



**City of Kingston
Information Report to Council
Report Number 15-394**

To: Mayor and Member of Council
From: Lanie Hurdle, Commissioner, Community Services
Resource Staff: Cheryl Hitchen, Manager, Social Policy & Strategic Community Development
Date of Meeting: October 20, 2015
Subject: Accessible Parking Awareness Campaign

Executive Summary:

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an overview of an Accessible Parking Awareness Campaign that the Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee, through its Education and Awareness Working Group, is organizing for November 27, 2015.

This campaign is aimed at reminding everyone the purpose of accessible parking and the importance of never using these spaces without an accessible parking permit “even for a couple minutes”. Built on similar successful campaigns in other Canadian municipalities, the campaign’s tag line is “Laziness is not a Disability”. Recognizing November 27th as “Accessible Parking Awareness Day” aligns with the holiday shopping season and the start of winter when accessible parking spaces are most likely to be misused.

Recommendation:

This report is for information purposes only.

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Authorizing Signatures:

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY COMMISSIONER

Lanie Hurdle, Commissioner, Community Services

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Gerard Hunt, Chief Administrative Officer

Consultation with the following Members of the Corporate Management Team:

Cynthia Beach, Corporate & Strategic Initiatives	Not required
Denis Leger, Transportation, Facilities & Emergency Services	
Jim Keech, President and CEO, Utilities Kingston	Not required
Desiree Kennedy, Chief Financial Officer & City Treasurer	Not required

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Options/Discussion:**Background**

On April 2015, through Report Number MAAC-15-007, Council approved the creation of an Awareness and Education Working Group that reports to the Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee. Part of the mandate of this working group is “To enhance public awareness about accessibility through the development and delivery of public events and campaigns.”

In researching successful public awareness campaigns in other communities, the working group determined that it would like to focus on a campaign to build awareness of the purpose of accessible parking and to hopefully deter the misuse of these spaces.

Across Canada there has been an increase in news stories involving accessible parking and those who abuse them. This problem arises in almost every place where accessible parking exists. There will always be some who misuse these spaces intentionally; but for the remainder, there is a lack of understanding as to the importance and purpose of these spaces.

Staff carried out research and consultation with other municipalities who have carried out similar campaigns including the City of Edmonton, Calgary and Fort St. John. Permission was received from the City of Edmonton to utilize their materials and tag line as basis for a campaign here in Kingston.

While the Edmonton campaign began in 2000 as a day-long event and has now grown into a week long campaign, it was felt by the working group here that a focused one day media event recognizing November 27th as Accessible Parking Awareness Day would be more realistic for 2015 as this is the inaugural year for this campaign. This date was chosen as it aligns with the start of the busiest shopping period of the year and the start of winter conditions.

Key Messages

The fundamental principle behind accessible parking spaces is the right of all people to have access to the community. For some individuals, these designated accessible parking spaces are the only way to gain this access.

Accessible parking is placed near entrances or on streets near the near the end of a row to ensure the safety of the person with the disability when exiting and entering their vehicle. The accessible spaces in parking lots are wider to ensure that those with mobility devices and ramps in vehicles can have the room required.

One of the most commonly heard excuses for parking in accessible spaces is that they will only be there “a minute” or they are “just waiting for someone”. The reality is that people with disabilities may not be able to park in a regular space, even when spaces are available; therefore, occupying an accessible space illegally removes any parking option for them and creates a barrier.

Another key message of the campaign will be to remind drivers that accessible spaces are also there for those with “invisible” disabilities. These include joint, muscle or heart issues among

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other disabilities, which result in the person not being able to navigate longer distances without difficulty, pain and putting their health and safety at risk.

In the Province of Ontario, accessible parking permits are issued by the province and require medical verification by a medical practitioner. There are short term permits (2 months to one year) for those with a short term disability and permits that must be renewed every five years for those with permanent disabilities.

Accessible Parking Data

In the City of Kingston there are 105 accessible spaces on the street and in municipal lots in addition to accessible spaces on private commercial lands. In 2014, By-Law Enforcement Officers issued 444 tickets to vehicles parked in accessible spaces that failed to properly display a valid accessible parking permit from the Province of Ontario. In 293 of those instances, persons were not able to subsequently provide evidence that they had just forgotten to display an otherwise valid permit.

Within the City of Kingston, there were 7,170 active accessible parking permits as of December 31, 2014 (an increase of almost 1,000 since the same date in 2010) and with the aging population this number is expected to grow.

The Highway Traffic Act requires that every person having possession of an accessible parking permit must surrender it for inspection to a City By-Law Enforcement Officer, upon request. The Officer may retain the permit until disposition of any case if he/she has reasonable grounds to believe that the permit is invalid or is being used in contravention of the regulations.

For every \$300 received in payment of an accessible parking ticket, Parking Services remits \$200 to a fund to support accessibility in Kingston. In 2014, \$38,690 was contributed to the fund. These funds are utilized for staff training on accessibility, public awareness events and other accessibility initiatives of the City.

Campaign Components

The Working Group is working with staff from Transportation Services, Communications and By-Law in the development of the materials to be distributed for Accessible Parking Awareness Day. While development of these materials is in process, it will include a media release; one page information flyer that can be shared through the City's website, in print and social media and a radio advertisement. Parking Enforcement Officers, as part of their regular duties, educate and inform the public about the use of these spaces and will be prepared to discuss the campaign with users on the street.

Existing Policy/By-Law:

By-Law Number 2010-128 A By-Law to Regulate Parking

Notice Provisions:

Not applicable

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Accessibility Considerations:

Materials created for this campaign will be available in alternate format upon request.

Financial Considerations:

Costs associated with the production of materials and advertising will be paid for through the approved Accessibility budget.

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Other City of Kingston Staff Consulted:

Ian Semple, Manager, Service Development, Transportation Services Department

Greg McLean, Policy Program Coordinator, Planning, Building & Licensing Services Department

Richelle Morgan, Communications Officer, Strategic Communications Department

Exhibits Attached:

Not applicable