

Dear Mayor and Council:

I have reviewed the report going to the Committee of the Whole on June 8, 2017 and am very disappointed that staff are recommending against addressing the concerns that the lower Fort St businesses have raised regarding the loss of parking stalls in the 600 block of Fort St.

The staff report advises against the additional infrastructure costs of \$500,000 to accommodate businesses' requests for preservation of 8 parking spots on the North side of 600-block of Fort St. Yet it is silent to the fact that each parking spot could result in \$15,000 in parking revenue to the city and help to maintain revenue for individual businesses in the area (otherwise those accessing goods and services are forced to go to multi-modal transportation friendly business districts). Please see the sections below:

'As reported to Council in December 2016, there is an option to spend additional funds to accommodate parking on the North side of the 600 Block of Fort by modifying the sidewalk and relocating assets, in order to increase the curb-to-curb pavement. This would create a total of 8 new on-street parking stalls on the north side and 1 taxi zone. The cost of this option is estimated at near \$500,000 or approximately \$60,000 per stall. This option alleviates some of the parking pressures in the vicinity of the Bay Centre and 600 block businesses, which are still served by parking on the south side, and nearby. Due to the significant costs of this portion of work, and the removal of pedestrian amenity in this busy foot-traffic location, staff consider this option to be unaffordable and a departure from the priorities outlined in the OCP. Therefore, this option has not been included in the "complete streets" design, but is presented for Council's consideration.'

I think its odd that in the same report, in a section discussing the 700 block of Fort St, the report clearly states the impact of the loss of parking revenue.

Existing Mid-Block Crosswalk in the 700 Block: Staff reviewed the option of diverting the bike lanes around the existing bulb out. Although possible, there would be a loss of an additional 2 on-street parking stalls. The value of these parking stalls is approximately \$15,000 each per year, or a total of \$30,000 per year. The cost savings from diverting bikes around the bulb is approximately \$60,000, so the payback is only 2 years, plus the benefit of the additional on-street parking. Therefore, the current design does not support a diversion of the bike lanes around the existing bulb out.

According to your own report, the 600-block of Fort represents the area with the most parking demand, yet the proposal is sacrificing parking revenue of 8 stalls @ \$15,000 each which is \$120,000 per year. Another way to look at it would be that the breakeven for the additional infrastructure cost is less than 5 years with parking revenues being \$600,000 in that time. After 10 years, the 8 spots provide \$1.2 million parking revenue, which almost pays for the bike lanes themselves and in 15 years pays for the costs of the bike lane and additional infrastructure cost. Would that not be a fairer way to represent the impact of decision in the report? With the addition of the 8 stalls on the north side of the 600-block Fort Street, staff could then say in the report, that businesses may become more supportive of the plan and attempts will have been made to address their concerns.

Again, I question why the cost of parking revenue impacts is mentioned in the earlier section of the report yet is specifically silent in the section about the parking impact for the 600 block of Fort St except to say that it is 'unaffordable'.

I must point out, that an issue raised at every engagement session with 600-block Fort St businesses was the concern that the Yarrow Building represents a busy and significant health services centre.

Accessibility to the services in the building is an issue. While staff might dismiss the costs of 8 stalls in the 600-block, it puts in place challenges for someone with limited mobility issues attempting to access services at the Yarrow Building. I would hope it wasn't deliberately left out of your evaluation.

I would suggest that the \$500,000 infrastructure modification can be justified as a cost to ensure ease of access for those with mobility challenges to these medical services without even needing to contemplate the additional revenue gained by the 8 spots. The goods and services downtown should be accessible for those of all ages and abilities, regardless of how they arrive downtown, be it bike, bus or car.

I just don't see the logic nor the explanation on why these points raised above are absent from report unless there is a deliberate attempt to provide incomplete information to Council Member via a biased report. I still feel the original study /proposal presented to Council misrepresented the fact the "Businesses on Fort St are supportive of the bike lanes. Efforts by a limited number of business owner to consult with Fort St businesses resulted in 99% feeling that they were not even engaged. Our consultation with business owners can be summarized as most businesses have serious concerns with a significant majority being in outright opposition to the bike lanes.

My wife and I participated in the engagement workshop held by the City in February of this year. A simple premise of engagement is to ensure that all input received is fairly reflected to the decision makers. This report fails to do that. I am hoping that Council members consider the comments above.

Sincerely
Rob Simon
Paul Mara Jewellers