Agenda – Council – December 15, 2022

Report – Standing Policy Committee on Public Works – November 29, 2022

Item No. 6 Results of a Street Signage Pilot Project in the Exchange District

STANDING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On December 7, 2022, the Executive Policy Committee concurred in the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Public Works and submitted the following to Council:

1. That the results of the street signage pilot project in the Exchange District described in this report be received as information and that none of the piloted parking signage be installed on City streets.

2. That the Proper Officers of the City be authorized to do all things necessary to implement the intent of the forgoing.

Report – Standing Policy Committee on Public Works – November 29, 2022

DECISION MAKING HISTORY:

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On December 7, 2022, the Executive Policy Committee concurred in the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Public Works and submitted the matter to Council.

STANDING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On November 29, 2022, the Standing Policy Committee on Public Works concurred in the recommendation of the Winnipeg Public Service and submitted the matter to the Executive Policy Committee and Council.

COUNCIL DECISION:

On January 28, 2021 Council concurred in the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works and adopted the following:

1. That the Public Service be authorized to apply to the Province of Manitoba for approval to use newly designed regulatory signs, as set out in Appendix C, to be used as enforceable traffic control devices as part of a pilot project taking place on three street segments in the Exchange District, as set out in Appendix A.

2. That the Public Service report back to the Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works no later than 90 days following the Province's approval of the proposed regulatory sign designs detailing the implementation plan for Phase 2 or alternatively, advising that Phase 2 of the pilot will not be proceeding as approval was not received.

3. That the Public Service be directed to report back on the results of the pilot, including a summary of stakeholder and public feedback and any recommendations for expanding the use of parking guides and potentially newly designed regulatory signs to other areas of the City, no later than 180 days following the conclusion of the pilot.

4. That the Proper Officers of the City be authorized to do all things necessary to implement the intent of the forgoing.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Title: Results of a Street Signage Pilot Project in the Exchange District

Critical Path: Standing Policy Committee on Public Works - Executive Policy Committee - Council

AUTHORIZATION

Author	Department Head	CFO	CAO
D. Patman, P.Eng..	J. Berezowsky	N/A	M. Jack

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On January 28, 2021, Council approved the implementation of a street signage pilot project in the Exchange District. The pilot project was initiated based on concerns raised by local businesses in the Exchange District who identified confusing street signage as a possible deterrent to patrons visiting the area.

A committee comprised of members of the Public Service and the Exchange District BIZ oversaw the implementation of the pilot project.

The pilot took place on the following three 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

Parking guides and newly designed regulatory parking signs were installed in the area to make it easier for drivers to know when and where they could park. Throughout the pilot, the public provided feedback on the parking guides and new regulatory signs. The feedback provided was as follows:

Parking Guides
Parking guides were installed on the backs of all sign posts, facing the sidewalk. The guides had a timetable view of all parking restrictions and were intended to be viewed after a driver parked their vehicle to double check when parking was available at the location.

Revised versions of the parking guides based on user feedback were installed at the mid-point of the pilot. The majority of respondents disliked both versions of the parking guides that were piloted. They were reported as being cluttered and unclear with too much information.

Regulatory Signs
Newly designed regulatory signs were installed throughout the pilot area for all types of parking restrictions. The new signs were intended to be more legible and easier to understand when a vehicle was in transit and the driver was looking for a spot to park.

Feedback on the regulatory signs was mixed. Overall, there was a preference to keep the existing regulatory parking signs. A common commentary was that the City doesn't need better signs, they need simpler parking rules.

There was, however, positive response to newly designed accessible parking signage. Features of the accessible signs that garnered positive feedback included the use of blue color, consolidation of multiple signs into one, and improved ease of understanding the parking rules.

Based on the feedback obtained throughout the pilot, the parking guides will not be explored further and the current regulatory signs will remain in place. The Public Service will explore how to update existing accessible regulatory signs to incorporate features that were seen as an improvement. A review of parking rules to simplify parking regulations will also be undertaken as a follow-up project to the forthcoming updates to the Transportation Master Plan.

The street signage pilot project came in under budget at $28,894, with the original budget set at $45,415.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the results of the street signage pilot project in the Exchange District described in this report be received as information and that none of the piloted parking signage be installed on City streets.

REASON FOR THE REPORT

On January 28, 2021, Council directed the Public Service to report back on the results of the street signage pilot, including a summary of stakeholder and public feedback and any recommendations for expanding the use of parking guides and potentially newly designed regulatory signs to other areas of the City, no later than 180 days following the conclusion of the pilot.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS

There are no implications as the report is to be received as information.

HISTORY/DISCUSSION

Background

On January 28, 2021 City Council approved the implementation of a street signage pilot project in the Exchange District. The pilot project was initiated based on concerns raised by local businesses in the Exchange District who identified confusing street signage as a possible deterrent to patrons visiting the area.

