



The City of Red Deer Parking Management Strategy

June 26, 2017

Executive Summary

Recognizing that public parking is a community asset, The City of Red Deer has been in the parking business since 1939. A municipality's parking infrastructure investments can play an important role in supporting economic and socio-cultural activity, and can have impacts on other community objectives, such as multimodal transportation choices, optimization of land use, and economic and environmental sustainability.

This *Parking Management Strategy* strives to achieve efficient and effective parking management while supporting business vitality and sustainable transportation policies.

In May, 2016, Red Deer City Council adopted the *Downtown Red Deer's Investment Attraction Plan* (DIAP) as a corporate planning tool. The DIAP includes a *Parking Study* component along with recommended short, medium and long-term actions to improve parking management activities.

To guide in the prioritization and implementation of these parking actions, Administration worked with Council in 2016 to develop parking management principles intended to ensure integrated parking management policies and procedures, and support balanced implementation moving forward.

These four principles will inform operational and budgeting decisions, while supporting other municipal objectives:

1. **Customer Focus:** "Provide and maintain an appropriate supply of affordable, secure, accessible, convenient and appealing public parking".
2. **Economic Development:** "Provide and promote affordable short-term parking services, and fair and consistent enforcement services, that support local businesses, institutions and tourism".
3. **Multimodal Transportation:** "Promote, establish and maintain programs and facilities that encourage the use of alternative modes of transportation including public transit, car/van pooling, taxis, auto-sharing, cycling and walking".
4. **Financial Sustainability:** "Ensure the revenues generated by the parking program are sufficient to wholly recover all related operating and life-cycle maintenance expenditures; contribute to a reserve fund to finance future parking system development, operation, and



promotion; and then assist in the funding of related initiatives to encourage the use of alternative modes of transportation”.

Under each of these principles, you will find objectives that guide operations. These objectives are reflective of the DIAP *Parking Study* recommendations, promising practice, and Administrative expertise.

How will this Strategy be used by the Public?

Those who use the city’s on-street and off-street parking areas will experience the results of this strategy. This strategy provides the ‘why’ and rationale behind the user experiences.

Based on the context and scope of the program change or project, an appropriate dialogue process will occur with the public.

How will this Strategy be used by Council?

This strategy sets the overall direction for Council in making decisions related to parking.

City Council will continue as the approving authority for decisions related to Council policies, budgeting including the parking reserve, bylaws, and capital infrastructure.

How will this Strategy be used by Administration?

This strategy provides Administration guidance in making informed and integrated decisions related to public parking management. Administration will continue to be responsible for developing appropriate administrative policies and procedures for day-to-day operations and facility management. Administration will also recommend bylaws, pricing changes, and budgets to Council.

Public Parking in Red Deer – A Look Back¹

One of the first moves by The City of Red Deer to create regulated parking occurred on May 22, 1939, when parking lines were painted on the asphalt of the main streets downtown for the ‘economizing of parking spaces’. On September 25, 1939, a decision was



Parking lots west side of downtown - 1950

made to extend the parking lines onto the sidewalks in order to make the spaces clearer to those parking their vehicles.

Immediately after the end of the Second World War (1946-1947), Red Deer began considering the installation of parking meters. The model Red Deer looked at was the one adopted by the City of Vancouver; however, Red Deer decided to postpone such a move at the time.

Nevertheless, on April 12, 1948, Red Deer decided to proceed with the designation of permanent parking areas (i.e. parking lots). To fit them into the existing municipal legal framework, they were considered to be an extension of the public streets.

Three major municipal parking lots were created over the next few years – south of the Post Office (north west corner of 49th Avenue and 49 Street [today P4]), by Builders Hardware (east of 51 Avenue, on the south side of 52 Street [today P2]) and south of the Phelan/Valley Hotel (east side of Gaetz Avenue, by 48 Street [today P3]).

With the city beginning to grow very rapidly in the 1950’s, in August, 1952, The City decided to install parking meters under Bylaw 1671. The meters were purchased and leased from the Twin Meter Company of Montreal.

In December 1952, The City decided to further regularize the location and operation of parking lots under revisions to the Zoning By-law.



