

Classic case of a problem resulting from a "solution" - the law of unintended consequences - ie. poor planning. - cjk

Expanded South Surrey park-and-ride lot loses patrons after \$2 fee added

Surrey city officials are poised to impose parking restrictions in the surrounding neighbourhood

BY KELLY SINOSKI, VANCOUVER SUN JANUARY 15, 2014



Surrey city officials are poised to impose parking restrictions around the South Surrey park-and-ride lot, following complaints that drivers are clogging local streets to avoid a \$2 parking fee at the lot.

Photograph by: Surrey Now, ...

METRO VANCOUVER -- Surrey city officials are poised to impose parking restrictions around the South Surrey park-and-ride lot, following complaints that drivers are clogging local streets to avoid a \$2 parking fee at the lot.

Coun. Tom Gill said the issue will likely be raised at the transportation and infrastructure committee Monday and will probably involve posting 'no parking' signs around the area.

The city has shied away from Vancouver's practice of having permit-only residential areas, he said, and likely won't adopt that here.

"We are looking at a new strategy," Gill said. "I would suggest we're going to be forced to look at some sort of parking restrictions on the side streets given the demand."

The situation arose last November following a decision by TransLink to impose a \$2 parking fee at the park-and-ride, which had previously been free of charge. The fee coincided with the opening of a

\$4.5-million provincially funded expansion of the lot, which had been over-capacity for years beforehand.

In 2012, for instance, TransLink had a tow truck on the lot during this week's morning rush hours to deal with a rash of illegal parking as a result of the overcrowding. Some drivers were parking at curbs, double parking, or blocking other cars and buses.

But despite nearly doubling the size of the lot to 840 spaces, it appears fewer people are using it. TransLink's Sani Zein estimates there's been at least a 20 per cent drop in drivers using the lot, but many argue the reduction is far worse. TransLink is doing more surveys to get the actual numbers.

"The introduction of pay parking has reduced demand and we're definitely seeing (traffic) drop," Zein said. "We always expect that when you go from zero to something it will affect demand."

TransLink has also recorded more vandalism at the lot, specifically to the pay parking kiosks, he added. TransLink has beefed up security and is looking at stronger housing for the parking machines, Zein said, while continuing to monitor the lot.

"There may be some elements of frustration there," he said.

TransLink decided to add or increase parking fees at its park and ride lots last year to make the system more consistent and encourage people to take transit to SkyTrain stations or bus loops instead of driving. The fees are based in the price of real estate in specific areas.

The Scott Road park-and-ride, for instance, charges commuters \$3 per day. Richmond's Bridgeport station, which has a partnership with the River Rock Casino, charges \$2.50 per day.

Gill noted parking fees at Scott Road SkyTrain haven't had an effect on parking levels, but noted that area is likely more convenient for drivers because they can just hop on a SkyTrain, whereas those in South Surrey would need to take at least one bus before transferring to other modes of transit.

"I don't blame those people for trying to save the extra two dollars," he said. "Everything that's happening in the community is contrary to the objectives of trying to get people to take transit."

Zein said the fees will remain in place. "We know Surrey, and particularly South Surrey, are growing rapidly and the demand will be there in the future."

ksinoski@vancouversun.com

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