

Enforcement of overnight parking restrictions at Town Park put on hold

By Brock Weir

Residents parking their cars around Town Park will have a few months' reprieve before Aurora begins enforcing overnight parking restrictions around the Downtown Aurora hub.

Aurora's bylaw enforcement officers were set to step up their game and take a harder approach to those using the parking spaces around the well-used facility as early as this Sunday. That plan, however, is set to be put on ice this week for up to six months, pending the development of a new Aurora-wide strategy around on-street parking.

When Council approved the recommendation from the Building and Bylaw Services Department last month for parking enforcement, they asked for a report on the feasibility of implementing an on-street parking permit system, as well as the possibility of an online just-in-time parking permit system. Both items are still outstanding.

?Concerns have been raised regarding enforcement of the overnight parking restrictions at Town Park in the absence of an alternative solution such as parking permits,? said Techa van Leeuwen, Aurora's Director of Building and Bylaw Services, in a report to Council. ?Understanding that there may have been an expectation that a parking permit system would be in place prior to March 1, staff is advising enforcement at Town Park will remain inactive until the feasibility study is completed and recommendations are adopted by Council.

?Staff is committed to reviewing the feasibility of a parking permit system at all our facilities and on our roads. A Town-wide parking strategy will be developed as part of a comprehensive traffic review with stakeholder engagement.?

Ms. van Leeuwen indicated last week parking will remain status quo for between four to six months.

?That is wonderful to hear because I have been contacted by a number of people who, through no fault of their own, would have been penalized by not being able to park at Town Park anymore,? said Councillor Michael Thompson. ?Once we sort it out, which will be wonderful because we do need to sort it out, this at least gives them some time for their landlords and property owners to get their parking situation corrected and it won't unduly punish those renters who have no control over that.

?We should have something in place for people so that they don't get ticketed for parking on the street.?

A similar view was offered by Mayor Geoff Dawe who said everyone around the Council table was likely to have heard these concerns, but talks also need to take into consideration commuters who are flocking to park at Town Park when they are unable to find adequate room for parking at the nearby GO station.

?We have had discussions with GO Transit as well in terms of what they're doing for parking,? he said. ?[Aurora CAO Neil] Garbe and I met with GO about a month and a half ago. They do have other plans and GO recently announced a parking garage and station at Bloomington and the 404 where the track crosses, which is to be completed by the end of 2016. They too are recognizing there is an issue. They're a victim of their own success, maybe, which is a good thing ? but annoying for most people.?