

THE CORPORATION OF THE
CITY OF WHITE ROCK
CORPORATE REPORT



DATE: March 8, 2021

TO: Mayor and Council

FROM: Jim Gordon, P.Eng., Director, Engineering & Municipal Operations

SUBJECT: West Beach Parkade Communication Strategy

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council direct Staff to proceed with the communications plan to promote the Parkade as outlined in this report.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The West Beach Parkade (“Parkade”) opened in 2019. Although there is much demand for parking along Marine Drive during the high season, the Parkade has not received the same demand, acting mainly as an overflow when parking closer to the beach is full.

Staff has prepared signage options and a communication strategy for Council’s consideration. After a review of the options, the communication strategy is the recommended option because it raises awareness of the Parkade and seeks public input at a lesser cost.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION

Motion # & Meeting Date	Motion Details
September 28, 2020 2020-G\L-072	THAT the Governance and Legislation Committee: 1. Requests staff to bring forward a corporate report to address more permanent and larger signage for the City Parkade, and information on a communication strategy to help promote the parkade that would be ready for the next high season.

INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

The four-level Parkade opened in May 2019 at the northeast corner of Victoria Avenue and Vidal Street. It is open from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 a.m. (midnight) with pay parking starting at 10:00 a.m. when in effect. The Parkade provides the following amenities:

- 183 regular parking spaces;
- seven parking spaces electric vehicles charging stations;
- five accessible parking spaces; and
- bicycle racks.

Although the Parkade has increased parking capacity along the waterfront and improved ease of parking, it has not seen the same demand as the Marine Drive parking lots given that it is a less

desirable location to park. The daily Parkade rate is only of value for those parking for four (4) hours or more. The hourly rate in the Parkade is the same as the locations near Marine Drive and more expensive than the “Value” lots, west of Oxford Street. There is increased occupancy at the Parkade only when waterfront parking has reached capacity.

The Parkade had an average daily utilization of approximately 5% in the winter months, and 10% in the summer months in 2019. While rates were slightly lowered in 2020, the revenue was 41% less than 2019 for the three-month period of July 1 to September 31. During weekends of the summer season, the utilization rate typically reached 20% and has gone as high as 69% on July 1, 2019 and 58% on August 4 of 2019.

One hypothesis is that visitors to the Promenade may be unaware of the Parkade’s location because the Parkade is not located on Marine Drive; therefore, in 2019, staff installed additional wayfinding signs for the Parkade. There are currently 13 signs for the Parkade; these are shown in Appendix A.

Parking demand for the Parkade has not increased in 2020, and at the September 28, 2020 Governance and Legislation Committee meeting, the Committee recommended to Council to review a signage and communication strategy to help promote the Parkade.

Staff reviewed the existing condition and identified several options to promote the Parkade. These options are listed as follows:

1. Install universal Parkade signs and remove redundant signs.
2. Install one freestanding lit sign.
3. Install two temporary digital messaging boards.
4. Proceed with a comprehensive communication strategy.

Option 1 involves removing redundant signs and installing six (6) new universally recognized signs for parking (blue P) with directional arrows. New signs will follow road safety regulations that dictate the size and placement of signs; the proposed locations are shown in Appendix B’s sign plan. The cost of this option is estimated to be \$9,000.

Option 2 involves installing a freestanding lit sign at the south side of Marine Drive and Vidal Street. Electrical work will be necessary for this sign. An example of this type of sign is shown in Appendix C. This option is estimated to cost \$40,000 and will require archaeological permitting that could take six months or more.

Option 3 involves purchasing two temporary digital reader boards to promote the Parkade, shown in Appendix D. This option is estimated to cost \$50,000.

Option 4 involves website updates, and a survey to obtain public feedback on ways the City can increase Parkade patrons, and other public awareness activities (i.e.: price sensitivity investigation, social media, and signage improvements identified from the survey results). The details are presented in the “Communication and Community Engagement Implications” section of the report. The cost to promote the survey and Parkade on social media and through advertising is estimated to cost under \$2,000, including print and online advertising.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There is currently no funding allocated to any of the options brought forward in this report. Increased revenues from parking would only be realized if the total number of vehicles using parking at the waterfront were to increase.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Not applicable.

COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

Staff reviewed the current situation and prepared a communication strategy. The strategy includes website updates, a survey to determine what attributes would encourage more Parkade patrons, and a public awareness campaign.

Current Situation: Perception of the West Beach Promenade

There are eight (8) Google reviews of the West Beach Promenade online with an average of 4.3 stars. Explore White Rock, the City's tourism contractor, has posted information on its website at <https://explorewhiterock.com/park-it-here/> under the heading of "Park it Here."

To promote the West Beach Promenade as a parking destination, the City would need to:

- Attract interest and grow awareness;
- Share the positive attributes;
- Connect the Parkade with activities on Marine Drive; and
- Provide an additional link from the City's Website.

Getting started: Survey on Talk White Rock

To enhance awareness of, and use of, the West Beach Parkade, the City may want to ask people:

1. Are you aware of the Parkade?
2. What would persuade/encourage you to park there?
3. What is important to you when parking at White Rock's Waterfront?

Once staff know what would encourage people to park at the Parkade, staff could communicate those features as part of a communication plan. Possible results will include:

- price;
- convenience;
- proximity to the water;
- length of time to park;
- condition of parking; and
- feeling of safety.

Once staff know what would encourage someone to park at the Parkade, staff can use that messaging to inform residents and visitors. We would also integrate symbols – the blue P—into our advertising and promotion to create recognition for wayfinding. The awareness campaign could ask "Did you know...?" and could include:

- ads;
- social media;
- posters on Marine Drive;
- free parking days at Parkade (awareness); and
- round "P" wayfinding with arrows.

INTERDEPARTMENTAL INVOLVEMENT/IMPLICATIONS

The Director of Engineering and Municipal Operations, Director of Finance, Manager of Communications and Government Relations, and Manager of Parking have provided input in this report.

CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

Directing motorists to the Parkade through enhanced signage may result in fewer greenhouse gas emissions as vehicles will potentially spend less time circling through parking lots looking for available parking spaces, especially during high use periods.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Increasing Parkade patrons is consistent with Council's Strategic Priority for Economic Development and the Marine Drive Task Force's recommendations.

OPTIONS / RISKS / ALTERNATIVES

The communications plan is the lowest cost option. It enables the City to reach a variety of potential parking patrons and increases awareness of the Parkade through social media, print advertising, and media relations. The survey as part of the communication plan engages the public and any future changes to signage will be aligned with feedback from the public.

Staff reviewed the options and recommend that Council direct Staff to proceed with the communications plan to promote the Parkade.

The following alternative options are available for Council's consideration:

1. Universal Parkade Sign Installation and Redundant Sign Removal.
2. Freestanding Lit Sign.
3. Temporary Digital Messaging Boards.

An analysis of the alternative options is summarized below.

Table 1: Evaluation of alternative options

Option	Analysis	Cost
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cost• Previous signage improvements did not increase Parkade utilization	\$ 9,000
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cost and time required for design and construction• Requires ongoing maintenance• Increases operation costs (electrical)• Excavation may be needed in the roadway for electrical conduits and will require an archaeological permit.	\$40,000
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Highest cost option• Not attractive• Increases street clutter• May need to remove two parking stalls to site the temporary signs	\$50,000

CONCLUSION

To be effective, signs for the Parkade must help motorists understand where they need to go for additional parking. By raising awareness of the Parkade, more people are likely to choose to spend time along the Promenade when they know parking is available. This will also increase the use of City assets and generate parking revenues.

Staff recommend that Council support proceeding with the communication strategy because it increases awareness of the Parkade, engages the public about what features would encourage more Parkade patrons, and is the lowest cost option.

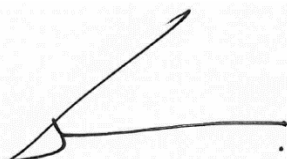
Respectfully submitted,

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Jim Gordon
Director, Engineering and Municipal Operations Department

Comments from the Chief Administrative Officer

I concur with the recommendation of this corporate report.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Guillermo Ferrero', written over a light gray rectangular background.

Guillermo Ferrero
Chief Administrative Officer

- Appendix A: Current Parkade Signage Map and Inventory
- Appendix B: New Sign Plan
- Appendix C: Freestanding Lit Sign
- Appendix D: Temporary Digital Messaging Boards