PARKING SIGNS PILOT

Phase 1 Public Engagement Summary

January 2022

Background

The City of Winnipeg (the City) recognizes the importance of parking and curbside management, including signage that is clear and easy to understand. Easier to read parking signage is better for drivers, better for congestion, and better for businesses. That's why we are trying out a few different approaches to improve parking signage to make it easier to understand where and when you can park.

On January 28, 2021, City Council approved the implementation of a street signage pilot project on the following street segments in the Exchange District:

1. Bannatyne Avenue between Main Street and Waterfront Drive
2. King Street between Notre Dame Avenue and William Avenue
3. Arthur Street Between Bannatyne Avenue and Notre Dame Avenue

The pilot project is broken into two phases:

Phase 1 (complete) - Install pilot parking guides (facing the sidewalk) to make parking rules easier to understand after you have parked.

Phase 2 (not yet started) - Replace current regulatory signage (facing the street) with pilot signage and install revised parking guides to respond to what we heard in Phase 1.

Engagement

In Phase 1, the City asked for feedback from the general public through a statistical survey (results in Appendix D) and targeted those who used the pilot parking guides to provide feedback on their experience through a brief online comment form (results in Appendix E). Parking guide users in the Exchange were encouraged to complete the comment form from June 7 until July 31 with a chance to win one in ten passes for an Exchange District tour.

The City also reached out to Exchange District businesses through the Exchange District BIZ to ensure their awareness of the pilot and encourage promotion and awareness among their customers.

The online comment form received 219 responses. Although the City had intended to hear from those using the signs in context on the sidewalk, the link to the comment form was circulated on social media and the City received feedback from those who were commenting on the guide without having used it for parking. For that reason, the results are categorized below to represent two response groups.

Promotion

Public engagement opportunities were promoted using the following methods:

- News release - June 7, 2021;
- Signs posted in the Exchange District with QR code and prompt to call 311 (Appendix A) - 35 signs posted;
- Facebook and Twitter posts – 16 posts from June 7 to July 31;
- Email to Exchange District businesses through the Exchange District BIZ (Appendix B) – June 3;
- Letter to pilot area businesses through the Exchange District BIZ (Appendix B) – June 4;
- Postcards to pilot area businesses through the Exchange District BIZ (Appendix C) - June 4, and;
- City of Winnipeg public engagement newsletter with over 5,300 recipients - June 14 and June 24.

Key Findings

- Winnipeggers rated currently regulatory signs (signs facing the street) a 5.6 out of ten on average.
- Clusters of parking signs are the most troublesome for Winnipeg drivers (10% always; 23% sometimes from the statistical survey).
- Those who used the guides were split in whether they liked or disliked the parking guides (36 of 96 liked; 46 of 96 did not like).
- Those who did not use the guides did not like the parking guides in general (105 of 122).
- The most common response when asked about improving the guides was that they were too confusing (51 comments).
- In the online comment form, there was no significant difference in responses between those who park often and less often in the Exchange.
- There was some misunderstanding of the intention of the guides and this misconception influenced the feedback received. Some respondents thought the guides were too complicated and small to read from their vehicle, but the intention is to use the guides from the sidewalk after exiting the vehicle.

What We Heard

The two groups of respondents within the data (guide users and non-users) are compared below. Their responses demonstrate those who used the signs were more likely to like them (Figure 1) and were more likely to find them clear and easy to read (Figures 2 and 3). In both groups, those who did not like the guides outnumbered those who did.

Figure 1: What did you think of the new parking guide?
218 responses

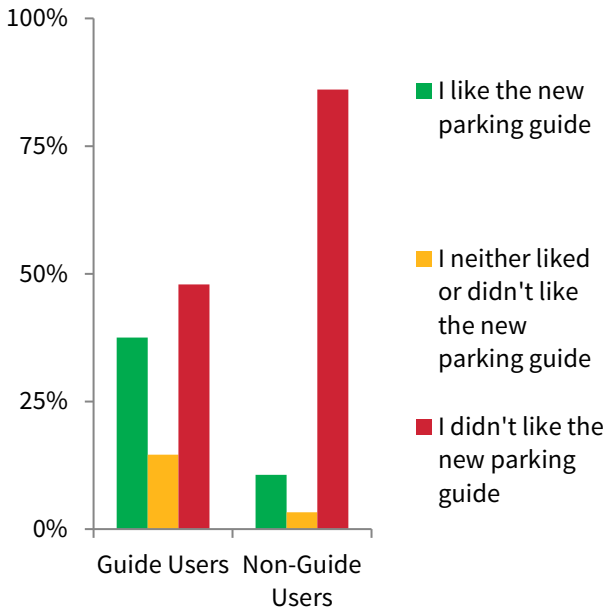


Figure 2: The parking guide was clear and easy to understand
(218 responses, average ranking from 1 - Highly disagree to 5 - Highly agree)

