



Report Date: June 4, 2025

VanRIMS No.: 08-3000-30

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TO: Park Board Chair and Commissioners  
FROM: Director, Business Services  
SUBJECT: Spanish Banks Paid Parking Pilot - Report Back

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- A. THAT the Vancouver Park Board approve the permanent adoption of paid parking at parking lots serving Spanish Banks Beach Park based on the findings and success of the 12-month pilot; and,
- B. THAT year-round rates be increased by a marginal amount to \$1.50/hour, aligning with the minimum rate applied to on-street parking in the surrounding neighbourhood by Engineering Services.

### PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

A 12-month paid parking pilot was implemented at Spanish Banks Beach Park in July 2024. Spanish Banks is one of the Park Board's top visited destination parks – demand for parking is high and the park's popularity brings increased service pressures. The pilot of a low-cost, reasonable parking fee across the past year has better managed parking availability, provided revenue to improve park maintenance and cleaning, and demonstrated how fees for services that directly benefit individual users create public benefits for the larger community.

The purpose of this report is to update the Board on findings and success of the pilot implementation of paid parking at Spanish Banks and seek approval of the continued application of parking fees at this site to meet several objectives that support the delivery of public good for park users and residents of Vancouver. Staff understand the transition to paid parking has been challenging for certain user groups. Through consideration of feedback, an approach of continual improvement with a focus on overall user experience will be taken.

Parking provides important access to Park Board's core services, particularly for users unable to use alternative transportation. Paid parking at reasonable rates and with equitable measures ensures parking availability for those that need it most while improving park operations and experiences – including for one of the most desired beaches under Park Board's jurisdiction, Spanish Banks Beach Park.

### BOARD AUTHORITY / PREVIOUS DECISIONS

Per the [Vancouver Charter](#), the Park Board has exclusive jurisdiction and control over all areas

designated as permanent and temporary parks in the City of Vancouver, including any structures, programs and activities, fees, and improvements that occur within those parks.

On July 6, 2023, the Vancouver Park Board approved the [Think Big Revenue Strategy Report Back](#) recommendations, including an item to “optimize parking revenues”.

On May 6, 2024, the Vancouver Park Board approved implementation of a [12-month paid parking pilot](#) at Spanish Banks Beach Park, beginning in July 2024, and peak season pricing set at the rate of \$1/hour. The Board directed staff to update in Q2 2025 on performance of the pilot.

On April 14, 2025, the Board approved the [Comprehensive Fee-setting Framework](#), which provides a consistent policy for setting fees by connecting level of public investment to the delivery of public good – services that result in indirect benefits to all residents of Vancouver.

Also on April 14, 2025, the Board received the [Park Board Parking Strategy](#), which it referred back to staff for further engagement with Community Centre Associations and to explore options for retaining revenue with the Park Board. Staff expect to report back in fall 2025.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Initial Implementation**

Following the Board’s approval of a paid parking pilot for Spanish Banks Beach Park, staff worked closely with EasyPark, a City-owned non-profit corporation, to implement paid parking for 744 spaces spread across four parking lots along the park’s waterfront length. Rates were set at \$1/hour for affordability and understanding limitations to transit access.

Delivery was managed to avoid disruption and communicate changes to the public. Nonetheless, installation of signage and parking meters saw minor incidents of vandalism and service interruption. With initial challenges resolved, paid parking at Spanish Banks successfully complimented the high demand lots already managed at nearby Jericho Park and Kitsilano Park beaches.

### **Program Benefits**

Pilot implementation of paid parking provides an opportunity to collect better data on use and user needs. Across ten months of pilot implementation at Spanish Banks, parking lot use met targets for effective management, with confidence that the project can be recommended for continued application.

As a destination park, Spanish Banks Beach sees high levels of visitation from regional visitors and tourists who do not pay taxes for parks and recreation services but whose use demands costs of operating. While paid parking data does not track user origins, paid parking is able to generate revenue from non-taxpayers to redistribute within Vancouver’s parks and recreation system.

Spanish Banks Beach parking lot has also been an attractive location for overnight and multi-day use by RVs, camper vans, and other forms of vehicle encampment. Parking lots are not typically designed to accommodate housing alternatives, and high demand use of the beach, particularly for families, raised safety and security concerns among some park users. Implementation of the paid parking pilot enabled the ability to enforce the by-law for overnight parking, resulting in a decrease of unsanctioned uses and increase to perceived levels of public safety.

**Program Challenges**

An important consideration for expanding paid parking is the impact on residents of adjacent neighbourhoods as vehicle users may search for free parking alternatives. To ensure residents of surrounding areas were not negatively affected, paid parking implementation at Spanish Banks was closely coordinated with City of Vancouver Engineering Services staff who oversee on-street parking, including residential permit parking and paid parking. Through the pilot, resident feedback and requests for residential permit parking have been limited, suggesting that coordination of on-street parking has generally been successful in aligning with service changes at Spanish Banks.

