

THE CORPORATION OF THE  
**CITY OF WHITE ROCK**  
CORPORATE REPORT



**DATE:** May 15, 2023

**TO:** Mayor and Council

**FROM:** Anne Berry, Director, Planning and Development Services

**SUBJECT:** Waterfront Business Employee Parking Designation

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**RECOMMENDATIONS**

THAT Council:

1. Receive for information the corporate reported dated May 15, 2023, from the Director of Planning and Development Services, titled "Waterfront Business Employee Parking Designation" and
  2. Direct staff to proceed with the status quo management of the 4<sup>th</sup> level of the West Beach Parkade.
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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

At its regular meeting held January 30, 2023, Council passed a motion directing staff to investigate the "feasibility of designating the top floor of the parkade as a waterfront business employee only parking location, to be used exclusively by waterfront business employees paying for a special business employee parking pass."

Currently there are sixty (60) stalls available for businesses by purchasing a reserve stall at the Montecito Parkade across the street. Only six (6) stalls are being utilized by waterfront businesses.

**PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION**

<b>Motion # &amp; Meeting Date</b>	<b>Motion Details</b>
2023-043 January 30, 2023	<i>THAT Council request staff to provide a corporate report on the feasibility of designating the top floor of the parkade as a waterfront business employee only parking location, to be used exclusively by waterfront business employees paying for a special business employee parking pass.</i>

2022-100 March 28 2022	<i>THAT Council Endorse Option 1: Schedule opening of the 4th level gate at the start of the tourist season from Victoria Day long weekend in May to the Labour Day long weekend in September and the day before and following a long weekend throughout the year and during stretches of good weather.</i>
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## **INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND**

The West Beach Parkade (“parkade”) was opened for public use in May of 2019. Subsequently, the City received nuisance complaints from residents who live adjacent to the property related to the public use of the open air 4<sup>th</sup> level. In response, Council directed staff to restrict access to the 4<sup>th</sup> level during periods of low parking demand and a manually operated gate was installed in 2021. To further limit the impact on area residents the 4<sup>th</sup> level lights are turned off by default and turn on as necessary via motion detector.

On March 28, 2022, Council endorsed a staff recommendation to schedule opening of the 4th level gate at the start of the tourist season from Victoria Day long weekend in May to the Labour Day long weekend in September and the day before and following a long weekend throughout the year and during stretches of good weather.

The ground level main gate operates automatically, opening at 8:00 a.m. and closing shortly after midnight to ensure there is no overnight activity in the parkade.

Paid parking serves as a tool to encourage turnover, generate revenue to pay the BNSF Railway’s annual lease, to offset taxes, and to decrease greenhouse emissions. Some local business owners consider it a financial hardship for them and their staff to pay the City’s parking fees and have requested that Council approve an additional discounted parking rate exclusive to waterfront employees. There are currently five discounted parking options available subject to eligibility criteria being met:

1. An all-day rate is offered to the public at the Montecito and West Beach Parkades. The \$16 summer season all day fee equates to 3.75 hours of parking if it were purchased at the hourly rate, however an all-day purchase will cover as much as 14 hours of paid parking between 10:00 a.m. and midnight. The all day rate is reduced to \$8 in the winter season.
2. Waterfront businesses can lease designated reserved parking stalls upon request in the Montecito Parkade for their staff’s use which is right across the Parkade and closer to waterfront business. The cost is \$150/month which comes with 1 blue non-transferrable decal. Additional blue decals can be purchased for \$31 annually so that one stall can be used at different times by any number of vehicles/staff so as to make efficient use of a single leased stall. Businesses can lease multiple stalls. There are no designated reserved stalls and no daily rate options in East Beach.

The \$1800 annual cost per reserved stall provides the City with significantly less revenue than the average revenue earned per regular waterfront stall which in 2022 was \$3,800\*. (\* in West Beach between the Pier lot and Oxford Street, including the two parkades).

In 2022, waterfront businesses leased a total of only six 6 reserved stalls from the City. Though significantly discounted from the hourly or all day rates, there seems to be a lack of demand by employers for this most discounted option. **Currently there are 60 stalls available for leasing for businesses by purchasing a reserved stall.**

To qualify for leasing a reserved stall a business owner must provide a business license. This enables staff to ensure that only those who qualify may participate. The blue decal/reserved

parking stall is specifically for waterfront business owners and their employees. Very few business owners pursue leasing reserved stalls. This may be due to the designated area (the Montecito) being considered too far away from some businesses (the furthest West Beach business is a 5-minute walk) or being perceived as cost prohibitive though it's cost averages \$5/day over a 12 month period and guarantees parking.

3. White Rock residents may purchase an annual pay parking decal for \$50. The decal covers four (4) free hours of parking per day.
4. One transferrable green merchant decal is available for \$369 to each waterfront business per year which allows any one vehicle to park in designated areas for an entire day without having to make a payment.
5. Winter season parking rates are reduced.

One recommendation per Urban Systems City Wide Parking Strategy, is that the City consider changing to a pay-by-plate format of enforcement at the waterfront. By this method, digital permits could be linked to license plates and is shown to be an effective way of managing permit parking programs. In the future, license plate recognition technology can be implemented to increase enforcement efficiency. As it would be difficult to screen individuals for eligibility, business owners would have to submit a business license in order to qualify for permits and the City would have to have faith that only local staff would be granted this privilege.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Offering a greater parking rate discount to local staff could result in a decrease in parking revenue collected by the City.

Without a means of verifying that someone works for a local business, there is potential for fraudulent system work arounds and further loss of revenue if non eligible people obtain the employee discount.