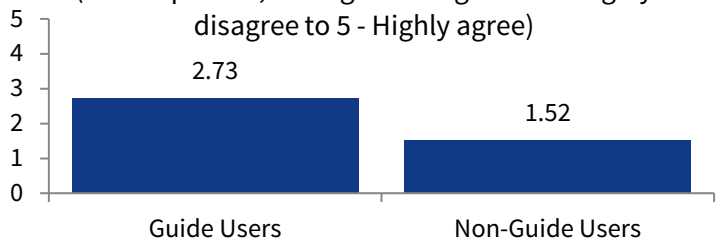
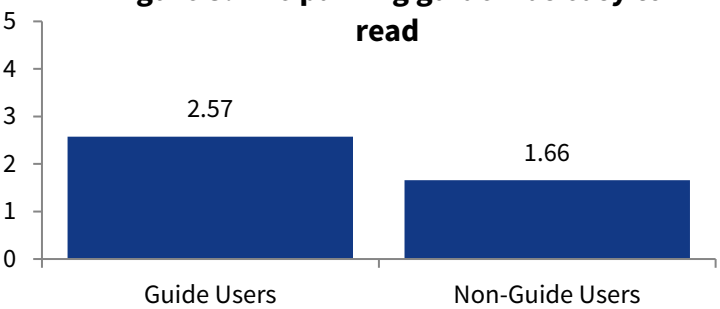


Figure 3: The parking guide was easy to read



The table below outlines general comments on the parking guide pilot. Specific suggestions for improving parking guides and responses to suggestions are included in Appendix F.

What We Heard	How It Was Considered
Rules should be simplified to reduce the need for a parking guide and to make guides less complicated (18 comments). There is too much information on the guides.	Curbside management is a key theme being explored in the upcoming Transportation Masterplan 2050 and the upcoming Winnipeg Parking Strategy. Specifically, both of these policy and strategic planning documents will explore best practices related to curbside management and specifically review options to simplify parking rules on the street.

What We Heard	How It Was Considered
The guides are confusing and difficult to understand (157 comments). They may be challenging to read for tourists, elderly people and people with English or French as a second language (5 comments). 159 of 218 disagreed or highly disagreed that the guide was clear and easy to understand 144 of 218 disagreed or highly disagreed that the guide was easy to read.	The Parking Guides will be redesigned based on feedback provided in Phase 1 of this pilot. The updated design will be installed on the street and public feedback will be gathered again to determine if the redesigned Parking Guides are easier to understand.
22% of comment form respondents liked the guides (49 of 218 respondents). Some of those who used the guides found them helpful and wanted the use of guides to be expanded (10 comments).	Feedback provided as part of this pilot will be taken into consideration for any future plans related to expanding the Parking Guides outside of the pilot area.
Specific feedback on the guides including revisions to the timetable, colours, legend, and size (see Appendix F).	Feedback on the guides were taken into consideration when creating a revised Parking Guide to test in phase two of the pilot. Specifically, the revised guides were updated as follows: - Feedback that the guides were hard to read by color blind users was addressed by using a pattern on the time slots that used the color red. A further redundancy was added in that the pattern is made up of octagons (stop signs) reinforcing the “no parking” message. Because the green or “parking available” slots occur more frequently, leaving them as a solid colour reduces visual clutter. - The MAX time was removed and a dollar sign was added to indicate that the time slot is paid and not free. - The sign title was placed on one line to conserve space. The time designations still sit centred vertically on the sign, but are now white on black background like the title. This helps to clearly delineate a left and right side of the sign. - The arrows were made larger and now reside in their own box created by the black boarders. In the case of an accessible spot, the whole background is blue, a visual reference to accessible parking signs. - Snow routes are now consistently on the furthermost left and right columns. - The legend appears at the bottom of every sign. The space saved at the top is reclaimed at the bottom resulting in clearer, larger type, increasing readability. - For uniformity, all signs are split to show regulations to the left and right hand side of the sign post. This creates a visual consistency which, through use, the user will become familiar with. With a standard left and right side, the user needs only to focus their attention on one side.

What We Heard	How It Was Considered
26% of Winnipeggers think signs are clear. Thirty-seven (37) comment form respondents said the current regulatory signs are fine as is. Ideas for improving existing regulatory signage (signs facing the street): • Free parking is not clear enough (e.g. complimentary hours on Saturday – are the first two hours free?) • Rates for parking are not clear • Text is too small • Rules are too complicated; simplify parking rules • Snow parking bans are not clear enough • Paint curbs to make rules clearer	As part of phase 2 of this pilot, a focus group will be conducted to gather more detailed information from residents on their preference between the current regulatory signs and newly designed signs.

Next Steps

The City is redesigning the parking guides using the feedback collected during Phase 1 and will replace parking guides in the pilot area in Phase 2. In Phase 2, the City will also pilot new regulatory parking signage (signs facing the street) in the pilot area and will collect feedback to determine their effectiveness.

After Phase 2 is complete, the City will make recommendations on the future of the piloted regulatory signage and parking guides.

Appendices

Appendix A – On-street signage promoting comment form
Appendix B – Exchange business email and letter
Appendix C – Postcard
Appendix D – Statistical survey results
Appendix E – Feedback form results
Appendix F – Specific suggestions for parking guides