



STAFF REPORT INFORMATION ONLY

Toronto Police Service – Feasibility of Broadening the Use of the Hand-Held Parking Devices

Date:	May 05, 2008
To:	Executive Committee and Budget Committee, City of Toronto
From:	Alok Mukherjee, Chair, Toronto Police Services Board

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide the City of Toronto - Executive Committee and the City of Toronto - Budget Committee with the Toronto Police Service's report on the feasibility of broadening the use of the hand-held parking devices.

Financial Impact

There are no financial implications in regard to the receipt of this report.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

At its meeting held on March 27, 2008, the Toronto Police Services Board was in receipt of a report dated January 30, 2008 from Chief of Police William Blair regarding the feasibility of broadening the use of the hand-held parking devices.

COMMENTS

Chief Blair noted that, although the potential exists to broaden the use of the hand-held devices, there are a number of issues to be considered. At this time, he would not support any broaden use of the devices.

The Toronto Police Services Board received the Chief's report and agreed to forward a copy to the City of Toronto's Executive and Budget Committees for information.

A copy of Board Minute No. 54/08, in the form attached as Appendix "A", regarding this matter is provided for information.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

Alok Mukherjee
Chair, Toronto Police Services Board

ATTACHMENT

Appendix A – Board Minute No. P54/08

APPENDIX A

THIS IS AN EXTRACT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC MEETING OF THE TORONTO POLICE SERVICES BOARD HELD ON MARCH 27, 2008

#P54. FEASIBILITY OF BROADENING THE USE OF THE HAND-HELD PARKING DEVICES

The Board was in receipt of the following report January 30, 2008 from William Blair, Chief of Police:

Subject: FEASIBILITY OF BROADENING THE USE OF THE HAND-HELD PARKING DEVICES

Recommendation:

It is recommended that:

- (1) the Board forward a copy of this report to the City of Toronto Executive Committee and the City of Toronto Budget Committee for their information.

Financial Implications:

There are no financial implications relating to the recommendations contained within this report.

Background/Purpose:

At its meeting of October 18, 2007, the Board received a report on the status of the implementation of the hand-held parking devices project - financial and operational updates. (Min. No. P334/07 refers). The Board requested the Chief of Police to provide a further report on the feasibility of broadening the use of the hand-held parking devices.

The Board inquired whether or not the hand-held parking devices contained technology that could be expanded to permit Parking Enforcement Officers to electronically record other reportable City maintenance issues, such as light standards that are not working.

The Board noted that a broader examination of the use and infrastructure of the hand-held parking devices in relation to other on-going City maintenance programs might provide the potential for further cost-recovery.

The Board received the foregoing and requested the Chief to provide a further report on the feasibility of broadening the use of the hand-held parking devices.

The Board also agreed to forward copies of the foregoing report, and a note that the Chief has been asked to provide a further report, to the City of Toronto Executive Committee and the City of Toronto Budget Committee for information.

The purpose of this report is to provide the Board with information relating to the operational and financial issues that would require consideration, in order to determine the benefits of utilizing the hand-held parking devices, Wireless Parking System (WiPS), for recording and reporting other city maintenance issues should a potential city partner be identified.

Discussion:

Asset Maintenance Reporting from the Field

Using the WiPS software, the hand held devices allow Parking Enforcement Officers to send electronic asset maintenance messages to the Parking Enforcement Unit, Customer Service Section while on routine patrol. Currently, the maintenance issues are associated with pay-and-display machines, parking meters or regulatory signs which are missing, damaged, obstructed or posted in conflict. The Toronto Parking Authority and Transportation Services have a maintenance role which can impact on parking enforcement initiatives. This module was designed and implemented to streamline information sharing between the agencies and enhance communications. When an asset advisory message is entered into the WiPS system, it is electronically received by Toronto Police Service (TPS), Parking Enforcement Unit, Customer Service personnel, who sort, log and transmit "Issue Logs" to Transportation Services or the Toronto Parking Authority, as appropriate. Once the issue has been addressed and feedback is provided by the appropriate partner, the entry is closed in the system and the reporting officer is notified of the action(s) taken.