### **COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

Any parking activity on the 4<sup>th</sup> level of the parkade has the potential to cause some level of noise and light disturbances to area residents, just as when drivers park in the waterfront lots across from a residential building on Marine Drive or on Buena Vista Avenue at City Hall, etc. Designating the 4<sup>th</sup> level as waterfront business employee parking could potentially cause more nuisances than what currently occurs as the traffic and use would likely increase and be more consistent than what currently occurs.

As some staff do not finish their shifts until 1:00 a.m. or later, it would be necessary for the parkade to remain open well past midnight, thus creating more opportunities for noise and light nuisances.

### **INTERDEPARTMENTAL INVOLVEMENT/IMPLICATIONS**

Possible RCMP involvement in responding to potential complaints in early morning hours should 4<sup>th</sup> level be kept open later than midnight.

Increased administration and enforcement would be required should another discounted option be made available on the 4<sup>th</sup> level.

## **CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

Paid parking is a tool that can help the City achieve a reduction in greenhouse emissions. Discounted parking rates can encourage driving, and as a result increase traffic congestion and greenhouse emissions. If parking is priced too low people tend not to consider alternative/cheaper/greener options such as car-pooling, public transit, cycling, walking, etc.

## **ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES**

To help achieve Councils objective of fostering a business friendly environment, the City offers reduced parking rate options such as the green merchant decal and the blue decal/reserved parking stall which are exclusive to waterfront businesses. The all day rate provides a discount for those local staff who park for longer than four (4) hours. Though not related directly to economic development, these options serve to provide a discount in parking costs for the employer and their staff should a business owner choose to take part in these programs. Pricing these options correctly can provide incentive for people to consider greener alternatives such as public transit and carpooling which can help achieve Councils objective of increasing patronage of the waterfront district by helping to reduce the impact of staff parking on the overall parking inventory as well as reducing traffic congestion, thereby improving the visitor experience by increasing the likelihood of their finding an available parking space.

## **OPTIONS / RISKS / ALTERNATIVES**

The following options are available for Council's consideration:

1. Status Quo. Continue to offer previously listed discounted options 1-5 as a means to offer financial relief and convenience to businesses and their staff. In the case of reserved parking stalls and merchant decals the onus is on the business owner to purchase the blue and green decals for their staffs use. The parkade will remain closed between midnight and 8:00 a.m. and the 4<sup>th</sup> level would remain closed during the off season unless capacity is needed.
2. Open the 4<sup>th</sup> level of the parkade to waterfront business employee parking year round. Automating the gate is cost prohibitive so enforcement would be by random patrols to inspect for blue reserved decals displayed on dashboards. Staff's opinion is that signage alone would not be sufficient in enforcing the "staff only" restriction. Depending on the demand for these stalls, activity on the 4<sup>th</sup> level could increase substantially if staff who park there don't leave until early morning hours i.e. 1:00 a.m. To meet the needs of some waterfront employees the parkade hours of operation would have to be extended. This has the potential to cause an increase in noise and light nuisances as perceived by area residents.

If a specific parking discount is made available to local staff, it would be difficult to screen for eligibility. A business license provided by the owner currently serves that purpose in order for them to obtain a reserved stall or a merchant decal.

3. Provide reserved parking stalls for businesses in the ten (10) stall Balsam Street parking lot to support staff parking needs for East Beach businesses and their staff. See Appendix A (Note: an all-day rate is offered at the SFN public lot.)
4. Provide an all-day rate in the East Beach Grand Chief Bernard Robert Charles Memorial Plaza parking lot. See Appendix A. This could result in a decrease of parking revenue as well as less parking turnover.
5. Allow business owners to register their staffs license plates so that those plates are eligible for a discounted rate option. This limits the City's ability to screen for eligibility, and could enable local staff to use the discount for non-work related purposes and could negatively

impact revenues. This would be compatible with license plate recognition enforcement which the City has yet to adopt.

6. Permanently close the 4<sup>th</sup> level of the parkade. This would have financial implications and would require an assessment of future alternative uses for the 4<sup>th</sup> level.

## **CONCLUSION**

Paid parking serves as a tool to encourage parking turnover for the benefit of local businesses by providing a greater likelihood of customers finding an available stall. It also encourages greener alternatives to driving. The cheaper parking is, the more likely people are to drive.

The City offers multiple discounted parking options, some of which are underutilized though they are designed for the benefit of local waterfront businesses and their staff.

As it would be difficult for City staff to verify that someone is a waterfront business employee, the business license is the best means to determine eligibility for a green or blue decal and leased reserved parking stall.

Based on this, staff do not recommend any changes to the current public access to the 4<sup>th</sup> level of the Parkade. Staff recommend considering options 3 and 4 provided a survey performed by the White Rock BIA shows a demand for reserved and/or all-day parking by East Beach businesses based on current seasonal rates.

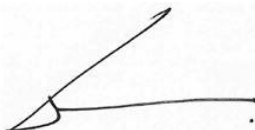
Respectfully submitted,



Anne Berry  
Director, Planning and Development Services

## **\Comments from the Chief Administrative Officer**

Council should consider utilization of the Parkade and noise as two separate issues. It would be very challenging to restrict access to the Parkade to unintended users. If the goal is to reduce noise, Council should consider security services to monitor the Parkade during problematic hours and peak season. The cost of this service could be funded by increases in parking fees at the Parkade. The cost to provide security services would be approximately \$30/hour.



Guillermo Ferrero  
Chief Administrative Officer

## APPENDIX A

### **Waterfront Business Employee Parking Designation, East Beach Map of Recommended All Day and Reserved Parking Locations**