The pilot took place on the following three 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 was broken into two Phases.

Phase 1, consisted of installing parking guides on the back of sign posts in the pilot area to help drivers understand where and when they can park. The guides were meant to complement, not replace, regulatory signs. They were intended to offer drivers additional clarity on what parking regulations are in place for the space they are occupying once they have parked and exited their vehicle.



Figure 1: Parking Guide - Phase 1

Phase 2 of the pilot, approved by Council on July 22, 2021, consisted of revising the parking guides based on public feedback received in Phase 1, as well as replacing the existing regulatory signage in the pilot area with newly designed pilot signs. The new pilot sign designs were intended to be more legible and easier to understand when a vehicle is in transit and the driver is looking for a spot to park.



Figure 2: Phase 2 Regulatory Signs



Figure 3: Phase 2 Parking Guide

The total cost of the pilot project was $28,894, which was charged to the 2021 and 2022 Public Works Department operating budget. This actual cost to deliver the project was below the project's approved budget of $45,415. A breakdown of the pilot project costs is provided in Table 1 below.

Table 1 – Project Costs

Project Task	Original budget	Actual costs	(Under) / Over budget
Stakeholder and public engagement	$11,288	$4,881	($6,407)
Production and installation of parking guide signage	$21,073	$11,544	($9,529)
Production and installation of regulatory signage	$13,054	$12,469	($585)
Project Total	$45,415	$28,894	($16,521)

Results of the Pilot:

Phase 1
Phase 1 began in May of 2021 and concluded in August 2021.

At the beginning of Phase 1 a statistical survey was undertaken to gain an awareness of residents' level of understanding of current parking signs and to have a better sense of the extent of the issue with parking sign confusion. The survey concluded that clusters of parking signs were the most troublesome to drivers; as such, the parking guides were designed to complement the existing regulatory signs, presenting an easy-to-read timetable view, denoting when parking is available at that location.

Once guides were installed on the street, engagement activities targeted those who used the pilot parking guides to provide feedback on their experience through an online survey. Parking guide users in the Exchange District were encouraged to complete the online survey with a chance to win one of ten passes for an Exchange District tour. The public service 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 survey in Phase 1 received 219 responses. Although the intent was to hear from those using the signs in context on the sidewalk, the link to the online survey was circulated on social media and feedback was received from those who were commenting on the guide without having used it for parking. As such, the results are categorized to represent Guide Users and Non-Guide Users response groups.

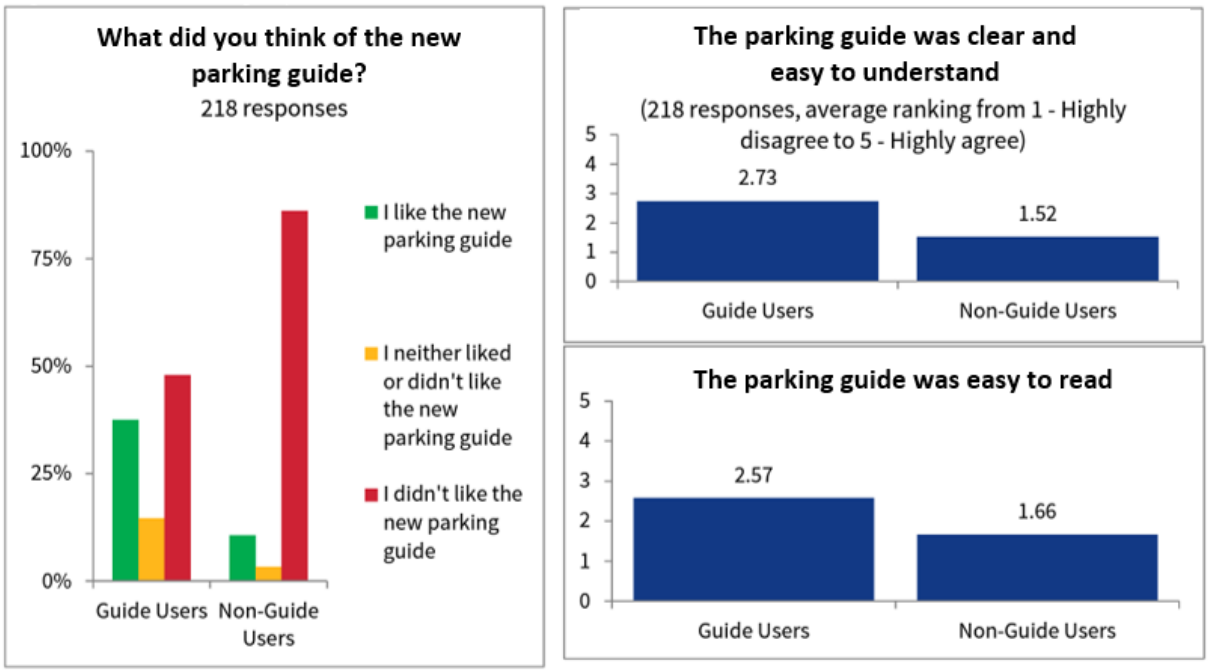

Figure 4: Parking Guide feedback received through the online survey

In both groups, those who did not like the guides outnumbered those who did, and guides were not deemed to be clear or easy to read and understand. The public feedback on the design and placement of the parking guides collected in Phase 1 was that the parking guides contained too much information in a format that was difficult to read or understand.

Phase 2

Preparatory work began for Phase 2 in September 2021, with the new signs installed in January 2022. The objective of the Phase 2 public engagement process was to build from the information gathered in Phase 1 regarding the parking guides, and obtain feedback from businesses in the area and from the residents of Winnipeg on the new regulatory signs posted in Phase 2. Feedback was gathered through an online survey and virtual focus groups.

The survey gathered feedback on the design, readability, and information on the pilot signage. At the end of the survey, respondents were asked if they were interested in participating in a focus group. Two focus groups sessions were held, which focused on assessing parking sign

and guide readability and comprehension. All survey respondents who expressed an interest were invited by email to attend.

The Phase 2 online survey was open to all Winnipeggers to gather feedback about the regulatory and parking guide sign design, readability, and functionality and received 505 responses; of which 124 respondents had seen the signs in person and 59 had used a parking guide. Results presented below focus on people who saw the signs in person as those respondents received a greater appreciation for how the signs looked on-street compared to others respondents.

A majority of survey respondents who saw or used the signs in person were not supportive of the new regulatory signs or the parking guides; 43% disliked the new regulatory signs and 56% of people disliked the revised parking guides. Figures 5 and 6 show the distribution of views on the new signage from respondents who saw the signs in person.

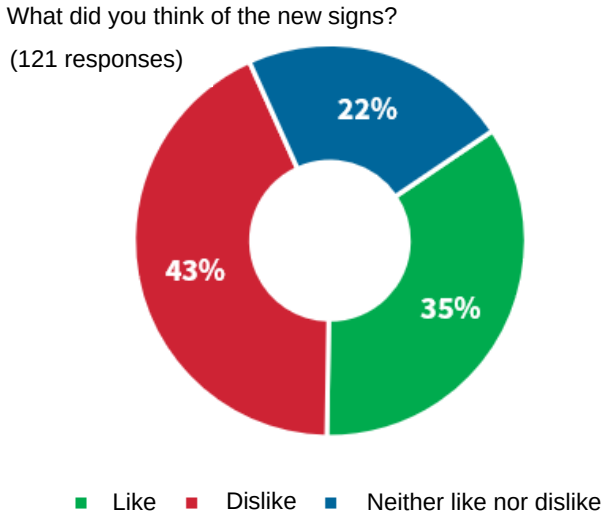

Figure 5 – Views on the Pilot Signs

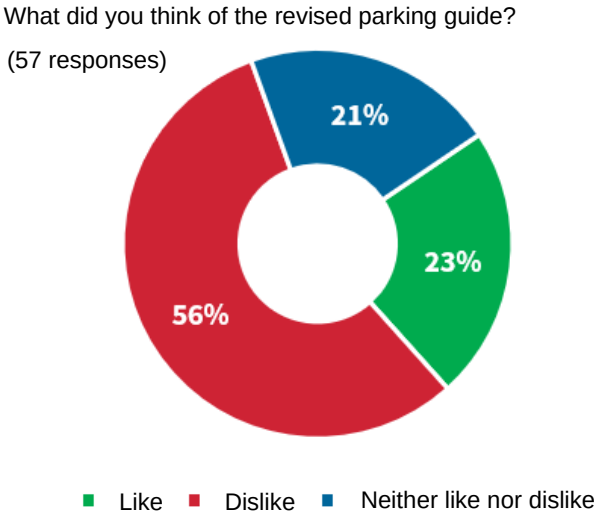

Figure 6 – Views on the Parking Guides

While the majority of survey respondents disliked the new regulatory signs as a whole, when respondents were asked about individual signs and elements of the sign design, there was a positive response to some features, including the sign colour and size, as well as improved clarity of parking rules for the accessible paid parking and accessible loading zones signs.

Two focus groups were hosted by the City virtually, with nine participants in each group. The participants were shown images of the new parking signs with varying parking scenarios to test their comprehension of the new signs and allow for discussion to understand how participants interpreted the signs and where any confusion might have existed. Overall, participants understood the signs 60 percent of the time. Comprehension of the accessible signs ranged highest between 76-81 percent. Figure 7 provides a detailed breakdown of comprehension for each scenario presented to participants.