Parking lot west side of 49 ave – 1951 (today P4)

¹ Adapted from correspondence with Michael Dawe, Archives Specialist, City of Red Deer

Originally, the operations and maintenance of the parking lots and parking meters fell under the Red Deer Policing Committee; however, in the mid-1950's, a Traffic and Parking Committee was created, and it originally reported to the Red Deer Policing Committee.

Both Committees were appointed by City Council.

By 1960-1961, The City created two new major parking lots: one south of the old City Hall on 49th Street (now the site of the Public Library). As well, the C.P.R. Station Park was turned into a parking lot south east of the CPR train station.



'Cushman' Parking Attendant Vehicle - 1983 (Red Deer Advocate)

Today, The City of Red Deer operates 1,878 parking stalls in the Greater Downtown Area, including 1,150 on-street parking stalls, and 728 off-street options.



CPR Station Parking Lot, 1977 (Today P2)

City of Red Deer Parking Management Principles, Objectives, and Standards

Principle 1 – Customer Service

“Provide and maintain an appropriate supply of affordable, secure, accessible, convenient and appealing public parking”.

In order to attain this principle, The City of Red Deer must work collaboratively with stakeholders and the public to continually review and improve how we provide and manage public parking inventory. Public parking is an important part of the daily lives of citizens and visitors whether as customers, students, employees, visitors, or otherwise. Recognizing this, there are inherent contradictions in providing public parking that is affordable and convenient to all, but which at the same time avoids contradicting the community’s alternative transportation or environmental objectives, or our ability to encourage the highest and best use of land and resources.



Objectives:

- Affordable, convenient, easy-to-locate, and easy-to-use parking options will be available through ongoing supply monitoring for on and off-street parking inventory, based on demand and relevant area/district characteristics.
- Parking utilization rates, pricing, and time restrictions will be managed to promote customer choice and to incent turnover in high-use areas, and longer stays in surface lots adjacent to areas with lower utilization rates.
- Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) reviews of public and private parking inventory, annual safety reviews, and incident reporting processes will help to ensure a secure and appealing parking experience.
- Policies to guide the incorporation of aesthetic features into City parking facilities, and Land Use Bylaw design standards for parking facilities will contribute to the supply of appealing parking options.
- City-managed parking facilities, lots and spaces will be maintained to promote an appealing, safe and accessible parking experience.

- Wayfinding will be provided, as appropriate, to highlight connections between parking and key destinations.
- A range of payment options will be provided for users, which may include cash, credit card, parking cards, mobile apps or any future means of payment.
- Accessible parking stalls will be provided, monitored and managed so that all citizens are able to access the parking facilities they require.



Principle 2 – Economic Development

“Provide and promote affordable short-term parking services, and fair and consistent enforcement services, that support local businesses, institutions and tourism”.

Parking management has become an important component of the economic development and business retention and attraction landscape in communities around the world. Businesses considering whether or not to remain or establish themselves in a given district often bear in mind parking requirements and parking options for both customers and staff when forming a decision to locate. The DIAP notes that current parking supply, parking and density requirements, and setbacks are having an impact on the feasibility of development projects, and reviewing these in a “holistic manner...is an important step toward providing more flexible and higher density mixed-use development”². As we seek



to draw more businesses, residents and visitors into the Greater Downtown Area, intentional parking management practices and the provision of a range of parking options will help contribute to successful retention of local businesses, and future investment.

Objectives:

- Parking spaces devoted to taxis, transit and charter buses will complement local and regional tourism initiatives designed to attract visitors, businesses and other patrons to our Downtown and city.
- Pricing and time restrictions make on-street space available as a convenient option for customers, visitors and business clients with short-stay needs. Long-stay parking needs will be directed to off-street facilities.

