

PRESIDENT'S INTERIM REPORT

Comox Valley Campus Pay Parking Feedback and Action Plan November 24, 2016

The following is an Interim Report regarding the implementation of pay parking at the Comox Valley Campus. It identifies key issues in connection to the implementation of pay parking, highlights major themes noted in feedback provided by college students, employees and community members, and sets out a preliminary set of actions that will be taken to improve pay parking and to address related issues. A final report that reflects any additional feedback, and takes into account other information (e.g. annualized revenues, and parking utilization) will be prepared and published by June 30, 2017.

BACKGROUND

On January 22, 2015, I communicated that planning was underway for implementation of pay parking at the Comox Valley Campus in the 2016/17 fiscal year. The possibility of establishing pay parking at the Comox Valley Campus had been a consideration for a number of years. Many post-secondary education institutions across British Columbia have long had pay parking at their campuses, as a measure to fund the operating costs associated with providing parking for students and employees. In 2015, there were several factors that precipitated the decision for implementing pay parking:

- growing financial pressures on the college budget due to unfunded inflation and unavoidable cost increases;
- the provincial government does not fund any new parking installation, maintenance of parking facilities or site infrastructure;
- the need to protect student and employee parking from users who would otherwise be paying for parking at the new Comox Valley Hospital; and,
- to support NIC's commitment to sustainability.

In April 2015, the Parking Development Group was hired as a consultant to Facilities Services to provide professional advice and guidance for the implementation of pay parking. They researched parking operations and rates in the Comox Valley as well as the provincial post-secondary education sector.

A Pay Parking Implementation Committee was established to identify parking issues and opportunities towards sustainable parking solutions, generate and review potential short and long term parking solutions, and provide input on the recommendations in the Parking Operational Strategy Discussion Paper, prepared by the Parking Development Group. Representatives from CUPE Local 3479, North Island College Faculty Association, Administration, and North Island Students Union were invited to participate. The Committee held meetings in November 2015 and in March and April 2016.

On May 26, 2016, I published a President's Newsletter (available at this [link](#)) announcing that the Board of Governors approved the NIC Pay Parking Principles and a decision to proceed with the implementation of pay parking. The newsletter described the implementation plan and provided more detailed information on the reasons for the decision.

Pay parking came into effect on September 1, 2016, at the Comox Valley Campus. As expected, we have been learning a great deal through the implementation process and adjustments have been made to operations to improve service in response to experience and feedback from users. During the implementation, the Facilities Services team have been customer service focused in dealing with parking inquiries and issues in a timely manner.

Since the implementation, we have received feedback from a number of employees, students and community members. The comments, suggestions and questions were carefully studied and have been considered for possible follow-up actions. In reviewing the feedback, it was important to keep in mind the NIC Pay Parking Principles approved by the Board of Governors (available on the NIC website [here](#)) that were established at the outset of this project provide the framework for decision making.

It needs to be noted that parking pressures and related costs are a concern only at the Comox Valley Campus. The parking lots at the Campbell River Campus are shared with School District 72. Parking at the Port Alberni Campus is on a large lot leased from the City for a nominal fee, and is never over capacity.

Pay parking revenues from the Comox Valley Campus will be used only at the Comox Valley Campus and will provide funding to properly maintain the parking lots and to add infrastructure such as bicycle shelters, to encourage alternate transportation methods, and to support other sustainability related initiatives.

Questions were brought to my attention on why pay parking was implemented before the hospital opens in 2017. In the fall of 2016, there were as many as 500 workers on site at the hospital on any given day and numbers are expected to increase with the work moving to finishing the inside of the building. There are already significant pressures on our parking and will continue to grow over the next year. Contractors are paying a fee to park on lots at or near the hospital site.

NIC employees who are required to travel from other campuses to the Comox Valley Campus for work, and therefore need their car for work, expressed dissatisfaction that they have to pay for parking. Employees who anticipate frequent regular trips to the Comox Valley Campus may wish to consider purchasing the E-Wallet (instructions are attached) which provides half-price parking rates.

The NIC Travel policy is currently under review for possible revisions and improvement. This policy provides for a kilometer rate reimbursement which is intended to cover the total costs of using a private vehicle. The ability to meet remotely via technology is also an option that can be considered. The available technology in place at NIC includes ITV, Skype for Business and teleconference.

There are a number of similar themes throughout the feedback received that will be addressed in the Action Plan that follows. It has been possible to determine some immediate actions and decisions to address many of the concerns raised, however in the case of some others, it will be necessary to defer final consideration and decisions until more information is available (e.g. after the first semester and first year of pay parking implementation are completed).

