



# Corporate Report

NO: R216

COUNCIL DATE: November 3, 2008

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## REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: Mayor & Council DATE: October 31, 2008  
FROM: General Manager, Engineering FILE: 5480-01  
SUBJECT: Update on Actions to Address Truck Parking in Surrey

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## RECOMMENDATION

The Engineering Department recommends that Council:

1. Receive this report as information; and
2. Endorse the actions documented in this report in support of addressing the parking needs of truck owners in Surrey.

## INTENT

This report provides an update to Council on the initiatives being assessed and implemented to address truck parking needs within the City. Staff is also seeking Council endorsement with respect to some key actions.

## BACKGROUND

On November 5, 2007, Council considered Corporate Report No. R237, entitled "Truck Parking" and approved its recommendations which included that staff:

- *Bring forward a report complete with recommendations, related amendments to the Zoning By-law, Business Licence By-law and other City polices and procedures that would allow for additional truck parking opportunities on properties zoned Light Industrial (IL), either as an interim use on undeveloped sites or as a permanent "third party" use on developed properties;*
- *Initiate a pilot on-street truck parking program, for a six-month trial period and report back to Council on the results of the trial; and*

- *Hire a Truck Parking Coordinator, to coordinate the actions identified in the report and to actively promote and coordinate the development and provision of truck parking facilities in the City.*

General information related to trucks and truck parking in Surrey is contained in Appendix I.

## **DISCUSSION**

A Truck Parking Coordinator commenced work on June 11, 2008. He has been leading the review and implementation of initiatives to address truck parking needs in Surrey.

The following principles form the basis for consideration of initiatives related to truck parking in Surrey:

1. Truck owner-operators should not be viewed as just truck owners but rather as business owners. The provision of parking should be viewed as a necessary part of the business operation.
2. The City of Surrey will facilitate and coordinate truck parking in the City.
3. The demand for truck parking in Surrey is growing at this point in time but will likely level off and ultimately diminish as the City matures, much like what has happened in the City of Vancouver. Truck parking lots will generally be interim uses on land that will be displaced by higher order uses as land values increase.

The following paragraphs discuss the status of various initiatives that have been assessed and/or implemented by staff.

### **Truck Parking Database and Website**

Staff have compiled a database of all the authorized “for rent” commercial truck parking spaces within the City. This information has been incorporated into a customized City map that enables truck operators to independently locate parking lots and spaces and obtain contact information. The information is accessible to anyone through a new truck parking webpage incorporated in the City website.

The webpage will continue to be enhanced over time. Regular updates will be undertaken with respect to parking space availability, which will help truck operators to find parking spaces, including temporary overnight and weekend parking for out of town trucks.

### **Communication/Facilitation Process**

The Truck Parking Coordinator has conducted radio and newspaper interviews to inform the public and local trucking industry that the City is working diligently to assess and implement measures to increase the supply of good quality truck parking spaces in Surrey.

Regular meetings have been held with members of the New Surrey Truckers Association, which is an association of independent truck owner-operators. Through these meetings, staff has been able to obtain feedback on different ideas and initiatives related to truck parking.

The Truck Parking Coordinator has also been receiving inquiries from property owners regarding the potential to use their properties for truck parking purposes. Where potential exists, the Truck Parking Coordinator is facilitating the process toward implementing such parking. This involves evaluating properties with respect to the feasibility for truck parking and explaining the process for establishing an authorized truck parking lot.

The Truck Parking Coordinator's role is being expanded to include working with the owners of sites on which unauthorized truck parking is currently occurring with a view, where reasonable, to steering them through the process to obtain full approval for the parking use. With this assistance, it is hoped that some of the unauthorized sites will be fully approved and can then be marketed on the City's truck parking website. It will also ensure that all truck parking lots are operating to an acceptable standard. The City has received complaints from truck owners that some of the existing commercial truck parking lots are not of an acceptable standard.

### **Improving Temporary Use Permit (TUP) Process**

The City adopted the use of TUPs as a means of varying Zoning By-law requirements for the truck parking lots. When a TUP is approved, it is effective for 2 years after which Council has the prerogative to extend it for an additional 2 years. Council-adopted policy allows truck parking lots to be established by way of TUP without the requirement for hard surfacing of the parking lot and without the requirement to construct a building on the parking lot.

There are several truck parking lots operating in the City without proper authorization. Some have initiated the TUP approval process but are not diligently pursuing approval. The City has been allowing truck parking lots to continue to operate as long as the TUP application is in process.

To increase the supply of authorized truck parking spaces, the Truck Parking Coordinator will be contacting the owners of each unauthorized truck parking lot in the City to explain the process for legalizing the parking lot. He will offer assistance in guiding them through the related TUP or rezoning approval process. He will also explain that the City will need to take enforcement action against them if they do not proceed with due diligence to legalize the use.

It is proposed that the following requirements be included as conditions of each TUP that is issued for a truck parking lot, which will address concerns that have been identified by the truck operators:

- Require sealed engineering drawings for the site layout to ensure adequate drive aisle widths and stall sizes to accommodate the maneuvering and parking of trucks on the site;

- Require that truck parking spaces be visually delineated at all times on the site to ensure that truck parking on each lot occurs in an efficient manner and to ensure that those who have paid for and are relying on parking on the site do not get locked out by the misalignment of other parked vehicles on the site;
- Require that the site be surfaced with materials that do not cause damage to truck tires (i.e., meet certain gradation specifications); and
- Require that adequate washroom facilities be provided on site.

