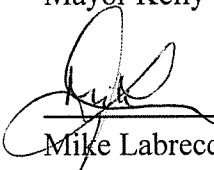




PO Box 1749
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 3A5 Canada

Halifax Regional Council
January 24, 2006

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY: 
Mike Labrecque, P.Eng., Director, Transportation & Public Works

DATE: January 9, 2006

SUBJECT: Amendments to Parking By-Law/Municipal Parking Garage,
Councillor Smith - Parking Exemption for Motor Scooters and
Motorcycles

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

Item 10.8.1 raised at the June 14, 2005 meeting of Regional Council, and item 11.2 raised at the November 22, 2005.

BACKGROUND

At the Halifax Regional Council meeting of June 14, 2005, Councillor Uteck requested staff to investigate changes in regulations regarding parallel parking for smart cars and scooters, and Real Property and Asset Management to consider changes in HRM parking garage to promote spaces for smart car parking. **Note: that staff report was removed from the agenda and was never presented to Council.**

Also, at the Halifax Regional Council meeting of November 22, 2005, Councillor Smith noted that the City of Toronto passed a bylaw giving motor scooters and motorcycles free parking, and indicated that it was done based on environmental savings. The Councillor requested a staff report on the feasibility of HRM implementing a similar bylaw. It was also requested that the report address the possibility of parking space capacity and if more than one small vehicle (i.e., motor scooter, motorcycle, smart cars) could park in one space; and, if areas can be allocated for parking specifically for such smaller vehicles.

These two items are similar and are addressed in this one report.

DISCUSSION

Our prime commercial and business districts are saturated with as much allowable on-street parking as possible without infringing upon safe traffic circulation. Currently all on-street parking spaces are available to any sized vehicle on a first come first served basis. Those parking zones which are not designated by parking meters are already free; and there is no restriction on either the size or number of vehicles which may park in these spaces. Therefore, smart cars, motorcycles and scooters are already easily accommodated for free on-street parking to some degree. For safety considerations, staff is not aware of any existing restricted parking areas which could be modified by signs to not only allow parking; but, which could be designated for the sole use of parking scooters, smart cars and motorcycles.

Those on-street parking spaces which are controlled by parking meters are located in the highest profile parking areas. Metered parking is not free and requires regular enforcement. Therefore, it is not possible to designate those spaces for more than one vehicle. Neither is it cost beneficial in these early stages to redesign any or all of our on-street metered parking inventory to accommodate only small vehicles; since, we do not know the real demand for such parking and where to locate it. In short, we could create a public relation problem and a hostile enforcement environment while at the same time have a negative impact upon the already existing short supply of on-street parking spaces. Also, defining which vehicles fall under the smart car designation could be problematic to control by simple sign messages in an on-street setting.

Staff supports the concept of encouraging free parking for such vehicles but believes it should be confined to off-street locations at this point.

Metro Park is operated under a management agreement by Hardman Group on behalf of HRM. They are paid an annual management fee for these services, determined through a formula that includes a factor linking the annual performance of the facility through gross revenues and net cash flow. In addition, HRM put a stipulation on the facility that the ratio of monthly parking spaces to available hourly spaces was to be 50/50. Should HRM wish to alter the operating parameters in a manner that negatively impacts the operator's ability to be fairly compensated, a readjustment in their management fee structure would be anticipated.

The fee formula was created to encourage the operator to maximize the potential usage of the facility. HRM has the added incentive of seeing maximum usage in order to generate sufficient funds to pay back the construction costs and set aside a reserve fund for future maintenance.

Dedicating specific spots for smart cars and scooters, or offering parking discounts, could impact the gross revenues or cash flow and may require renegotiating the annual management fees for Hardman. This could be undertaken, should Council wish to move in the proposed direction. It is difficult to estimate this impact at this time without establishing the number of spaces to be set aside. If the number of spaces is small, it is assumed at this time the impact on gross revenues or cash flow

would also be small.

However, there may be some issues of monitoring that could be more difficult to implement. Offering discounted monthly parking would require HRM compensation and could be managed through the normal billing process by the operator. Hourly parking discounts would be more difficult to implement, as the payment process is one of automated ticket booths. Without the booths being manned, it becomes difficult to discount hourly parking.

At present, the parkade had been operating at less than peak capacity, but well within the original targeted performance parameters. The number of hourly parkers fell below expectations, and the number of monthly demand exceeded the assigned spaces. HRM permitted the operator to increase the ratio of monthly to hourly to a 60/40 split, and thereby increasing revenue performance, and thus, allowing more funds available to pay back construction costs. This past summer the operator reported a continued trend of increased usage of the facility. The operator has not recorded any requests to date for any sort of special consideration for smaller vehicles.

Given the existing management agreement and the fact that Metro Park is a fully automated facility, staff believe it would be difficult to promote and properly monitor designated parking spaces for smart cars, with the possible exception to consider some sort of program for monthly parking requests.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

There are no budget implications.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES / BUSINESS PLAN

This report complies with the Municipality's Multi-Year Financial Strategy, the approved Operating, Capital and Reserve budgets, policies and procedures regarding withdrawals from the utilization of Capital and Operating reserves, as well as any relevant legislation.

ALTERNATIVES

There are no recommended alternatives.

ATTACHMENTS

None.

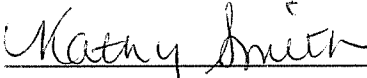
Parking Exemption for Motor Scooters and Motorcycles
Halifax Regional Council Report

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A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/cagenda.html> then choose the appropriate meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

Report Prepared by: Kevin McEachern, Traffic Analyst, 490-6133
Doug Rafuse, Manager, RPAM, 490-6205

Financial Review: 
Kathy Smith, Financial Consultant, 490-6153