No paid parking implementation project is without some level of negative public sentiment. The Spanish Banks Beach pilot was not an exception. Input received through 311 demonstrated concerns for paid parking rates, enforcement, provision of bike facilities, transit access, and difficulties with digital payment services. The digital app-based payment system for paid parking, without alternative for coin or cash payment, was of particular concern for some seniors.

Limitations to access by transit is a common criticism of the pilot. Currently, there is direct bus access to Spanish Banks Beach Park on peak season weekends. The 24% parking tax that TransLink receives through paid parking fees supports improving bus and transit services. The cost of taking transit both ways to the beach from within Vancouver is \$6.40 -- even with service improvements, transit would still cost more than parking at the beach for a visit 4 hours or less.

**Shifting to a Permanent Program**

Parking rates or fees at Park Board parking lots are recommended based on nearby lots and on-street parking fees in the surrounding area to reflect demand and market alignment. Additional consideration is given for affordability. At the outset of the pilot, the minimum fee of \$1/hour was set to align with on-street parking by City Engineering at the minimum rate. Hours of paid parking would continue to be from 9am to 10pm, with no parking past closure hours.

In November 2024, City Council approved changes to parking fees including increasing the lowest fee from \$1 to \$1.50/hour, to account for inflation and increased transaction and processing fees. This was the first adjustment to the minimum fee level since 2012.

To mitigate negative impacts of digital payment systems, staff worked with EasyPark. Digital payment methods reduce theft, increase ability to gather use data, and respond to the increasingly cashless habits of today's users and consumers. Recommended improvements to payment accessibility include a customer service line (requiring a cell phone) and on-site attendants who can work through challenges in person during peak times.

Usage data trends at Spanish Banks and Jericho Beach parking lots suggest that a portion of Jericho Beach users are choosing to park at Spanish Banks for \$1/hour, rather than pay the \$4 rate at Jericho. As parking fee setting is based on rates at nearby lots while maintaining affordability, best practice suggests that the Spanish Banks fee be increased to more closely align with Jericho Beach, with a lower fee reflecting more limited transit accessibility. Potential further increases would need to be considered and implemented incrementally over time.

## FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Nearly half of Park Board's operating budget is funded by fees and charges, with paid parking contributing the second highest annual amount after program fees. The Comprehensive Fee-setting Framework approved earlier this year provides principles for connecting individual user fees, such as for paid parking, to the wider public benefits they support. Expanding fees based on these principles is necessary as inflation and aging infrastructure are impacting service levels, and increased revenues from the approximately 700 stalls of paid parking at Spanish Banks are a meaningful contribution to the continued delivery of parks and recreation for all residents of Vancouver.

Before implementation of the pilot, annual revenue expectations for the site were estimated at \$121,000. High-level financial reporting has net revenues for the period between July 2024 and May 2025 at around \$168,000, already exceeding the original estimate before the full annual pilot has passed. These revenue figures suggest that paid parking has not been a deterrent to parking lot use, while significantly improving capacity for funding service improvements.

This report recommends a paid parking fee of \$1.50/hour established for year-round use to match new minimum rates set for City of Vancouver on-street parking. A year-round fee model also reduces administrative costs while providing clarity for public expectations.

The following estimates based on pilot revenues are provided to understand potential revenue and the degree to which it may benefit parks and recreation service delivery:

Fee	Estimated Annual Net Revenue	Comments
\$1/hour	\$170,000	Currently applied – does not match new on-street minimum nor effectively manage demand.
\$1.50/hour	\$255,000	Recommended year-round – matches new on-street minimum with limited impact to user habits and affordability.
\$2.00/hour	\$340,000	For consideration in 2026 – to effectively manage demand and better align with rates at nearby Jericho Beach Park, a gradual increase brings further benefit.

Staff are exploring options through the Park Board Parking Strategy to retain parking revenue within Park Board to directly fund either capital or operating. The report back to the Board expected in fall 2025 will also include recommendation for directly connecting revenues to the asset where they were generated or nearby assets impacted by use.

**CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS**

Free parking is increasingly rare in Vancouver -- the city is densifying, demand for parking is increasing, and operating costs are impacted by inflation. Parking comes at a cost for municipalities, who subsidize free parking at the expense of core service delivery for all residents and visitors, whether they drive or not. Establishing reasonable fees for the individual use of parking spaces connects the cost of that service to the user that directly benefits while providing indirect benefits for all residents.

If approved for permanent adoption, staff will work with EasyPark on improvements to accommodate alternatives to digital payment systems that respond to concerns for equity and specific user needs, bringing a human touch to services for impacted user groups.

Before the pilot, free parking at Spanish Banks Beach Park was somewhat unique; municipalities as far as Tofino manage their destination beaches with paid parking. By establishing year-round paid parking at this location, at reasonable rates and striving to respond to the needs of the most impacted users, the Park Board would modernize service delivery to better meet challenges through best practice and sensitive application.

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