CONCLUSION

I would like to thank all the college employees, students and community members who have provided feedback and suggestions regarding the implementation of pay parking.

The ideas and questions raised have been very helpful in shaping the changes and improvements that are being made, and are identified in this report. As previously noted, some of the concerns and suggestions received will undergo further consideration for other possible action in 2017, as additional information becomes available.

The College welcomes additional ideas and suggestions in the future, as we are committed to working with everyone to continuously improve this and other services.



John Bowman
President

ACTION PLAN

The following are the common themes and action plans that will be implemented in response to the feedback and concerns.

A. Parking Rates

The rates were established to align short-term rates with the hospital rates to protect College parking for students, employees and visitors and to provide a range of longer-term parking rates to enable users to select the one that best match their usage.

After further review of the designated rates, it was recognized that the student semester pass rate should align with lowest economy rate at Vancouver Island University (VIU). It should be noted that the size and topography of the VIU Campus in Nanaimo is very different than the NIC Comox Valley Campus. The economy student lot at VIU is at the bottom of a long uphill walk to the campus buildings.

Our current annual employee rate is comparable to the rates at other post-secondary institutions:

Rate Comparison Post-Secondary Institutions Long Term Parking Rates

Institution	Students			Employees		
	Weekly	Monthly	Semester	Monthly	Semester	Annual
NIC ¹	\$15	n/a	\$150	n/a	\$150	\$450
VIU ²	n/a	\$45	\$150	\$90	\$300	\$600
CNC	\$15	\$47	\$189	\$47	\$189	\$567
UVic ³	\$32	\$93	\$279	\$93	\$279	\$333 - \$583
UFV	\$12	\$48	\$150	\$48	\$150	\$300

¹ NIC does not have a monthly rate but has an "Electronic Wallet" that provides half price rates.

² VIU student rates are in the economy lot. Parking in general lots is an additional \$2 per day.

³ UVic's \$333 annual rate for staff is for unreserved parking. \$583 annual rate for staff is for reserved parking.

Action:

- Student Semester Pass:** Effective December 15, 2016, the student semester pass will be reduced by \$10 to \$150 (to align with VIU's economy lot).
- New Weekly Rate:** By December 1, 2016, a 7-day weekly rate of \$15 will be introduced at the parking kiosks. The monthly pass will be removed.
- Annual Employee Rate:** The annual rate for employees will be reviewed at the end of the fiscal year after the complete financial information is available.

Part-time Staff Rate: Rate options for part-time staff were reviewed. There are a significant number of part-time employees who work various percentages and hours and therefore difficult to accommodate all the different needs. The **E-Wallet** may be the most economical way for part-time staff to pre-pay for parking, as it provides access to greatly reduced rates, and gives the most flexibility. It can be purchased online with a credit card through the Passport Canada app.

A student does not have to be the credit cardholder in order to purchase the E-Wallet. Information on E-Wallet is attached to this report.

B. Annual Pass Re-enrollment Rules for Employees

Concerns from employees were raised on the re-enrollment rules. Currently, an annual pass holder who terminates payroll deductions before the end of the 26 pay periods, cannot re-enroll for payroll deductions for a period of 10 pay periods.

In order to limit the amount of additional work created for College Finance staff related to annual parking passes, a set of re-enrollment rules were established for the payroll deduction option. For example, allowing them to be turned off for a 2-week vacation or holiday period would require a lot of additional staff time to manage this process. The re-enrollment rules were set up as a means of recognizing differences in staff leave plans but in the end, were established for too long a time frame (10 pay periods).

Action:

The current re-enrollment rules will be adjusted to a shorter timeframe of 5 weeks beginning May 1, 2017, with further instructions to follow.

C. Designated Staff Parking

To ensure that all parking stalls are available to all students and employees, designated student and staff parking was removed September 1, 2016. This was intended to help ease parking pressures by not having some designated employee parking areas with empty spaces while others for students are completely full. To help ease the pressure, Facilities Services will be adding additional parking for staff and students behind the Village.

Action:

- 1. Parking stalls will be added (approximately 16-18 spots) behind the Village.*
- 2. Further consideration will be given for re-establishing designated staff parking (by June 30, 2017).*

D. Bike Shelter

We will be investing in four new covered bicycle shelters at the Comox Valley Campus that will accommodate 70 bicycles in total. In consultation with NIC staff since June 2016, it was determined that one larger central covered shelter with lockers would provide practicality and security for regular commuters. Some smaller shelters will be added around campus to provide cover for those who wish to be closer to their specific locations.

