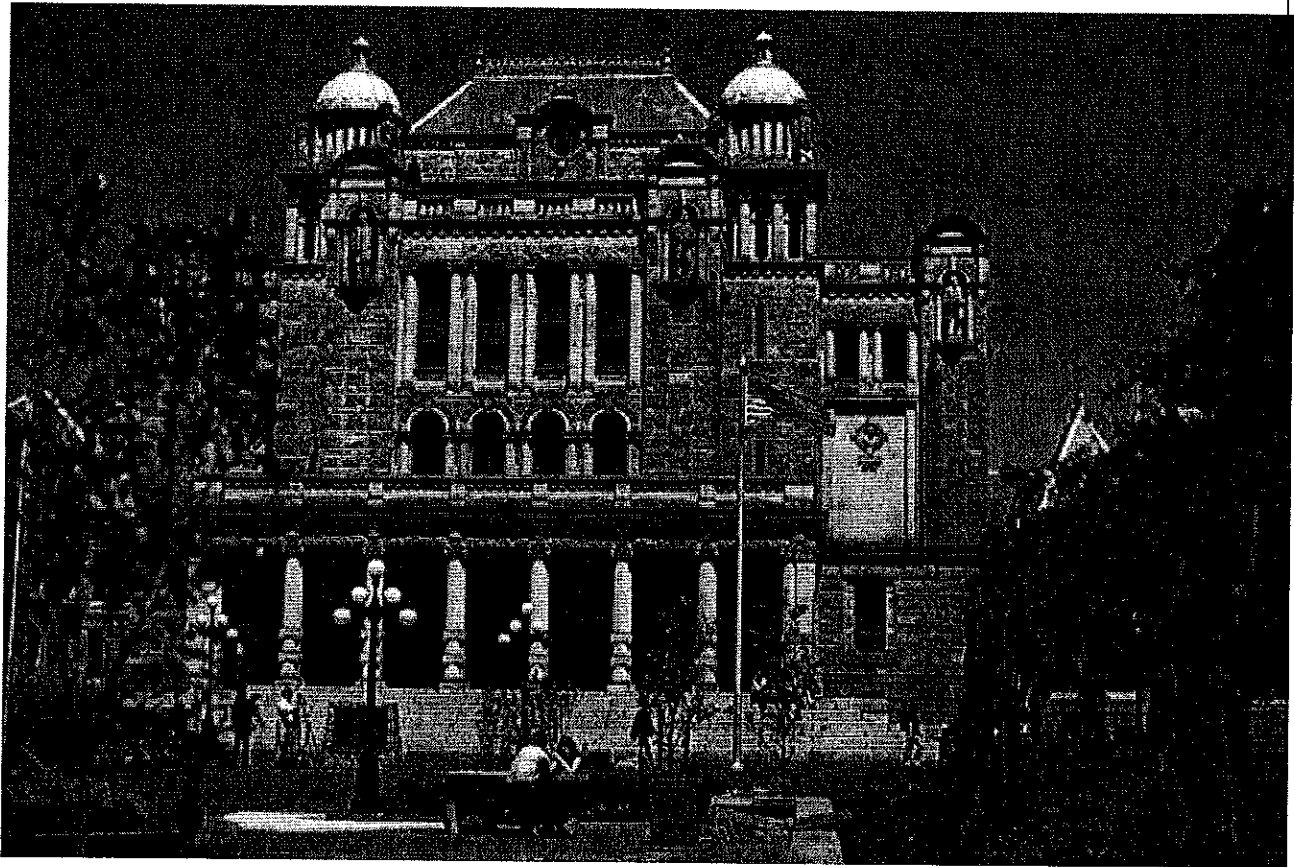
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City of Victoria  
April 11, 2014 3:20 pm

## City of Victoria asks for public input on parking changes

By Peter Meiszner  
Global News



The B.C. Legislative building is shown in Victoria, July 2, 2013. THE CANADIAN PRESS/Chad Hipolito

The City of Victoria is asking for the public's help to improve its parking services.

Victoria recently reviewed parking and came up with several changes the city says will make it easier for motorists to park downtown.

The recommended changes include shifting drivers from on-street parking spaces to city parkades and reducing and standardizing parkade rates.

Victoria is asking people to take an online survey to provide feedback on the proposed improvements.

*Douglas Magazine*  
*April 14/14*

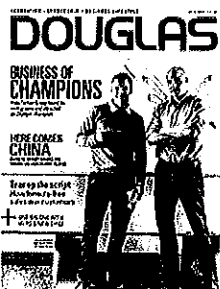
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#### REGIONAL NEWS

### Tell The City of Victoria How to Improve Parking Downtown

APR 14, 2014

(News Release) VICTORIA — The City of Victoria recently reviewed its parking services to identify ways to make it easier to park downtown and improve customer service.

The community is invited to learn more and provide feedback on the recommended improvements to downtown parking and to share their thoughts and experiences on parking in Victoria by completing an online survey by May 2.

A drop-in open house will be held on Friday, April 25 from 8 a.m. – 9:30 a.m. at the City Hall Antechamber to provide the public an opportunity to view displays and speak with staff about the proposed improvements.

The City's review of downtown parking highlights that the demand for on-street parking exceeds available capacity, while there is space within the City's five parkades. Recommendations focus on shifting motorists from higher-demand, on-street parking spaces to available spots in City parkades. Some incentives include offering the first hour free and free evening parking Monday to Saturday in all City parkades.

Reducing and standardizing parkade rates is recommended to improve consistency and ease of understanding. The hourly parkade rate of \$2.25 would be reduced to \$2/hour and charged in 15 minute-increments. Daily maximums would be \$12 at all City parkades except at Bastion Square Parkade, which would have a higher daily rate of \$14 due to higher demand. Moving monthly, long-term parkers to higher floors in City parkades to free up space on lower floors for those who park for less than three-hours is also proposed.

Providing variable on-street parking rates from \$1.50 to \$3 an hour with time limits ranging from 90 minutes to all day depending on the area, is one way to provide motorists with more flexibility and choice when parking downtown. Higher demand on-street parking spaces within a three-minute walk of a City parkade would be set at the highest rate.

Other recommendations focus on customer service, such as new training for all City parking staff and contracted enforcement commissionaires, and improved way-finding signage and parking information online, on-street and in parkades.

All feedback will be compiled and summarized in a report to City Council for consideration in May. For more information and to participate in the online survey, visit: [www.victoria.ca](http://www.victoria.ca)

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