



Parking Rate Changes and Upcoming Enhancements

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For Immediate Release

VICTORIA, BC – The City's five parkades were built to provide parking for shoppers and visitors. While some daily parking can be accommodated, City parkades do not have the capacity to host all downtown commuters. To free up space during peak, mid-day hours for short-term parkers, the hourly rate at the four-hour point, as well as daily and monthly rates, increase starting today.

City parkades still offer the first hour free with the second and third hours remaining at \$2 per hour, free evening parking from 6 p.m. – 8 a.m., and free parking all day Sundays and holidays. It is at the four-hour point where the rate changes to \$3 per hour. Hourly rates continue to be billed in 15-minute increments. The motorcycle day rate remains at \$4, with the vehicle day rate changing to \$14.50 (\$16 at Bastion Square Parkade). Monthly parking rates which have remained the same since 2007, are increasing from \$25 - \$40 per month depending on the parkade.

The City recognizes that additional space for long-term parking customers is needed. To provide alternate long-term parking downtown, the City is evaluating limited on-street time zones to determine if some of them can be made into all-day paid parking spaces for commuters. It's too early in the process to identify specific blocks but it is estimated that more than 100 on-street spaces on the periphery of downtown will become all-day parking this year in a phased approach.

In addition, the City is working with the Downtown Victoria Business Association (DVBA) to identify alternative solutions with privately-owned facilities in an effort to alleviate the parking capacity challenges in the short-term. The DVBA in partnership with the City, Robbins Parking, Pattison Group and BC Transit is offering commuters a new Park and Ride service at Douglas Street and Frances Avenue, with two more Park and Rides planned for 2017.

Most on-street parking zone rates remain the same, except for 24-hour zones which are a daily maximum of \$9 and 20-minute meters which are now \$1 per 20 minutes (previously \$7.50 and 50 cents respectively). In 2014, the City introduced variable parking rates with time zone limits ranging from \$1.50 to \$3 per hour depending on the location to provide parking customers flexibility and choice. Over the past two years, variable on-street zones have been successful, with the City seeing increased usage on streets further away from the core, which provide longer parking times for less cost.

Rates at the City's three surface lots – Wharf Street lot, Royal Theatre lot and Royal Athletic Park lot – have not increased since 2010. Starting today, Wharf Street and Royal Theatre lot hourly rates increase by 25 cents to \$2.50 per hour and the day rate changes from \$13.50 to \$15. Royal Athletic Park lot rates remain the same.

This year, numbers will be assigned to Royal Athletic Park lot spaces to enable customers to pay using the City's *ParkVictoria* app, which is currently used to pay for on-street parking. The *ParkVictoria* app enables customers to pay for parking from their smart phone or tablet, receive an alert when parking time is running out, add time remotely (e.g. from their seat at a baseball game), and refund unused time.

In 2017 a range of customer service improvements will be introduced in City parkades. This summer, the City will begin work to replace the two aging elevators at View Street Parkade, and new LED parking space counters will be installed on the exterior of Centennial Square, Johnson Street and Broughton Street Parkades to inform motorists of the number of spaces available. Parking space counters were installed at View and Bastion Square Parkades in 2015.

This fall, "Tap and Go" for credit card payments will be introduced to speed up transactions at the gate and reduce the need for paper tickets, and a new cashier system will improve efficiency and reduce exit times. In addition, a new licence plate recognition system will be piloted for monthly parkers at Centennial Square Parkade to speed up entrance/exit times as there will be no need to stop for a ticket.

Currently, the City encourages car share programs in four of its parkades, with View Street Parkade to be added this summer. Free, covered bicycle parking, electric bike charging stations, and 1-3 electric vehicle parking spaces at no additional charge are available at all five parkades. Motorcycle parking is available at City parkades (except Johnson Street Parkade).

The City continues to work with local businesses to conduct block-by-block analyses to determine how best to improve on-street parking. As a result of discussions with local businesses over the past two years, 27 new on-street parking spaces have been created, and 19 new 20-minute metered spaces have been introduced for a total of 53 throughout downtown for loading and unloading.

In February, the City introduced a one-year pilot to enable taxi drivers to wait for fares at six identified taxi hydrant zones as long as they remain in their vehicle and relocate immediately upon the approach or arrival of an emergency vehicle. The new taxi hydrant zones are designed to increase the number of available areas where taxis can wait, freeing up valuable on-street parking spaces for downtown visitors to access local businesses.

A best practices review of residential parking will take place this year to explore different management models, such as the use of parking permits. Also this year, the City will develop a sustainable transportation strategy to define the long-term management of Victoria's transportation network and assets, of which parking is an integrated component.

There are over 11,000 parking spaces in downtown Victoria. The DVBA has developed a helpful online parking map that identifies City-run and private parking spaces. Learn more at www.downtownvictoria.ca/parking.

For more information on parking downtown, visit: www.victoria.ca/parking.

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