² DIAP pg. 6

- Concerted marketing and promotion of parking options and information related to key changes to public parking management will be made available to affected parties and the public, and will be designed to integrate and reflect strategic synergies with other initiatives.
- Customer service and enforcement practices will accommodate fairness and equity, while incenting compliance and early payment.
- Opportunities to support special events, local businesses and tourism will be tracked ongoing, while also making sure that parking operations and reserves continue to be self-supporting and sustainable into the future.
- Both private and public parking management activities impact supply and demand. Therefore, relationships between public and private providers need to be maintained. Monitoring of both private and public inventory will need to occur annually



Principle 3 – Multimodal Transportation

“Promote, establish and maintain programs and facilities that encourage the use of alternative modes of transportation including public transit, car/van pooling, taxis, auto-sharing, cycling and walking”.

Parking management also affects resident, employee and visitor transportation activity in a given area. Maximizing public parking inventory, and particularly free or low cost parking, can have unintended impacts on a transportation system by inadvertently discouraging alternative transportation choices, such as transit, cycling and walking. The ability to adapt to technological changes and consumer demands will play an important role in encouraging and inviting a range of transportation options. The intentionality and continued integration of parking management and multimodal planning will be critical to success.



Objectives:

- Consideration will be given toward increasing parking options, such as bicycle and motorcycle parking, which will help diversify and attract a variety of transportation mode users to our Downtown.
- Changes and trends such as ride/auto-sharing will be incorporated into our parking management policies to ensure we are responding to customer and citizen preferences.
- Annual cross-departmental meetings between key areas such as Transit, Engineering, Parks, and Parking administration will occur to promote integrated transportation options.
- The City will explore options to invest and save for parking infrastructure. Options may include a fee-in-lieu program for new developments, where no minimum commercial parking provision is required.
- How The City issues special parking passes will be reviewed regularly to minimize pressures on public parking inventory, and to incent other transportation options.

Principle 4 – Financial Sustainability

“Ensure the revenues generated by the parking program are sufficient to wholly recover all related operating and life-cycle maintenance expenditures; contribute to a reserve fund to finance future parking system development, operation, and promotion; and then assist in the funding of related initiatives to encourage the use of alternative modes of transportation”.

The reality of parking is that it costs money to provide in terms of both capital and operating expenses, whether supplied by private entities or provided publicly. These costs are ultimately paid by taxpayers or customers and tenants of developments and businesses that need to pass down the costs of providing parking. As an example, the *Downtown Investment Attraction Plan* identifies that the median cost of surface parking is \$10,000 per stall, and roughly \$60,000 per stall for underground parking³.



Utilization of public parking primarily as a revenue generator can lead to increased parking inventory supply to maximize revenue. However, an oversupply of parking inventory can lead to a prevalence of low-density developments which may impact the density requirements that businesses need to remain viable, having an impact on economy, transportation and environment-related goals. As well, tourism and business vitality can be negatively impacted by revenue-centric parking policies.

The City’s aim is to manage public parking operations and parking reserves to be self-supporting over the long-term, and to generate sufficient revenues to minimize draws from other reserves required to cover existing infrastructure costs. The goal is for parking operations and reserves to return to being financially whole and revenue-generating.

Here again, ongoing monitoring, integrated decision making, and innovation will be required to attain a desirable balance between each of the guiding principles and related objectives.

³ DIAP Case Study, pg. 8

Objectives:

- In support of organizational goals related to *Financial Leadership*, parking demand will be leveraged as a modest revenue generation tool for the municipality, with parking supply and pricing reflective of market demand and desired utilization targets.
- In order to encourage turnover, time restrictions and pricing are necessary to maintain parking spaces at 85% occupancy.
- Policies will be developed to establish criteria and processes for parking discounts or subsidization, and provision of term-based off-street parking agreements.
- There will be a fair, equitable and transparent provision of staff parking passes to ensure The City leads by example and to minimize the impact to the Parking Reserve.
- Pricing based on season, time of day, location, etc., may be deployed to increase utilization.
- Any residential on-street parking program will be cost/revenue neutral with a charge to residents to wholly recover all operating expenses related to the implementation of the program.
- Pricing will be reviewed annually, as part of budget, based on the previous year's occupancy.
- The addition of new surface parking lots in the Downtown will be based on demand to maintain the appropriate balance of long-term and short-term parking inventory, and consideration will be given to possible impacts on the Reserve.
- Long-stay parking will be encouraged off-street, rather than on-street, in the Downtown during weekdays through time restrictions and pricing.

