

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE - WORKING SESSION – MAY 22, 2012

VISITOR PARKING PERMITS – TECHNOLOGY TO ENHANCE AVAILABILITY

Recommendation

The Commissioner of Legal and Administrative Services and City Solicitor, and the Director of Enforcement Services, in consultation with Information Technology Services and Purchasing, recommend:

That staff include the implementation of online and phone technology and automated plate recognition in the 2013 Budget Submissions.

Contribution to Sustainability

Not applicable.

Economic Impact

The set up costs to implement both an on-line and automated telephone visitor permit program are \$29,000 with ongoing annual costs estimated at \$27,530.

The cost of implementing automated license plate recognition technology is \$75,000. with ongoing annual costs estimated at \$15,000.

Communications Plan

Information regarding any changes to visitor parking permits process would be publicized through a news release on the City's website, e-news letter and Access Vaughan.

Purpose

This report is to provide further information regarding the potential technological enhancements to the existing visitor parking permit program.

Background - Analysis and Options

In 2002 the City of Vaughan began offering visitor parking permits for overnight parking. Five permits are available per month, per household based on address at a cost of \$5.00 per permit.

These permits are currently only available by attending City Hall Monday to Friday between 8:30am and 8:30pm. Visitor parking permit fees currently generate about \$5,000. annually.

Staff have undertaken a review of the options and potential costs of enhancing the visitor permit program to an online, telephone, or other remote-access system.

The City retained the services of Business Improvement Architects to review the processes available including benchmarking other municipalities..

The consultant's review was required to include the following:

- Review the software module used by the City's current vendor and ascertain cost and time to implement;
- Eliminate the need for paper printouts by linking the data to the officer's machines;

- Investigate the possibility of using the web for other permits, such as construction parking permits and animal licenses to help justify the cost;
- Residents that are not comfortable with online purchases should be provided with the option of still purchasing the permits at City Hall or phoning in their request. The phone information would have to be downloaded to the handheld units.

Benchmarking Visitors' Parking Permits in other Municipalities

Vaughan is the only municipality that charges a fee for visitors permits. It also allows, by far, the most permits per year (60 per year).

TABLE # 1				
Municipality	Permits	Limit	Fee	How Obtained
Vaughan	Yes	60 per year (5 per month)	\$5.00 each	Attend City Centre
Markham	Yes	12 per year	NIL	Call during business hours, message before 1am *
Mississauga	Yes	14 per year	NIL	Call 7am-7pm after -hours speak to live representative *
Brampton	Yes	12 per year	NIL	Call 24/7, live dispatcher *
Windsor	No Visitor	N/A	N/A	N/A
London	No	N/A	N/A	N/A
Richmond Hill	Yes	5 per year	NIL	Call leave message *

* Information called in is downloaded real-time to officers hand-helds.

The consultant reviewed three options for enhancing the parking permit program:

- Online Permits

- Automated Voice Technology
- Permit "Hang Tags"

Online Permits

Online permit purchase would provide 24/7 service to the residents that have access to a computer. The license plate information and location would be sent real time to the handheld ticketing devices the officers are using. This could eliminate time, tickets, and staff resources wasted cancelling tickets issued inadvertently where an online permit had been issued during a shift. This provides improved customer service and the system enables the user to print a copy of the permit at home to display it in the vehicle.

Automated Voice Technology

Automated voice technology requires phone payment capability for permits. This service can be purchased through a third party offering live operators 24/7 and providing real time download of information to handheld devices in the field.

Permit "Hang Tags"

A Permit "hang tag" is a permit that would be purchased at City Hall only and hangs on the mirror of the permitted vehicle.

Permit hang tags do not provide any automation to the process. The permits are still issued manual and only in person at, and the data is not electronically downloadable to the officers' handhelds. There would be no advantage to introducing this option.

Sourcing the Technology

Following the review of the consultant's recommendations and information, staff circulated a Request for Information to the parking software industry to better ascertain the options available and potential costs.

Four vendors provided information. The information received was not complete, either lacking cost projections, or not quoting on all aspects of the request.

Armed with the results of the RFI, staff met with the current vendor, Group Techna, which is the City's vendor of record for parking enforcement hardware and software, online ticket payment and animal licensing, to obtain cost estimates for the options of online purchase and automated telephone purchases.

The estimated costs are set out in Table #2. There is also a cost of \$2.00 per permit for the online system, and \$3.50 for automated telephone system which would need to be paid out of the fee charged to the resident.

The vendor's estimate includes:

- 1) Online module that will maintain the current visitor permit program. The information on the permitted vehicle will be downloaded in real time to the officers' handhelds;

It is anticipated that the tool would be hosted by the vendor but would be seamless to the user.

The system would be PCI compliant.

- 2) The vendor has partnered with another company that offers phone purchase capability for permits. This company offers live operators and would provide real time download of the information. Due to the volume being relatively small, there is a fee of \$700. per month and \$3.50 per permit to cover their costs.

The cost of implementing this solution will likely not be offset by permit revenue, which is quite modest at present. However, the solution offers full automation of the visitor parking permit process and is scalable in the event that parking permits evolve across the City in the future.

ONLINE AND PHONE IN COSTS		
	Start Up Costs	Annual Costs
Online Module	\$ 27,000.	
Handheld Licenses		\$4,130.
Training	\$ 2,000.	
Voice Technology (Monthly)		\$ 8,400.
Maintenance Agreement		\$ 4,000.
Data Plan Handhelds		\$11,000.
Total	\$29,000.	\$27,530.

Additional Technology To Cost-Effectively Scan Vehicle Plates

Parking permits have the potential to impact on enforcement productivity. Time can be lost by commencing the ticketing process, only to find out a permit has been issued. This can be minimized through the introduction of technology which ‘reads’ which vehicles (parked along a street) have obtained a visitor’s permit.

An estimate to obtain this technology has been obtained. The technology, used by a number of enforcement agencies in North America, is called Automated License Plate Recognition (ALPR). It allows enforcement officers to ‘read’ up to 8,000 license plates per shift. The system then notifies the driver of vehicles that do not have permits. This provides a very efficient process, as only those vehicles that do not have permits are flagged. The software also has the capability to identify repeat offenders, or those that have delinquent penalties. This could allow for additional enforcement actions, such as towing repeat offenders.

The cost to equip 3 parking enforcement vehicles with the hardware and software is estimated at \$75,000. (for three units to equip three vehicles). In addition, there will be an annual maintenance cost of approximately \$15,000.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020/Strategic Plan

In consideration of the strategic priorities related to Vaughan Vision 2020, this report will provide service excellence.

Regional Implications

Not Applicable.

Conclusion

There are technological solutions available to enhance the visitor parking permit process. In the event Council supports implementation of some or all of these technologies, these would be included as Additional Resource Requests for consideration in the 2013 Budget process.

Attachments

None

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Respectfully submitted,

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and City Solicitor