

Higher parking fines defeated for now

Aldermen miffed by parking authority jumping the gun

Last Updated: Wednesday, November 18, 2009 | 7:19 PM MT

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A woman uses a ParkPlus pay machine in Calgary.

(CBC)

A proposal by the Calgary Parking Authority to raise parking fines as a way to generate extra revenue has been rejected for now.

The land use, planning and transportation committee turned down raising parking tickets from \$40 to \$50, along with the idea of gradually boosting the late penalty from \$50 to \$75 over two years.

"I've thought about it for some time and I just don't like them [the proposed increases]. So if I don't like them, I'm not compelled to vote for it," said Ald. Dale Hodges.

The authority was looking to generate \$1 million more next year with the fine hikes and several million more with other revenue-generating ideas including extending hours people have to pay for parking, possibly including Sundays and holidays.

Less than a week ago, the CPA announced a cut to downtown parking rates. But none of its plans have gone through city council. The mayor and aldermen are slated to review the proposed budget next week.

Ald. Ric McIver blasted the parking authority for publicizing changes before budget approval.

'I think the tail's wagging the dog here and that needs to stop.'

"Don't call a media conference claiming to lower rates and then drop a bomb later saying we're hoping to raise other rates and then try to box council in to say 'Well if you don't do everything we want, we're going to embarrass you at budget time.'"

—Ald. Ric McIver

"I think the tail's wagging the dog here and that needs to stop," McIver told reporters on Wednesday.

Added Ald. Diane Colley-Urquhart: "These guys seem to be a little bit out of control."

If city council rejects any of the authority's plans, aldermen will have to make up for the projected revenue by cutting services, or finding additional returns elsewhere such as through property tax increases.

"Nothing in here is a done deal until council approves it," said Ald. Gord Lowe.

Rate cut cost \$1.4M

On Friday, the authority adjusted weekday parking rates on prime downtown streets — to \$2 for the first half hour, \$2.25 for the second half hour, and \$5 for subsequent hours — in an effort to encourage more short-term turnover.

Rates at three downtown parking lots will also drop slightly starting in January.

The move will cost about \$1.4 million a year in revenue.

The parking authority took in \$22.4 million in 2008 — \$13.5 million of which went to the city for transit and road maintenance.

With files from Erin Collins

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[BigDanO](#) wrote:Posted 2009/11/19

at 8:15 AM ETJust another reason why I never go downtown.

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[tigharry](#) wrote:Posted 2009/11/19

at 7:58 AM ETI think the council should now fire the management of the Parking Authority. Their handling of this was absolutely out of control and they seem to have lost touch with reality. Dale Fraser et al at the CPA have no clue as to how to do their jobs and have no sensitivity to the way to PR things. They also seem to forget who makes the decisions. Lets clean house at the CPA

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[Inmyinterest](#) wrote:Posted 2009/11/19

at 12:36 AM ETMERKSS: Sneak out of work for a few hours...

Sure hope your employer doesn't read this or recognize your name.

But you can make up all the lies you want to get out of a ticket. But you should know this.. Win or Lose I still get paid by YOUR CITY taxes.

Win or Lose, you sneak (embarrassed are you) away from work, I hold my head up high.
Win or Lose, lie all you want, I still get paid to write tickets.
Win or Lose, I don't pay for parking downtown, you do.
Win or Lose, I still get paid by YOUR city taxes.

Big SMILE :-)

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[UKidderU](#) wrote:Posted 2009/11/18

at 11:45 PM ET
Calgary has some of the highest downtown parking rates in the world rivaling New York and Toronto and CPA insists it needs more revenue?!? I'm waiting for the day the CPA installs a parking meter in my driveway. Why not just charge Calgarians for the privelege of breathing oxygen in the core? Can't deny breathing at work can't ya? These people have no sense of reality and should be demoted. They just don't understand the importance of encouraging people to go the core (i.e. lower crime rates, more vibrant civic culture, more thriving businesses, etc.). Instead, the CPA just wants to squeeze every last dollar out of your wallet. How pathetic.

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[derrickdavies](#) wrote:Posted 2009/11/18

at 11:31 PM ET
This is nothing more than tax by stealth,the parking authority shouls look at its own costs witha view of reducing its overheads and not contnually trying to increase its tax by stealth.

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