### **Third Party Truck Parking on IL Properties**

Staff conducted a survey and has concluded that there is significant potential with respect to allowing “third party” truck parking on developed IL properties in the City. To facilitate the introduction of this measure, an information package is being prepared to be sent to the owners of each IL-zoned property in the City to inform and encourage the owners to allow for “third party” truck parking on their site as an accessory business if they have space available on site for such an accessory use. This package will include information on the approval process. The Truck Parking Coordinator will assist owners who are interested in pursuing this opportunity by guiding them through the process.

In general, if a developed site is fully paved and has an existing building, the owner would simply require a business licence to allow “third party” parking for which they would collect a monthly rent. If the area on the site on which the proposed “third party” truck parking were not paved, the owner would need to apply for a TUP.

This measure has significant potential to address the current shortage of legal truck parking spaces in the City.

### **Truck Database**

Staff is currently exploring options with respect to developing a more accurate database of trucks that operate within Surrey. Such a database would assist in better understanding the needs of the trucking industry. It appears that if more information was gathered through the business licensing process, such a database could be implemented and maintained in a relatively accurate state.

### **On-Street Truck Permit Parking**

Staff will not be continuing to explore the possibility of “on-street” truck parking in industrial areas of the City. This opportunity appears to be more limited than first expected due to the objections of owners of fronting properties in relation to their needs for on-street parking in support of their business needs. In addition, due to the size of commercial vehicles and the related space required to park these vehicles, only a very limited number of truck parking spaces could be achieved between driveways in industrial areas. The members of the New Surrey Truckers Association advised that this was not, in their opinion, a reasonable solution related to concerns with lack of security and uncertainty about the availability of such spaces on an ongoing basis.

### **Other Opportunities for Truck Parking Facilities**

Staff has met with both BC Hydro and the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure in efforts to determine if land was available from either of these entities for the purposes of constructing truck parking lots. Both parties have informed staff that they would be willing to lease lands to the City of Surrey for constructing and operating a truck parking lot but would not be willing to lease land to the private sector due to concerns with orderliness and contamination issues. BC Hydro indicated that land located under Hydro Transmission Lines could be used but it may require increasing the height of hydro towers to achieve safe vertical clearances from the tops of trucks to the overhead high voltage lines. This work would be very expensive (i.e., can vary up to \$100,000 per tower; depending on the site, many towers may need to be raised).

The primary obstacle to the City providing parking facilities either on City-owned property or on leased land from BC Hydro or the Ministry of Transportation & Infrastructure is that it is uneconomic (i.e., the rents that would be achievable would not cover the costs of construction based on staff analysis). The City is held to a higher standard than private industry and would need to obtain expensive insurance policies in regard to liability and would need to address environmental issues with a higher degree of rigor than has been exercised by the private sector owners of truck parking lots.

Staff will continue to investigate options in this regard.

### **Parking on Agricultural Lands**

The Agricultural Land Commission (the "ALC") has, in two recent decisions related to exclusion requests in the Lower Mainland, set a high standard for the definition of "Community Need" for exclusions. In general, these decisions indicate that the use of excluded land must have a high level of importance for the community and it must be clearly demonstrated that no reasonable alternatives exist within the community or area for the proposed use. Advice from staff at the ALC is that it would be very unlikely for the ALC to approve an exclusion or issue a "non-farm use" permit to allow a truck parking lot to be constructed on land in the Agricultural Land Reserve.

Staff has attended a Surrey Agricultural Advisory Committee (the "AAC") meeting to discuss the issue of truck parking and the potential for consideration of lands in the ALR for this purpose. The AAC advised that it strongly objects to any consideration of the use of ALR land for parking related to non-agricultural uses.

## CONCLUSION

The City is making good progress towards better managing and addressing the parking needs of truck owners in Surrey. A number of the strategies highlighted in this report will increase the number of truck parking spaces available in the City and address concerns associated with current unauthorized truck parking lots.

It is recommended that Council endorse the actions documented in this report in support of addressing the parking needs of truck owners in Surrey.

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VL/JB/brb

Appendix I – Truck Parking Issues and Demand

## Truck Parking Issues and Demand

Key issues identified to the City from truck operators are:

- Insufficient legal parking spaces to accommodate demand
- Long commute to parking facilities
- Overcrowding on parking lots
- Security and safety of existing parking lots - vehicles being damaged
- Need for dedicated and marked parking spaces on parking lots, particularly those that are not hard-surfaced.
- Substandard surface materials on truck parking lots which is causing damage to trucks
- Poor parking lot maintenance with respect to cleanliness, snow removal, de-icing
- Lack of washrooms is unhygienic
- High cost of parking space rentals

The deregulation of the trucking industry in January 2000 has led to a significant increase in the number independent owners of trucks. These owners are not able to purchase or lease industrial land to park their trucks due to the revenue stream of their business operation in comparison to larger companies with multi-vehicle fleets that have economies of scale. As a result, municipalities have seen a rapid increase in independent truckers and the consequential increase in unauthorized truck parking.

Surrey has been particularly affected as it is at the peak of its growth cycle and the recent rapid development has attracted a large number of trucks to Surrey. There are about 9,100 commercial trucks registered to addresses in Surrey. Many of these trucks are accessory to businesses in industrial areas of the City, where truck parking is provided on the business premises. However, there are a large number of gravel trucks that service the development industry and tend not to have a home base in a business area. It is mainly these truck owners who are experiencing the most difficulty in finding legal parking spaces. The number of trucks registered to addresses in Surrey has been growing at a rate of 10% to 12% per year. In recent years, Surrey has absorbed over 60% of the new trucks registered in the Lower Mainland.