

MEMORANDUM

To: St. Albans City Council
From: Dominic Cloud, City Manager
Re: Parking Rates and Program, First Reading - DRAFT
Date: August 7, 2014

Enclosed, please find proposed parking fees for the parking garage, courthouse, and City Hall lots. This proposal expands on the 2011 recommendations of the Downtown Board's Parking Sub-Committee. It has a number of objectives:

1. Ensure that our parking facilities are both well maintained and not reliant on tax payer dollars for maintenance.
2. Provide an array of parking options that respond to the diverse parking needs of our downtown.
3. Establish a system of incentives and disincentives so that our long term parkers use our parking facilities instead of on-street parking in front of retail establishments.

Parking Garage

The parking garage is primarily intended to serve long term parkers who need to know that if they purchase a parking pass there will be room for them to park. This is a good option for people who work or live downtown and are in town for a long period of time. It is also critical for financing large development projects like the State building or the Hotel. The guarantee that spaces will be available also drives up the price.

Working with our parking consultants, Desman Associates, we have developed these fees to ensure that revenues are sufficient to cover operating costs for the garage, including making necessary capital reserves and repairs and maintenance. These funds are only used for operations and maintenance (not debt service).

It will take a few years for the operations and usage patterns to emerge. Key drivers will be the size of the 43 Lake Redevelopment (hotel parcel) and other redevelopment activity in the downtown as well as daily and contract use by the general public. Nonetheless, we believe this rate structure will allow us to make the necessary capital reserves and pay the operating expenditures without turning to the general fund.

The base rate is \$450 per space per year. This equates to \$1.73 per workday or 21 cents per hour.

Courthouse Lot

One thing we heard a few years ago when the parking committee was completing their work was that we needed a low cost option for the part-time employees that work in our retail shops, otherwise they will park out front of the shops. Pricing in the Courthouse lot is intended to serve this need as well as those that are willing to take the chance of a space being available in exchange for a lower price. There will be 39 spaces available in this lot.

The spaces will remain metered and it will take both the City parking card and/or coins.

With a parking card, this lot will be available for \$1 for 8 hours or 12 cents per hour. Employees can use the card for as little time as they like. For example, a part time worker at a local shop working a three hour shift would pay 36 cents (total) to park in the courthouse or City Hall lots.

Without a card, it will be .50 per half hour up to a five dollar limit. All facilities (garage, courthouse, and City hall) have the same base transient rate (\$0.50/half-hour). Consistent rates across all the facilities

make them more predictable, inviting and accessible to those folks who have a choice to come to downtown St. Albans.

City Hall Lot

This is our least expensive lot. Improvements to the lot are anticipated to be completed in coordination with the City Hall renovation. This proposal offers a low cost alternative similar to the Courthouse lot. It will have a two credential system in play allowing the purchase of an annual pass specific to this lot for \$200, as well as a kiosk for pay and display. Card users can use the kiosk for 12 cents per hour (\$1 per day) or people can pay cash for \$.50 per half hour. This will allow individuals to use either the Courthouse lot or the City Hall lot using the same card under a pay as you go system.

Programmatic Changes

In addition to the fee proposal, staff are recommending a number of programmatic changes. The first is time limits on Main Street. The current time limits of 2.5 hours make it too easy for downtown workers and students to move their cars around during the day and avoid parking in the lots. Staff recommend time limits be reduced to either 1.5 or two hours on Main Street to encourage greater turnover in spaces in front of downtown businesses. Other streets within the central business district would remain at 2.5 hours.

Under the current scheme, an employee only needs to shuffle their car three times per day. At 1.5 hours, they would need to move their car five times per day to stay ahead of a ticket. With a ticket cost of \$15, compared to a parking pass for \$1 per day, we hope we can incent more long term parkers to use off street parking.

A second change is a validation program that allows each license plate to receive two waivers per year for on-street parking if validated by a merchant. This allows a person who received a ticket for overtime parking to ask the merchant whose store they were patronizing to sign the waiver and the police will waive the ticket. A similar program has been very successful in Woodstock, Vermont.

Finally, we intend to phase out tire chalking in favor of hand held license plate readers sometime late fall and early winter. The costs for these units has fallen; we now have a full time parking enforcement officer; and our overall parking management operation has become much more professional in the last year. While chalking tires can be offensive to many visitors and leaves much to the officer's interpretation, license plate readers capture the plate number, location, and time electronically. All of this helps improve the overall experience in downtown St. Albans.

Summary

As a community, we appear to have survived the construction of the parking garage and the resulting displacement of day long parkers. Now that our downtown is coming alive, we need to take additional measures to protect one of our most important assets: abundant parking located directly in front of store fronts.

We believe this proposal accomplishes the following:

1. Creates a diverse array of off street parking options;
2. Establishes a pricing structure where part time employees can purchase parking passes for less than the likely cost of parking tickets;
3. Allows visitors without passes or cards to use both the lots and the garage;
4. Covers the operating costs of the garage;
5. Encourages turnover on prime Main Street spaces.

Thank you for your consideration.

St. Albans City Council
 First Reading - DRAFT
 Fee Schedule for Parking Garage and City Lots
 Effective, December or January 2014/15

Parking Garage

Twelve Month Pass	\$ 450.00
Six Month Pass	\$ 230.00
Monthly Pass	\$ 40.00
Daily Rate	\$ 5.00
Hourly Rate	\$ 0.50 per half hour up to \$5

Reference Points

\$1.73 per workday; \$1.23 per calendar day

Courthouse Lot (Metered)

With Pre-purchased Card	\$ 1.00 for 8 hours
With Cash	\$ 0.50 per half hour up to \$5

Notes

.12 an hour; usable in both Courthouse and City Hall

City Hall Lot (Kiosk)

Annual Parking Pass	\$ 200.00
With Pre-purchased Card for kiosk	\$ 1.00 for 8 hours
With Cash	\$ 0.50 per half hour up to \$5

.76 per day

.12 an hour; usable in both Courthouse and City Hall