

March 22, 2004

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## **BRIEFING NOTE – Processibility of Parking Tags**

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### **ISSUE:**

At its meeting held on March 9, 2004, the Budget Advisory Committee requested that the Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer and Chief of Police provide an update on how to increase the processibility of parking tags (i.e. the ability of staff to process parking tags based on legibility, as well as errors with respect to spelling, dates or times). Currently, 97% of all parking tickets issued are able to be processed (i.e. they are legible and error free).

### **BACKGROUND:**

The Toronto Police, Parking Enforcement Unit issues approximately 2.8 million parking tickets annually, and an additional 250,000 parking tags are issued each year on private property by private Municipal Law Enforcement Officers (i.e. - private security guards).

While approximately 97% of all of these parking tags are processible, 3% are cancelled for the following reasons:

- 0.1% are illegible (i.e. data entry staff cannot read the officer's handwriting);
- 2.1% are spoiled (i.e. an error was made in completing the required information on the tag – such as date, time, address or offence errors. It should be noted that while errors are made, officers replace these tickets in all instances except for when the offender drives away before the officer can replace the ticket. This 2.1 % reflects those instances where the tag cannot be replaced in time.)
- 0.8% are incomplete (i.e. information is missing or the tag was not completed in full)

While the above figures represent all tags cancelled due to not being processible, only the illegible and incomplete tags are within the officer's control, since offenders driving away before a spoiled tag can be replaced is beyond the officer's control. In light of this, the true processible rate is actually 99.1%.

### **KEY POINTS:**

- Finance staff have worked closely with the Toronto Police, Parking Enforcement Unit to reduce the number of non-processible tags. The Toronto Police – Parking Enforcement Unit has increased its “controlled” processible rate from 97.1% in 2000 to 99.1% in 2003 through increased supervisory monitoring relating to quality control.

- Furthermore, with the implementation of computerized, hand-held parking enforcement devices, the number of non-processible tags will be reduced significantly since the hand-held devices will:
  - a) print the parking tickets and transmit the tag data directly to the City's parking tag system at the time the ticket is issued (thus eliminating the problem stemming from illegible tickets);
  - b) use an automated date, time and street address database to ensure accuracy in each of these fields (thus reducing the level of errors/spoiled tickets) ;
  - c) will prompt the officer if information is missing or incomplete, prior to printing the parking tag (thus eliminating the problem of incomplete tickets).
- With respect to collectability, approximately 81% of all tags issued are subsequently paid. Although Toronto's collection rate is one of the highest in Canada, approximately 19% of all parking tags are not collected upon for a variety of reasons. Table 1 below outlines the various reasons why some tags are never collected upon.

Table 1 – Breakdown of 19% tags cancelled or not collected upon.

Percentage of Tags	Reason for Cancellation or Non-Collection
2.1%	Spoiled – error on parking tag – not replaced since offender drives away
0.1%	Illegible – processing staff are unable to read the tag
0.8%	Incomplete – information is missing
2.5%	Out-of-Province – tags issued to out-of-province vehicles where license plate and owner information is unattainable for processing
2.8%	Drove Away – offender drives away before officer can serve the tag
1.0%	Cancelled by Justice of the Peace at Trial
3.0%	Cancelled by First Appearance Facility staff for following reasons, deliveries, utility or road work, by-law exemptions, missing signs etc.
4.0%	Tags outstanding at Plate Denial – tag not paid due to offender being deceased, moving out of province, no longer driving, simply ignoring tags
2.0%	Plate errors – plate does not exist, plate is unattached
1.0%	Miscellaneous – visitors, driveway repairs, funerals, emergencies

- With respect to the spoiled, illegible and incomplete tags, Toronto Police, Parking Enforcement staff are continually reviewing quality control issues on the tags within the officer's control and have steadily increased the overall processibility rate.
- With respect to the out-of-province tags, these tags cannot be pursued since the Ministry of Transportation does not provide license plate or owner/address information on out-of-province vehicles. On March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2001, Council adopted a recommendation directing that the Province be requested to negotiate information-sharing agreements with other provincial and state governments in an attempt to access out-of-province vehicle information. To date the Province has not negotiated any such agreements. As an alternative, Finance staff, in consultation with Legal Services, are in the process of investigating whether the City itself can negotiate information sharing agreements with other provincial and state governments.
- Staff reviewed the Drove Away tags to determine if there were alternate means of serving the tag, such as using a Provincial Offences Act Part III Summons. However, as reported to Committee and Council in June 2002, the significant administrative responsibilities and

resources associated with the use of Part III Summons, is not cost beneficial, given that most parking offences have low fines.

- With respect to tags cancelled in court by the Justice of the Peace, City staff are unable to affect these tags since it is the sole judgement of the judiciary that makes the decision to withdraw the charge.
- With respect to parking tags cancelled by City staff in the First Appearance Facilities, strict guidelines are followed to ensure integrity. