



Date: July 30, 2003

TO: Board Members - Parks and Recreation
FROM: General Manager - Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT: INCREASE IN BUS PARKING FEES IN 2003

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Board approve increases to bus parking fees in Stanley Park and Queen Elizabeth Park, as outlined in this report, effective January 1, 2003

BACKGROUND

In 1997, the Board approved the introduction of pay parking for tour buses and vans in Stanley Park and Queen Elizabeth Park.

The following bus services are specifically exempted from paying for parking:

- buses carrying students from day care, elementary schools, high schools and other equivalent educational institutions, for visits where the primary purpose is educational
- transit buses, shuttle type tour buses (e.g. Vancouver Trolley Co. & Gray Line's city tours) and AAA Horse & Carriage's bus.

Parking passes are purchased by both bus charter and bus tour companies. Depending on their individual contract arrangements, these operators can set their charter or tour pricing 4 - 18 months in advance or, in some cases, even further ahead. It is appropriate to consider the proposed rate increase in advance of 2003 fees and charges, so notice can be given now to allow the companies to incorporate any increases into their future pricing.

Bus Visits to Stanley Park and Queen Elizabeth Park

Based on daily and annual parking passes sold in 2001, and information provided by a number of the operators as to how frequently each annual bus pass was used, it is estimated that:

- there were approximately 29,000 bus trips into the parks in 2001 (visits to both parks in the same day count as one trip)
- about 60% of these trips were by large buses (25 seats and over)
- over 75% of the buses used annual passes
- over 80% of the bus trips took place in the peak months of May - September.

These numbers do not include buses which drove through the parks without stopping. Nor do they include buses which were exempted from paying, or simply did not purchase a daily parking pass at the pay stations in the parks or use an annual pass. No data is currently available on these buses.

Expenditure and Improvements

Over the past few years, the Board has incurred expenditure of over \$1.7 million on repairs, maintenance and improvements to Stanley Park's bus parking areas and roadways. The ongoing deterioration in the road surface on Park Drive will necessitate significant additional repairs in the near future. Heavy bus traffic has been, and continues to be, a major contributor to this situation.

In 2001, changes were made to improve the bus parking facilities in Stanley Park. The lot at the Brockton Totem Poles was resurfaced and the bus parking reconfigured. At Prospect Point, the sidewalks were widened in the bus parking area, to allow easier access for passengers.

DISCUSSION

Bus Parking Rates and Proposed Increases

Both daily and annual parking passes are available. Daily passes are purchased at pay stations in the parks on arrival and one daily pass allows parking in both parks on the same day. Annual passes are purchased by the companies in advance and are transferrable between the company's buses.

The actual parking rate depends on the seating capacity of the bus. Currently, the price of a daily pass ranges from \$8 to \$25 and an annual pass costs from \$350 to \$700.

When bus pay parking started up in 1997, tour vans with 11 seats and under paid the same rates as 12 - 24 seat buses. In 2000, in response to concerns expressed by tour van operators, and in recognition of their smaller passenger load, a reduced rate was introduced for these vehicles.

The last increase in the daily bus parking rates was in 1999. The proposed new rates for 2003 are increases of 20 - 25% over the current rates. This represents an average annual increase of 7%.

Previous, current and proposed bus parking rates are as follows:

	<u>1997 & 1998</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000, 2001 & 2002</u>	<u>2003 proposed</u>	<u>% increase in 2003</u>
Daily Fee					
van - 11 seats & under	\$10	\$12	\$8	\$10	25%
bus - 12 - 24 seats	\$10	\$12	\$12	\$15	25%
bus - 25 seats & over	\$20	\$25	\$25	\$30	20%
Annual Pass					
van - 11 seats & under	\$450	\$450	\$350	\$425	21%
bus - 12 - 24 seats	\$450	\$450	\$500	\$600	20%
bus - 25 seats & over	\$600	\$600	\$700	\$850	21%

In comparison, the cost to park a car for two hours in Stanley Park in the summer has increased from \$2 to \$3 since 1997, an average annual increase of 10%.

Notification to Bus Companies

A letter regarding this proposed increase in bus parking rates was sent in February to 28 bus and tour companies, requesting their comments. None were received.

Bus Parking Revenue

In 2001, net bus parking revenue to the Board was \$206,000. If bus traffic remains at 2001 levels and the same number of annual passes are purchased, the proposed increase in parking charges should result in net revenue in 2003 of approximately \$250,000, an increase of \$44,000 over the current level.

SUMMARY

The proposed increases in bus parking charges will raise the cost of an annual pass by approximately 20% and the daily fee by 20 - 25%. These increases are considered reasonable, given recent improvements to bus parking facilities in Stanley Park and the time which has passed since the last bus parking rate change.

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