Current asset reports relate only to deficiencies directly impacting parking enforcement services and are captured in order to restore, maintain or continue enforcement activities in the affected area. Mitigating the risk of public complaints, parking tag withdrawals and towing refunds, that may arise from outstanding maintenance issues, contributes positively to the delivery of fair, equitable and consistent enforcement.

The potential does exist for expansion of the existing technology to allow the reporting of other reportable maintenance issues and electronically process them to an identified city partner. The feasibility of a project to further develop this potential, requires further study should an appropriate city maintenance program be identified. A feasibility study would be required to provide consideration to the following areas of concern:

Operational Impact on the Parking Enforcement Unit

The reporting frequency and location of potential maintenance issues will have a bearing on the front-line operations of the Parking Enforcement Unit. In addition, the unit's Customer Service Section which provides the administrative "back-end" computer workstations that receive the reports from the field would experience an increased workload. A feasibility study would be required to assess the impact on the following resources of the Parking Enforcement Unit:

- Staffing (both front line and administrative);
- Office space, workstations and additional office furniture;
- The potential impact on efficiency of front line operations.

Efficiencies and/or Program Enhancement for the Potential Partner

The feasibility study also needs to consider the city partner's ability to respond to the increased asset reporting and whether the partner has sufficient resources to respond to these asset advisories in a timely manner. The study should also focus on the potential benefits to the city partner in order to determine if the net benefits can be justified by any additional expenses incurred.

Review of Cost Recovery Options

A part of any feasibility study should be the consideration of an agreement between the TPS and the City for the recovery of costs incurred by the Parking Enforcement Unit as a result of participation in this initiative.

Expansion of the Wireless Parking System (WiPS) Software

It is important to consider that modifications to the existing WiPS software (both front end and back end applications) would be required. Internal resources from the TPS Information Services would need to work in consultation with the Parking Enforcement Unit, the identified city partner and the vendor of the WiPS solution for an initial review of the software and infrastructure work to be performed and to manage and implement the necessary changes to the system. A quotation from the WiPS vendor should be requested and considered as part of the feasibility study for a potential new project. In the event a decision is made to move forward with this initiative to report additional maintenance assets to a city partner, formal Board approval and budgetary funding would be required. The WiPS vendor would then need to be brought on board to participate in the design, testing and launch of the software modifications.

Conclusion:

Although the potential exists to broaden the use of the hand-held devices for additional asset reporting, there are many issues which warrant consideration. At the present time, Parking Enforcement Officers are reporting on asset maintenance issues directly associated to the enforcement of parking regulations. It is in the best interests of our organization to ensure these regulations are enforced in a fair and equitable manner in accordance with the expectations of the public. To expand the reporting of asset maintenance to include areas outside the realm of parking enforcement could be construed by the public as being contrary to the function and mandate of the unit. In any event, the city partner, once identified, would be actively involved with the staff of the Parking Enforcement Unit, TPS Information System Services and the WiPS vendor to conduct an overall assessment of the existing capabilities of the system. This assessment should include a review of the operational impact of expanding the software, the cost/benefit of the expansion of the software as it relates to service delivery and the potential for

cost recovery. Once these criteria are more closely reviewed, a well-informed decision on the future expansion of the program could be made.

Deputy Chief A.J. (Tony) Warr, Specialized Operations Command, will be in attendance to answer any questions that the Board may have regarding this report.

Superintendent Wes Ryan and Mr. Maghfoor Chaudhry, Parking Enforcement Unit, were in attendance and responded to questions about this report.

Chief Blair noted that, although the potential exists to broaden the use of the hand-held devices, there are a number of issues to be considered. At this time, he would not support any broaden use of the devices.

The Board received the foregoing report and requested that copies be forwarded to the City of Toronto –Executive and Budget Committees for information.