Action:

Construction of the bike shelters will commence in late November. Further details will be provided to employees and students as the project progresses.

E. BC Transit System

The Director of Facilities Services has been having discussions with BC Transit which has included the possibility of a new bus exchange at NIC to better serve NIC and the hospital. He was also successful in getting the North Valley Connector routed through the College before heading downtown, along with earlier service for some routes.

After the new hospital opens in 2017, we anticipate further schedule and route modifications. A final decision will also be made on a new bus exchange at the campus.

Action:

The Director of Facilities Services will continue discussions with BC Transit regarding improvements to service frequency and routes.

F. Ryan Road Crossing at Campus Main Entrance

Due to the heavy traffic on Ryan Road, it can be dangerous to cross the road at the main campus entrance (across from Cowichan Ave). It is safer, although less convenient, for pedestrians to walk to the Lerwick Avenue entrance and cross at the light. We have made several requests to the City of Courtenay and the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure to install a controlled crosswalk at Ryan Road and the campus entrance. However to date, we have not received approval from the ministry.

Action:

The Vice President of Finance and Facilities will continue to lobby the Ministry of Transportation and Highways and will work with other partners, including Island Health and the neighbouring community, to seek to have a controlled crossing installed at the main campus entrance.

G. Invited Guests

Concerns were expressed in some of the feedback received that the College will be negatively impacted if external community guests and volunteers, who are occasionally invited to visit the campus, are required to pay for parking.

Action:

Guest passes will be provided to Divisional Deans and Directors to be distributed to their external guests in line with established procedures. The clearly identifiable guest passes will be provided by the College and are intended to be temporary with a limited number of hours of use with no impact on departmental budgets.

H. Parking Services Vendor

A competitive Request for Proposals process was initiated and posted on BC Bid and the standard public sector procurement processes were followed. Robbins Parking Service was selected as the best value for the best service.

NIC is in the business of providing post-secondary education and cannot take on the costs and administrative burden of directly administering parking services. Robbins Parking Service is a professional organization established on Vancouver Island in 1958 and has the required expertise, infrastructure and technical capacity to administer pay parking. The employees hired by Robbins to patrol the parking lots are local residents.

Action:

Report on Pay Parking Revenues: *An annual report regarding pay parking revenues and expenses will be published in June of each year.*

I. Carpooling and Ridesharing

In the coming months, the College will develop strategies and tools to encourage carpooling and ride sharing (for employees and students).

Action:

An update on this issue will be included in the Final Report on Pay Parking Implementation in June 2017.

J. Other Issues

It is expected that other ideas, suggestions and questions regarding pay parking will be raised in the coming months. These topics will be considered and addressed in the Final Report on Pay Parking Implementation.

E-WALLET INSTRUCTIONS

How to Load your Wallet or Flex Pass for the First Time

The Passport Wallet or Flex Pass is way to pre-pay for parking that provides access to reduced rates.

- The wallet is sold in increments of \$60. However, for each \$60 charge to your credit card, you receive \$120 of parking credit.
- It can be used for daily or hourly parking.
- You can register multiple licence plates.
- The service requires a credit card.
- It requires daily check-ins with the Passport Canada App or website.
- You must login, select your length of stay and plate number each time you park.
- A 25 cent convenience fee will be charged each time you pay with your wallet. This is built in to the online price.



Step 1: Access the Passport Canada website or app

The Passport Canada app is available in the following ways:

- Website <https://passportca.com/park/>
- Download the Smartphone App <http://www.egoassortca.com/>

If your app is a different colour, than the red and black site below you may be on the US site. Go back to www.egoassortca.com and download the Canadian app, using the links above.



ALREADY HAVE AN ACCOUNT?
BY USING THIS APP, YOU AGREE TO THE FOLLOWING LEGAL TERMS:

[TERMS & CONDITIONS](#) [PRIVACY POLICY](#)
passportca.com/park

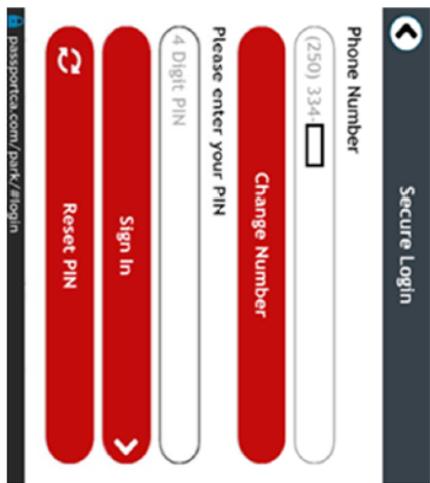
Step 2: Create an account for the first time