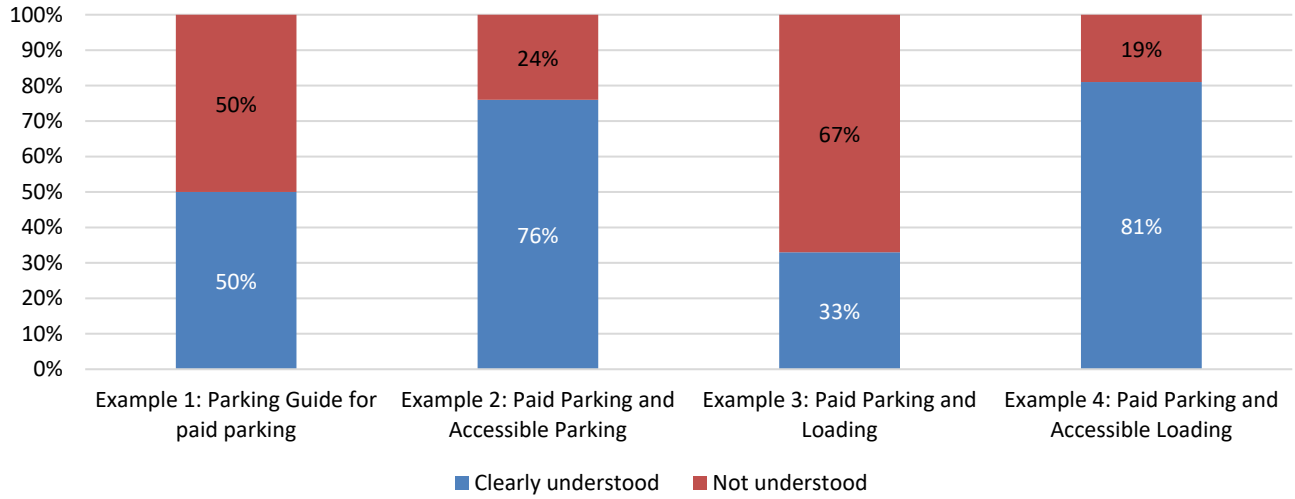

Figure 7: Understanding of Different Parking Scenarios

The top themes from the survey and focus groups were:

1) Understanding the signs: Some people found the new colours and symbols clearer and easier to understand, while some found them less clear.
2) Sign color: Some people like the bright colour signs, while some people prefer the white and black signs.
3) Poor readability: The new pilot signs are harder to read and less visually accessible. The white text on a colour background is hard to read.
4) Status quo: Desire to keep the current signs. The pilot signs were not a significant improvement and there is a preference for the current regulatory signs.

Additional themes were:

- The signs are complicated and difficult to understand because the parking regulations are complex.
- There is support for bilingual signs. However, respondents expressed that the additional text contributed to poor readability.
- Single signs that display multiple regulations are preferred over multiple signs.
- The new signs diminish the streetscape.

Since the majority of respondents did not like either version of the parking guides they will not be pursued further.

As there was an overall desire to keep the current regulatory signs, changes to most regulatory signs will not be made. However, the City will explore redesigning accessible parking and accessible loading zone regulatory signage using the current sign designs as a starting point and incorporating elements from the pilot regulatory signs that were seen as an improvement including use of blue color to improve visibility of the signs, as well as having all parking rules on one sign instead of multiple signs to improve clarity.

The City also intends to reassess parking regulations and curbside management, to simplify the parking rules as a follow-up project to the upcoming updates to the Transportation Master Plan. This will help address feedback heard through the survey and focus groups that parking regulations are complex, resulting in complicated parking signs.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Financial Impact Statement Date: September 21, 2022

Project Name:

Results of a Street Signage Pilot Project in the Exchange District

COMMENTS:

As this report is for information purposes only, there are no implications.

J. Ruby 2022-10-07
J. Ruby CPA, CA
Manager of Finance & Administration

CONSULTATION

This Report has been prepared in consultation with:

- Pilot project sign committee members including representatives from the Office of Public Engagement, Planning Property and Development, Exchange District BIZ, and Public Works Transportation Division.

OURWINNIPEG POLICY ALIGNMENT

Attempts to improve regulatory parking signage support Complete Communities 2.0, Policy 3.6: "Ensure that signage makes a positive contribution to the streetscape and enhances the desired character of key neighbourhoods and districts." (p.153)

WINNIPEG CLIMATE ACTION PLAN ALIGNMENT

N/A

WINNIPEG POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY ALIGNMENT

N/A

SUBMITTED BY

Department: Public Works
Division: Winnipeg Parking Authority
Prepared by: T. Pearce/A. Williams
Date: October 7, 2022
File No: WPA-017-2022

Attachments:
Appendix A: Parking Signs Pilot Phase 1 Public Engagement Summary

Appendix B: Parking Signs Pilot Phase 2 Public Engagement Summary