

CITY OF NANAIMO

BUSINESS CASE – Parkade Security Plan

CURRENT OVERVIEW

The City of Nanaimo manages three major parkade structures with 901 stalls for public use located in downtown Nanaimo:

- Harbourfront Parkade, 51 Gordon Street - 301 parking stalls.
- Vancouver Island Conference Centre Parkade (VICC), 101 Gordon Street - 308 parking stalls
- Bastion Street Parkade, 236 Bastion Street - 292 parking stalls.

The City's parkades are designated for public use to support downtown businesses and to service major downtown amenities and attractions such as the Port Theatre, Casino, and Commercial Street. Parkades provide an important service to the community, however they are experiencing impacts from the pandemic, from individuals experiencing homelessness, and from incidents of crime, which is creating poor public perception of these facilities.

COVID-19 Pandemic

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the City's parkades were nearing capacity. Historically, 80% of available parking capacity would be sold as monthly parking through contracts with local businesses. It is anticipated that revenue from monthly-permit parking in 2021 will have decreased by more than 50% from pre-pandemic figures as businesses have closed, employees have worked from home, and major attractions including the Port Theatre, VICC, & Casino have reduced/ceased operations. Parking revenues have increased slowly through the 2021 summer months, but are still significantly less than pre-COVID levels. Below is a summary of these revenues/projected revenues over the past three years:

	2019	2020	2021
Harbourfront	\$ 690,311	\$372,486	\$292,000
VICC	249,766	184,796	82,420
Bastion Street	285,091	163,300	144,000
Total	\$1,225,168	\$720,582	\$518,420

Individuals Experiencing Homelessness

City bylaws prohibit entry into parkade facilities for any purpose other than to park or move a vehicle. Notwithstanding, there is a continuous presence of individuals experiencing homelessness which has resulted in; daytime and overnight sheltering, obstruction of stairwells, doorways, and elevator vestibules, and drug related activities. The City receives many complaints regarding harassment, obstructed pathways, and 'ambush-type' encounters. Parabolic mirrors were installed to increase visibility in blind-spot locations, however these are frequently damaged and stolen along with other City equipment and property. In addition, the City has disconnected stairwell baseboard heaters and electrical outlets as these amenities were being used to facilitate sheltering activities and there has been a number of minor fire incidents in these corridors. The City has invested in resources to increase contracted clean-up, pressure washing, and maintenance services to address sanitation issues, as well as installed fencing to minimize incidents.

Incidents of Crime

Theft of valuables left in vehicles, external and interior components of vehicles, and malicious damage (i.e. smashing windows, scratching paint) are ongoing incidents in our parkades. The Coast Hotel reports that vehicle-related incidents is the most common complaint received from their guests. The need for secure parking facilities will increase with the new Marriot Hotel opening at 100 Gordon Street in 2022. In addition, residents of Protection Island have sent delegations to the City on several occasions requesting security improvements to parkade facilities citing repeated crime incidents involving their vehicles. There are regular occurrences of monthly passholders cancelling their passes after experiencing repeated incidents of theft and damage. These frustrations have also been expressed by the Port Theatre and VICC.

Current security measures in place by the City includes limited CCTV surveillance and private security patrols. The VICC is the only parkade facility with limited CCTV surveillance which was installed when the building was developed in 2008. This system consists of nine cameras which monitor limited portions of the vehicle areas and has many dead zones (unmonitored by cameras) including; bicycle storage lockers, components of HVAC systems, gas detection and fire suppression equipment, select parking areas, and all adjacent stairwells and elevator vestibules. Many components of this aging system have failed and there is limited current functionality. The requirement for Privacy Impact Assessments has stalled replacement or upgrading of the existing system.

The City also employs the services of private security patrols to monitor downtown City buildings and facilities. The contract provides for two eight hour shifts by a single patroller (3- 11 pm and 11 pm -7 am) for City Hall, SARC, VICC, Military Museum, Piper Park, Diana Krall Plaza, and the three City parkades. The concentration of disorder incidents in and around the parkades have occurred to a magnitude that the security contractor has been directed to concentrate efforts to the parkade facilities which consistently are at greatest risk. However, there is a downfall to the use of patrollers as they can be easily observed moving from one facility to another, leaving ample opportunities. Security reports indicate that patrollers regularly encounter 'unauthorized persons' in parkades, but in the absence of police enforcement, this is not a significant deterrent and incidents of crime occur regularly regardless of regular security patrols. The annual cost of these private security patrols for Downtown and the parkades is approximately \$140,000 which is anticipated to increase when the contract expires in 2022. Council has approved an additional \$400,000 to increase private security patrols July through December of 2021 in response to existing conditions downtown.

There are practical solutions to improve parkades to ensure a secure perimeter with options for access control, video surveillance, and parking attendants. Improvements to parking security will attract patrons who want to enjoy downtown amenities. This translates to a safer downtown and a great return on investment.

BUSINESS ISSUE

Provision of parking is an important aspect of the economic success of downtown which has been impacted by crime and by individuals experiencing homelessness. The City must plan for safe parking solutions beyond current measures to address risks identified by key stakeholder groups. Expertise is

required to develop an integrated program that addresses the specific security vulnerabilities of each of the downtown parkade facilities.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Engage a consultant to assess City parkades and provide:

- A detailed work plan with phasing and associated costs to deliver security solutions and improvements to City parkade infrastructure. This may include new integrated systems of access control, gating, intrusion systems, CCTV, improved maintenance, mobile patrols strategies, lighting, landscaping adjustments and more.
- Improve public confidence and perception of personal safety in City parking facilities, which in turn will promote overall downtown safety, vitality, support major hospitality and attraction venues and enhance parking revenues.

OPTIONS

Option #1 – Engage a Consultant to Prepare Parkade Security Plan

To retain the service of a security consultant who specializes in parking facilities to conduct a risk assessment which will identify strengths and weaknesses in existing security measures in City owned parkades. This will also include a list of security elements for consideration with costs and benefits.

Benefits:

- This is a proactive approach which attempts to change the environment in which incidences occur.
- Has the ability to change public perceptions on these facilities.
- Increases the safety for facility users.
- Potential to regain parking revenues from monthly parking passes if parkades are perceived safer.

Weaknesses:

- Security measures could be costly to implement.

Financial Analysis:

- Budget impact is \$25,000 in 2022 for the cost of a consultant. Future financial impact will be determined as part of the plan.

Option #2 – Status Quo

Continue to address security issues through private security patrols and mitigate public perception of these facilities through maintenance.

Benefits:

- Less costly to implement.

Weaknesses:

- This is a reactive approach to security and doesn't address the problem at its root.
- Public perceptions remain as it doesn't reduce activity and incidences at these facilities.
- Potential lost revenue due to individuals cancelling monthly parking passes.
- Does not address community safety issues.

RECOMMENDATION

Option #1 – Engage a Consultant to prepare a Parkade Security Plan.