



Town of Newmarket
395 Mulock Drive P.O. Box 328,
Newmarket, Ontario, L3Y 4X7

Email: info@newmarket.ca | Website: newmarket.ca | Phone: 905-895-5193

Parking Enforcement Initiative – Pay It Forward Program Staff Report to Council

Report Number: 2019-107

Department(s): Legislative Services

Author(s): Flynn Scott, Manager of Regulatory Services

Meeting Date: November 4, 2019

Recommendations

1. That the report entitled Parking Enforcement Initiative – Pay It Forward Program dated November 4, 2019 be received; and,
2. That Council approve staff initiating a Pay It Forward program in lieu of a monetary fine for parking enforcement at various times throughout the year; and,
3. That Staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with information related to parking enforcement and to request consideration on an education program to supplement parking tickets throughout the year.

Background

In preparation for the 2019 holiday season, members of Council inquired with Staff regarding opportunities for the Town to participate in a positive initiative pertaining to parking enforcement.

The Customer Services Department receives many parking-related complaints annually. The Town employs eight (8) full time parking enforcement officers to respond to formal complaints and to conduct proactive patrols of specific parking-related offences. Regulatory Services recognizes both the contentious nature of a parking enforcement

program and the demand for services to monitor and respond to parking issues throughout the community. While enforcement through ticketing can be compulsory, achieving voluntary compliance through public education is a key objective of the Regulatory Services Department.

When researching holiday initiatives related to parking enforcement, “Toys for Tickets” is notably a popular program choice throughout many communities, wherein parking tickets are eligible to be paid by donation of a toy or gift card of equal or greater value. The program offers an alternative method to paying a parking ticket and the program can be structured various ways to outline specific dates and types of violations eligible to participate.

The Town of Newmarket was recently invited to participate in a “Toys for Tickets” initiative, led by the Township of King. The program proposed the donation of a toy in exchange for a parking ticket received between November 1st and November 15th in relation to vehicles parked between the hours of 2:00 AM and 6:00 AM.

Discussion

“Toys for Tickets” Program Considerations

While the proposed initiative is positive, important considerations were documented when researching implications to the Town of Newmarket. For example, participating or interested communities such as Aurora, Bradford, East Gwillimbury, Georgina, King, and Orillia have smaller populations and therefore see minimal impact throughout the duration of the program pertaining to administration and financial implications. When comparing the number of tickets issued within Newmarket to other participating municipalities, the impact demonstrated is significantly disproportionate.

Further research was conducted to determine if like-sized communities have successfully implemented a “Toys for Tickets” initiative to determine the success of this program. The City of Brampton piloted the project in 2017 but discontinued in subsequent years due to challenges surrounding the administrative process and budget constraints in supporting the program moving forward.

Overall Implications

A major challenge in running a “Toys for Tickets” initiative in Newmarket surrounds the dates proposed by neighbouring communities: November 1st initiates the 2:00 AM to 6:00 AM parking restrictions for the Town. An increased focus on enforcement transpires at this time, in order to provide snow plows with safe and clear access to the Town’s roadways. Town Staff considered running the program during later dates, however, neighbouring communities identified challenges in postponing these dates due to the administrative processes required to ensure the toys are donated prior to December 24th. For example, tickets issued between November 1st and November 15th are permitted 30 days to make payment pursuant to legislation, resulting in members of the public being granted until potentially December 15th to opt-in for participation of the program. This leaves a minimal timeframe to ensure the toys reach the appropriate destination for donation and disbursement.

Alternative Program Options – “Courtesy Parking Ticket: Pay it Forward”

Town Staff conducted further research to explore an alternative program option. The City of Victoria, British Columbia, has operated a voluntary “pay it forward” initiative over the past 20 years and continues to document success. Their model substitutes parking tickets received between December 10th and December 24th with “Courtesy Parking Tickets” (warnings) in the form of a letter. The letter advises the offender that they have parked in contravention of a by-law, that they are receiving a warning rather than a ticket for the violation, and invites the individual to “pay it forward” by donating to a local food bank or charity in lieu of the violation. The program does not require the individual to make a donation, but the City of Victoria has reported success by increasing positive community relations and promoting local donations over the holiday season. A sample of Victoria’s courtesy letter is attached to this report for reference (see **Attachment 1**).

