

TO:	CHAIR AND MEMBERS CIVIC WORKS COMMITTEE MEETING TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2015
FROM:	GEORGE KOTSIFAS, P.ENG. MANAGING DIRECTOR DEVELOPMENT AND COMPLIANCE SERVICES AND CHIEF BUILDING OFFICIAL and JOHN BRAAM, P.ENG. MANAGING DIRECTOR, ENVIRONMENTAL & ENGINEERING SERVICES AND CITY ENGINEER
SUBJECT:	FREE PARKING IN DECEMBER

RECOMMENDATION

That, on the recommendation of the Managing Director, Development and Compliance Services and the Managing Director, Environmental & Engineering Services and City Engineer;

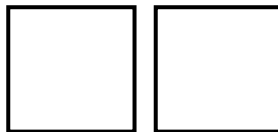
- a) That the removal of free parking in Downtown and Richmond Row in December **BE APPROVED** noting that the return of paid parking is supported by Downtown London;
- b) That parking meter revenues **BE INCLUDED** in the Parking Services operating budget; noting that the additional revenue will help mitigate loss of other revenues; and
- c) The Downtown London Proposal for funding of their new initiative **BE REFERRED** to the 2016 budget deliberations.

PREVIOUS REPORTS PERTINENT TO THIS MATTER
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1. November 26th, 2007, Environment and Transportation Committee - Item 4 "Parking Strategy Business Plan – 2008";
2. September 25th, 2008: Service Level Review Committee "Parking Business Plan"; and
3. September 28th, 2009: Environment and Transportation Committee - Item 5 "Parking Strategy Issues Update"
4. November 16th, 2009: Environment and Transportation Committee - Free Parking Initiatives

2015-19 STRATEGIC PLAN

The following report supports the Strategic Plan through the strategic focus areas of *Strengthening Our Community, Building a Sustainable City and Growing our Economy* by addressing the need for convenient short-term consumer/visitor parking which benefits businesses that rely on this parking.



BACKGROUND

On October 31st, 2007, a large watermain break forced the closure of the intersection of Dundas Street and Wellington Street for several weeks. Free parking, until the end of 2007 in the immediate downtown area, was implemented to assist businesses impacted by the road closure.

On November 24, 2008, the Environment and Transportation Committee (ETC) received a verbal presentation from J. MacDonald Manager MainStreet London and B. Usher, Downtown London Business Association (BIA) with respect to the City allowing 2-hour free parking during the month of December 2008. Civic Administration was asked to consider the feasibility of 2 hour free parking in the Downtown being an annual event.

In December 2008, free 2 hour parking was implemented in the Downtown BIA area only and administration was asked to report back on the feasibility of continuing the event.

In September 2009, Civic Administration reported back to the ETC on the 2 hour free parking impact and recommended discontinuing the 2 hour free parking in future years, however, the extension was passed by Council and at that time Old East Village was included to ensure continuity and avoid customer confusion and the free on-street parking has continued every December since that time in the Downtown London, Richmond Row and Old East Village areas.

Purpose

At the Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee meeting held on October 26, 2015, the Committee received an added communication to request delegation status by Janette MacDonald, Downtown London. The Committee resolved that:

“That the communication dated September 24, 2015, from J. MacDonald, CEO and General Manager, Downtown London, requesting the City of London to provide financial assistance for Downtown London's proposed recruitment initiative, through MainStreet London, in the amount of \$200,000 annually, for four years from 2015 to 2018, BE REFERRED to the Civic Administration for review and report back; it being noted that the requested amount is an amount equal to the revenue that the City currently forgoes by providing free daytime parking downtown during December each year; it being further noted that the funding would be in return for Downtown London waiving its request for free parking in December for the above-noted four years, thereby making the funding request revenue neutral for the City of London; it being noted that the Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee heard the attached presentation from J. MacDonald, CEO and General Manager, Downtown London, with respect to this matter.”

The purpose of on-street parking meters is to manage short-term parking by creating turnover of the parking space. Businesses in the vicinity benefit by creating available parking for their customers and guests. Customers also benefit from parking stall turnover; by ensuring the most convenient parking is not utilized by employees. Two-hour free parking may benefit Downtown businesses; however, it is evident that workers are also taking advantage of the free parking. This reduces the available parking for customers which may ultimately negatively impact the businesses. Parking services regularly receives calls from frustrated motorists who complain that there is less available parking during December than throughout the year.

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The 2-hour free parking also results in confusion from the public who often believe that they can park for free for 2 hours then pay for an additional 2 hours and park for 4 hours in total which is not permitted and receive a ticket.

Parking is a commodity and consumers pay for parking either at the meter or its cost is included in the price of the goods/services that are purchased. Free parking each December removes the cost from the consumer but places it with the tax payer City wide who must absorb the lost meter revenue. Further, in concurrence with Downtown London's presentation, it is acknowledged that it is no longer necessary to waive paid parking during December and we believe the original purpose to provide more parking for holiday customers is not being utilized accordingly. Parking meter staff spend several days at the end of November and the end of December installing the meter hoodies on the individual meters and program the master meters. By reinstating paid parking in December in these two areas staff resources would be better deployed maintaining meters and fulfilling other duties.

Free parking in the Old East BIA area is deemed to be still a positive initiative for this area. There is more private parking for business owners, workers and residents in this area and no high concentration of office buildings with thousands of workers using the free parking. Therefore, it is not recommended to change the provision of free parking to the Old East BIA area for this December.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

During December 2015, parking services will monitor the impact on revenue and will report back on its certainty. Subject to the evaluation of the proposal by Civic Administration, on-street parking meter revenue realized as a result of the removal of the downtown exemption will be contributed to the Parking Services Operating Budget.

CONCLUSION

The removal of the on-street parking meter exemption for the Downtown London and Richmond Row areas in the month of December be approved starting December 1, 2015 and the parking meter funds be allocated to the Parking Services Operating Budget; noting no change to the Old East area at this time (pink area in Appendix "A"). Civic Administration will report back in early 2016 with the revenue generated by return of paid parking in these two areas (blue and green areas in Appendix "A"). Further that the request for funding by Downtown London be referred to the 2016 budget process.

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Acknowledgement

This report was prepared by Annette Drost, Manager of Municipal Law Enforcement Services with assistance by Shane Maguire, Division Manager Roadway Lighting & Traffic Control and Ian Collins, Senior Financial Business Administrator.

RECOMMENDED BY:	REVIEWED AND CONCURRED BY:
ANNETTE DROST MANAGER, MUNICIPAL LAW ENFORCEMENT SERVICES - PARKING AND LICENSING DEVELOPMENT AND COMPLIANCE SERVICES	EDWARD SOLDO, P.ENG. DIRECTOR ROADS AND TRANSPORTATION
RECOMMENDED BY:	RECOMMENDED BY:
GEORGE KOTSIFAS, P. ENG. MANAGING DIRECTOR, DEVELOPMENT & COMPLIANCE SERVICES AND CHIEF BUILDING OFFICIAL	JOHN BRAAM, P.ENG. MANAGING DIRECTOR, ENVIRONMENTAL & ENGINEERING SERVICES AND CITY ENGINEER

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Appendix "A"