To create an account for the first time, choose SIGN UP. You will be prompted to provide either:

- An e-mail address or
- A text enabled phone number

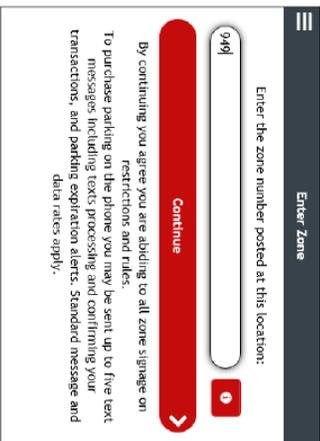
You will be texted or e-mailed a three digit verification code to confirm the phone number/e-mail. In some cases spam filters re-directs the e-mails, so check your junk e-mail boxes if you do not receive your verification e-mail code.

You will create a four digit (numeric) password to complete the process.



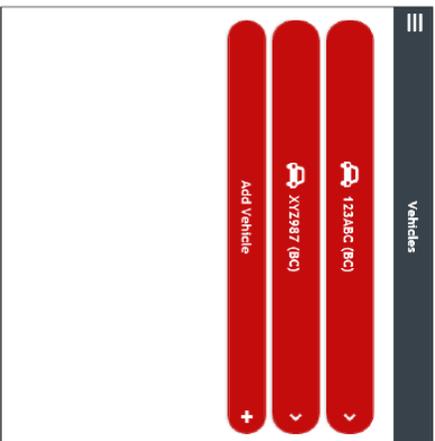
Step 3: Enter Zone 949

If North Island College does not come up, double check your web address is www.pasportkanada.com/ark.



Step 4: Add your vehicle

You can add as many vehicles as you like. Access the menu in the top left hand corner to delete a vehicle.

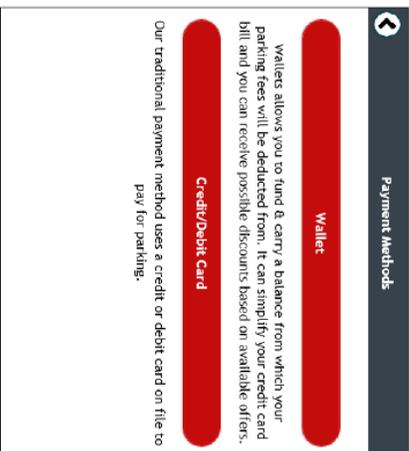


Step 5: Load the Wallet for the flex options

1. To load the wallet for the first time, you must SELECT A PRODUCT to access the payment screen, but as you may not want to make a full price purchase, we will delete this choice in part 5 of this step below.



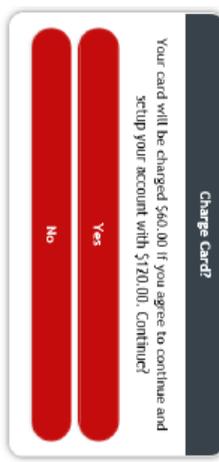
2. When asked for a payment method, choose WALLET.



3. You will see a \$60 for \$120 offer, click BUY OFFER and enter your credit card details.



4. SELECT YES when asked if it is okay to charge your card \$60.

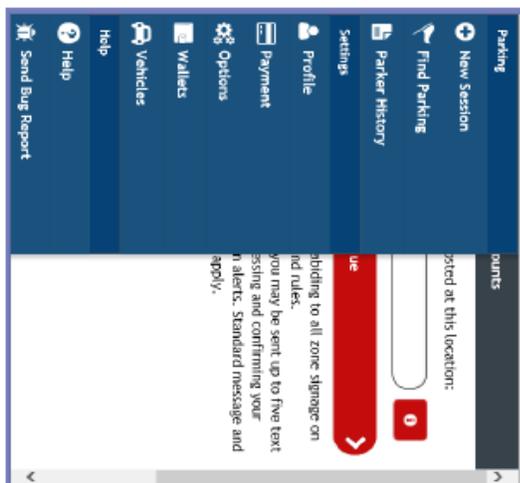


5. When asked to confirm, SELECT NO. This will allow you to purchase a wallet, without immediately deducting an hourly or daily rate.



Step 6: Check your Settings

To confirm your purchase, check your wallet or wallet balances in the setting section of the left hand menu. You should see a \$120 balance in your account.



Please note: The credit card will automatically recharge after it is empty. To stop recharging, unclick the toggle button in your wallet balance. You also have the option to delete your credit card details, if you do not want them stored. Select payment from the menu, choose the card and delete your card.