
TO: CITY MANAGER **DATE:** 2008 July 14
FROM: DIRECTOR ENGINEERING **FILE:**
SUBJECT: PARKING FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES
PURPOSE: To respond to a request for free metered parking for people with disabilities and to present a proposal of improving on-street disabled parking accessibility.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. **THAT** Staff be authorized to improve on-street parking accessibility for people with disabilities by providing additional designated parking spaces (metered or non-metered) on city streets where appropriate, for vehicles displaying a disability placard.
2. **THAT** a copy of this report be sent to Mr. Peter Hanson of 1203-7264 Kingsway, Burnaby BC V5E 3Z5.

REPORT

1.0 BACKGROUND

At the 2008, June 23 Regular Council Meeting, Council received a delegation, Mr. Peter Hanson, requesting free parking at meters for vehicles displaying a disability placard. Mr. Hanson's request was based on his observations in Seattle where free metered parking was provided to vehicles displaying a valid disability parking tag. He would like to see greater accessibility for people with disabilities within the City of Burnaby because of the upcoming Winter Olympics in 2010. He also observed that designated handicap parking spaces are often abused. The request for free parking and enforcement from the delegation was referred to staff for a report.

2.0 DISCUSSION

2.1 PARKING FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Vehicles transporting people with disabilities are identified in B.C. by a placard issued by the Social Planning and Research Council (SPARC). The disability placards are issued upon submission of an application along with the requisite medical proof. Currently there are 95,000 placards issued to residents within the Lower Mainland with 6,000 issued to Burnaby residents.

The City of Burnaby currently provides limited designated on-street parking spaces for vehicles displaying a disability placard. These spaces are located throughout Burnaby often near medical clinics, care facilities, businesses and private residences based upon the need and specific circumstances. The purpose of these spaces is to ensure that people with disabilities can park in close proximity to their desired destination. Usually the most desirable spaces are located off-street near an elevator or accessible entrance to a building. Where no suitable off-street alternative exists, an on-street space is provided. Those with disability placards issued outside of B.C. are also eligible to park in these on-street disability spaces.

Currently, as an informal practice, By-law Enforcement Officers have exercised discretion in issuing parking tickets to vehicles with a disability placard for an expired meter or parking beyond posted time limits. By-law Enforcement Officers do regularly enforce on-street disability parking spaces. In the course of their duties, they avoid parking in them but will do so momentarily if it is the safest option while carrying out their enforcement duties, rather than double parking on the street within a moving lane.

The purpose of parking meters is to provide short term parking by encouraging parking turnover. Unlike parking time limit signs only, parking meters are more effective in creating parking turnover because they are easily enforced and people are dissuaded from parking longer than necessary due to the associated cost. The proposal of providing free metered parking for people with disabilities warrants the following consideration:

- It does not necessarily improve parking accessibility
- It does provide a financial benefit to placard holders
- It removes the time limit and may encourage longer term parking which is contrary to the intent of the parking meters
- It may generate additional requests for free parking from other groups or associations
- It may create greater potential for misuse of the disability placard

2.2 OTHER CITIES' PRACTICES

The provision of free on-street parking for people with disabilities varies amongst all cities across Canada where on-street parking is metered. Of the 5 municipalities within the Lower Mainland that have parking meters on their streets, 2 (Richmond and Coquitlam) provide free parking for vehicles displaying a SPARC placard. The other 3 (Vancouver, New Westminster and White Rock) do not provide free metered parking. Instead, to increase accessibility, Vancouver, New Westminster and White Rock designate specific on-street parking spaces for vehicles displaying a SPARC placard. It should be noted that Richmond and Coquitlam have a total of about 350 metered on-street parking spaces; whereas White Rock, Burnaby and Vancouver have about 300, 1,400, and 8,000 respectively.

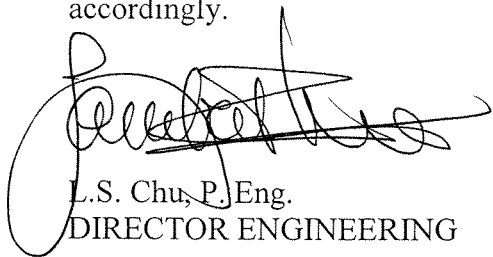
To: City Manager
From: Director Engineering
Re: Parking for People with Disabilities
2008 July 14 Page 3

In the United States, the City of Seattle provides free on-street parking for people with disabilities based on state law. However this excludes the downtown core where parking time limits are less than 1 hour to ensure parking turnover. As another example, the City of San Francisco also provides free on-street metered parking for people with disabilities based on state law. Issues currently faced by San Francisco include the misuse of the disability placards, the concern of parking turnover, and difficulties enforcing the abuse of disability placards. Philadelphia used to provide free metered parking for people with disabilities, but now provides designated on-street spaces instead.

3.0 CONCLUSION

Increasing the accessibility of on-street parking spaces for people with disabilities is a principle long recognized and practiced by the City of Burnaby. From the City's perspective, the accessibility issue can best be achieved by designating specific spaces in close proximity to desired locations such as medical clinics or care facilities as required. Providing free metered parking for all vehicles displaying a SPARC placard does not necessarily meet the objective of improving accessibility. To further enhance on-street parking for people with disabilities, it is recommended that the current program of designating specific on-street parking spaces for vehicles displaying a disability placard be expanded as appropriate. This would include, if necessary, increasing time limits and converting a metered parking space to one designated for vehicles displaying a disability placard only.

Staff are mindful and respectful of the designated disability spaces and enforcement of these on-street disability spaces will continue and any misuse of the designated spaces will be addressed accordingly.



L.S. Chu, P. Eng.
DIRECTOR ENGINEERING