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DISTRICT OF WEST VANCOUVER
750 17TH STREET, WEST VANCOUVER BC V7V 3T3

COUNCIL REPORT

Date:	September 16, 2024
From:	Jenn Moller, Director, Engineering & Transportation Services
Subject:	Reduction of Parking Restrictions around Fire Hydrants
File:	1700.09

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the report titled “Reduction of Parking Restrictions around Fire Hydrants” dated September 16, 2024, from the Director, Engineering and Transportation Services, be received for information.

1.0 Purpose

This report has been prepared in response to Council’s April 22, 2024, motion, directing staff to investigate and report back on the feasibility and implications of reducing the no stopping area on either side of fire hydrants from 5.0 metres to 2.5 metres, in order to create additional parking spaces within the District.

2.0 Legislation/Bylaw/Policy

The use and operational rules for a road network within the Province are set out by the BC Motor Vehicle Act. The District’s Traffic and Parking Bylaw supplements the BC Motor Vehicle Act.

3.0 Council Strategic Objective(s)/Official Community Plan

The Official Community Plan does not apply.
Council’s Strategic Objectives do not apply.

4.0 Financial Implications

There are no financial implications currently.

5.0 Background

5.1 Previous Decisions

At its April 22, 2024, regular meeting, Council passed the following resolution and requested that staff report back on the matter:

THAT staff to investigate and report back on the feasibility and implications of reducing the no stopping area on either side of fire hydrants from 5.0 metres to 2.5 metres, in order to create additional parking spaces within the District

5.2 History

Fire hydrants play a critical role as part of the District of West Vancouver's (District), fire prevention system. They are supplied with potable water through connection to underground watermains making up the District's water distribution system. Within the District, Engineering Water Operations maintain and repair hydrants located on public land.

As part of fire suppression operations, the District's Fire Department connects a hose to a fire hydrant port which has a valve which can be opened to allow flow of water. Considerations as to the location of fire hydrant placement within District highways is a function of land use, fire flow requirements, and practical operational considerations. Technical standards and guidance are provided for within "Water Supply for Public Fire Protection – A Guide to Recommended Practice" published by Fire Underwriters Survey and the "Master Municipal Construction Documents (MMCD)".

Part 7 of the District's Traffic and Parking Bylaw No. 4370, 2004, prohibits standing, stopping, or parking a vehicle on that side of a highway within 5 metres of a point on the edge of the roadway nearest a fire hydrant.

The no stopping zone is governed by the BC Motor Vehicle Act, where Municipal bylaws typically mirror provincial regulations as they are not supposed to be in conflict. The rationale behind these laws is that fire hydrants need to be visible and accessible in an emergency.

5.3 Discussion

Creation of Additional Parking

According to MMCD requirements, fire hydrants should be located not more than 150m apart or nor more than 90m from a building, and at property lines in mid-block locations.

Where on street vehicular parking is permitted on District highways, vehicles are intended to park parallel to the direction of vehicular travel

within the adjacent travel lane. A typical vehicle parking length is between 6 and 7 metres in length, depending on the type of vehicle. Reducing the no stopping zone adjacent to fire hydrants from 5 metres to 2.5 metres may have the effect of creating additional parking, but this would be dependant on the specific highway conditions: the length of the block, the location of the hydrant, curb returns and let downs, pedestrian facilities within the public realm and so on.

Legislation

The existing 5 metre fire hydrant setback is a provincial requirement under subsection 189((1)(d) of the Motor Vehicle Act and, accordingly, a reduction of the setback to something less than 5 metres would require an amendment of that section of the Motor Vehicle Act. The District does not have authority to vary the minimum setback from fire hydrants or allow stopping, standing or parking of any vehicle contrary to subsection 189(1)(d) of the Motor Vehicle Act.

The District could ask the Province to consider amending subsection 189(1)(d) to allow a reduced setback or to allow municipalities by bylaw to authorize a reduced setback. Or it could consider asking UMBC to support such an amendment.

6.0

6.1 Climate Change & Sustainability

Not applicable

6.2 Public Engagement and Outreach

Not applicable.

7.0 Options

7.1 Recommended Option

THAT the report titled "Reduction of Parking Restrictions around Fire Hydrants" dated September 16, 2024, from the Director of Engineering and Transportation Services, be received for information.


7.2 Considered Options

No other options were considered. Council may request additional information or provide alternate direction (to be specified).

8.0 Conclusion

This report responds to Council's April 22, 2024, motion directing staff to investigate and report back on the feasibility and implications of reducing the no stopping area on either side of fire hydrants from 5.0 metres to 2.5 metres, in order to create additional parking spaces within the District.

Author:



Jenn Moller, Director, Engineering & Transportation Services