

## Parking authority told to back up

**Aldermen urge officials to reverse course on ticketing motorists who pull into stalls backwards**

By RENATO GANDIA, SUN MEDIA

Last Updated: 9th October 2009, 3:14am

Aldermen are telling parking officials to back off from punitive rules following a public outcry by hundreds of Calgarians who got hit with fines for backing in at LRT parking lots.

As of yesterday, 449 tickets have been issued since the rule prohibiting backing in was enforced last Monday, the kind of money grab that enrages the public, Ald. Diane Colley-Urquhart said.

"This is unacceptable and I am demanding that all these tickets get waived," said Colley-Urquhart, who has advised Calgary Parking Authority (CPA) to "back off."

Dale Fraser, CPA general manager, said the signs instructing people on parking rules have been up for months and parkers were given warning notices last month.

"The tickets that have been issued so far beginning this week are all tickets that are valid and have been issued without error," said Fraser.

Ald. Ric McIver said the rule "seems ridiculous" and will discourage more people from parking in the lots and taking transit.

"I don't think we want to create a nanny state where we rent somebody a parking stall and then, tell them what direction they can park in," said McIver. "We make them pay \$3 and then we make it difficult for them to get out of the parking lot without getting a \$50 ticket on top of that."

McIver said the authority should do away with the signs and allow people to park safely the way they see fit.

"What we need is a gate or a turnstile in parking lots as opposed to the camera surveillance solely for the purpose of writing tickets."

Fraser said the rule was introduced to make ParkPlus work. The system doesn't require actual parking receipts be placed in vehicles' dashboards, but cars have to show plates so computerized monitors can check. He said CPA will put up new signs today warning commuters that backing into park and ride stalls will result in a \$50 ticket.

RENATO.GANDIA@SUNMEDIA.CA