In determining the feasibility of administering this type of program, the overall impact is projected to be quite low: the program will require no additional administrative processes regarding the collection of donations – the option is voluntary and the onus is placed on the individual to choose if they wish to “pay it forward”. Similarly, there would be no administration required to identify and establish processes and procedures between departments regarding the financial recovery, balancing, and voiding of tickets in exchange for toys donated – a challenge that was highlighted by the City of Brampton.

Considerations of an alternative to traditional parking enforcement

While most communities run a “Toys for Tickets” program leading up to December 25th, Town Staff recommend moving forward with a “Pay it Forward” educational parking program to be offered throughout the year. With Newmarket becoming an increasingly diverse community, Town Staff propose implementing this program during various occasions (i.e. beyond the month of December), as well as pertinent times of the year

when education on parking restrictions will be an effective strategy (i.e. education within school zones at the start of the school year). The goal of this program will be to achieve compliance in a positive manner while promoting local donations. Rather than issuing warnings subjectively per officer, the program will be implemented strategically with a specific focus identified each time it is organized in order to support multiculturalism and local donations within the Town of Newmarket. Key considerations will be reviewed prior to each time the program is implemented, including the length of time the program will be run and when to focus on education for on-street parking initiatives.

The “Pay it Forward” program is projected to have a low budget impact due to parking enforcement officers already issuing a large number of warning tickets throughout the peak holiday seasons in an effort to remain educational and provide leniency. Town Staff propose to substitute standard warning notices that are already being issued during these times with a “Courtesy Parking Ticket” notice in an effort to promote “paying it forward” and donating to a local foodbank or charity of the individual’s choice. The financial impact will remain low due to merely restructuring current practices by the Town in an effort to increase educational awareness.

A sample of the Town’s proposed Courtesy Parking Ticket is attached to this report for reference (see **Attachment 2**). In an effort to keep donations local, the letter will refer to the Town’s website, which will have the names and addresses/website links to various Newmarket charities and foodbanks. A comprehensive call-out to all charitable organizations will be conducted to ensure those wishing to participate are included on this list.

Current Town of Newmarket Holiday Initiatives

In addition to the “Pay it Forward” parking initiative proposed for 2019, it is relevant to note the other incredible programs that the Town of Newmarket supports throughout various seasons:

- 1) Spring Food Drive
- 2) Fall/Thanksgiving Food Drive
- 3) Pumpkin Contest (proceeds to Newmarket Food Pantry)
- 3) Salvation Army Holiday + Toy/Food Drive

Conclusion

Town Staff do not recommend moving forward with the “Toys for Tickets” program in 2019 due to the financial impact, administration required to support its operation, and overall concerns for road clearance during snow plow removal.

However, the implementation of the “Pay it Forward” parking initiative program beginning in December 2019 and carrying forward in subsequent years is feasible due to low-impact to administration, budget, and staff resources required.

Staff will continue to monitor and research other opportunities as they arise, as well as conduct a review of the program to ensure demonstrated success

Business Plan and Strategic Plan Linkages

This report aligns with Council’s Strategic Pillar regarding Safe Transportation (Streets): Providing exceptional transportation experiences across all modes through continuous improvement of accessibility, safety and speed reduction.

Consultation

Consultation with communities currently participating in the “Toys for Tickets” program, as well as communities interested in participating, has been conducted. Consulted communities include: Aurora, Bradford, Brampton, East Gwillimbury, Georgina, King, Kingston, and Orillia.

The City of Victoria, British Columbia, was consulted to confirm their annual success with a “Courtesy Parking Ticket: Pay it Forward” model.

Human Resource Considerations

Not applicable.

Budget Impact

“Courtesy Parking Ticket: Pay it Forward” Program

Town Staff are proposing to move forward with a “Pay it Forward” program due to being low-impact on administration, budget, and staff resources. Overall, the financial implications on revenue remain low due to Staff proposing to run the program during periods when warning tickets are more commonly issued. For example, the potential revenue loss for running the program between December 14th and January 2nd is estimated to be approximately \$13,000. This program is also feasible to operate year-round; during various seasons and throughout key educational enforcement opportunities. This program will construct a strategic approach to educational parking enforcement and offer a positive alternative to donate to a local foodbank or charity.

Attachments

Attachment 1 – Sample of City of Victoria’s Courtesy Parking Ticket

Attachment 2 – Draft Sample of Town of Newmarket’s Courtesy Parking Ticket

Approval

Lisa Lyons

Director of Legislative Services/Town Clerk

Esther Armchuk

Commissioner of Corporate Services

Contact

For more information contact Flynn Scott, Manager of Regulatory Services at fscott@newmarket.ca.