



February 2, 2023

MEMO TO : Park Board Commissioners

FROM : Donnie Rosa - General Manager, Parks and Recreation

SUBJECT : **Parking Strategy - Parks and Recreation - Board Briefing Memo**

---

Dear Commissioners,

This memo provides an update to the Board on the Parks & Recreation Parking Strategy, including an overview of the project scope and schedule, and next steps.

### **Background**

The Vancouver Park Board operates 180 parking lots; the majority are free parking and only 13 lots are paid parking, operated and managed through an operating agreement with EasyPark. These parking lots and spaces support access and provide some funding to core parks services and amenities such as community centres, recreational facilities, and destination park spaces, while also providing spaces for local economic activity such as filming, special events, and businesses.

Despite the significant role parking plays for our organization, parking in many Park Board-operated spaces is becoming increasingly challenging. Parking shortages and low turnover of free parking spaces have become regular occurrences at more popular Park Board destinations such as Hillcrest Community Centre, VanDusen Botanical Garden, Spanish Banks, and other beaches and waterfront parks. These inefficiencies impact park accessibility and contribute to traffic congestion in and around parks and recreation facilities. In contrast, there are also parking lots that are underutilized, either year-round or seasonally, which takes up space that could potentially be used for other programs such as additional open spaces, sports amenities, other infrastructure needs, and support for other modes of transportation (e.g. sport or skateboard facilities such as seen at English Bay, micromobility, ridesharing, bike parking and storage, etc.).

Parking is the single largest generator of funding that provides critical investment in subsidized service areas. As the Park Board continues to face service, funding, and spatial use pressures, now is the opportune time to begin a comprehensive Parking Strategy that can study and improve parking systems to: create better experiences for visitors; manage parking lot usage and turn over; and expand pay parking (where appropriate) to generate revenues that better support and maintain park and recreation services.

Parking Strategy work is identified in the [2019 VanPlay Playbook \(Implementation Plan\)](#) – specifically Approaches for Action P.1.5, “outline the Park Board’s approach to appropriate vehicle parking in and adjacent to parks” (p. 25), and R.2.3, “describe a methodology to determine the appropriate and applicable fees and charges for [...] parking” (p. 35). This work was subsequently included in the [2022 Service Plan](#) approved by the Board on November 30, 2021, which cites the need to “develop a new parking policy framework to improve strategy and overall outcomes of these spaces” (p. 24). Furthermore, per the [January 16, 2023 Motion](#), the Board directed staff to apply a “revenue generating lens” when developing the parking strategy to better integrate parking revenues with the “Think Big Strategy”.



The Parks Parking Strategy aims to:

- Optimize parking provision levels in a large and complex parks and recreation system, in balance with the general inventory of parking (e.g. on-street parking, private/third-party parking), while considering parking demand in parks, the protection of park land, and equity of access for all park users;
- Provide strategic direction for improving the efficiency and management of existing free parking lots that considers areas of high and low demand, the potential for implementation of pay systems to increase revenue generation and manage use, gather and interpret demand data and projections, consider access to the public transportation and greenways networks, and more;
- Better integrate parking with park services and amenities, including improving access and increasing and potentially aligning financial support (via pay parking revenues) directly to parks and recreation facilities where the revenue is potentially generated;
- Explore creative programs and solutions to improve accessibility to those facing barriers; and
- Better align with City of Vancouver's parking strategies, including carbon reduction directions, charging station provisions for both vehicles and micromobility devices, and accessibility design guidelines.

### **Project Scope and Schedule**

This work will include four general phases:

Phase 1 (Q1-2, 2023): Research and compile data and existing conditions (“what we know” and “what we need to find out”), including:

- Inventory of public parking spaces in and around parks;
- Analysis of past and present-day trends related to capacity, occupancy, and revenue;
- Parking lot usage from various user groups (e.g. park patrons, internal operations, tourism/event industries, businesses, and others);
- Existing challenges to the parking network;
- Best practices from other jurisdictions locally (including Engineering Services and Metro Vancouver Parks) and abroad; and
- As a quick start: researching appropriate locations to implement pay systems in free lots experiencing ongoing congestion and access issues and identifying opportunities for new pay parking sites with estimated revenues for each.

Phase 2 (Q3, 2023): Stakeholder and public engagement (“what else do we need to know”, “what we heard” or “from whom we are hearing”) that provides opportunities for people to:

- Learn about the role parking plays to support access and funding to Park Board services and amenities;
- Share their ideas and concerns (e.g. access issues, accessibility, congestion, etc.);



- Share information on their parking lot uses, patterns, and needs (e.g. Park Board destinations and activities, frequency of travel, time spent at location, specific needs related to accessibility and/or charging stations); and
- As engagement is underway, begin implementing pay systems at identified quick start locations.

Phase 3 (Q4 2023 – Q1, 2024): Draft and refine policy recommendations and implementation frameworks (“where we are going”), including:

- Reviewing key themes and findings from research and engagement to develop grounding principles and a “vision” for a better parking system;
- Exploring and reviewing tools, approaches, interventions, and upgrades to address challenges and opportunities specific to parking lots in different park locations around the city; and
- Developing policy options and recommendations that can be implemented based on an assessment of priorities (e.g. revenue generation and better management approaches to free lots), needs (e.g. improved accessible parking designs EV charging provisions, and more), and other measurable performance metrics such as occupancy trends over time.

Phase 4 (Q1-2, 2024): Finalizing the strategy and prepare for Board communications, stakeholder and public report-back, and implementation actions

In addition to the main scope of work above, staff are also exploring the feasibility of piloting upgraded accessible parking stall designs at select parking lot locations. Data collected from this pilot would be used to further inform and contribute to the Parking Strategy. Staff will update the Board at a later date as these quick starts are confirmed.

## Next Steps

To support the delivery of Parks Parking Strategy’s scope of work, staff plan to retain a consulting team with expertise in transportation planning, data collection and analysis, engagement, and business planning. A Request for Proposal (RFP) is expected to be posted publicly for bids in early Q1 2023. Phase 1 of the Parks Parking Strategy is anticipated to commence once a successful proponent is selected.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Donnie Rosa".

Donnie Rosa (*they/she*)  
General Manager - Parks and Recreation

/fm/ed/ds

Copy to: PB Leadership Team, Park Planning, Policy & Environment, PB Communications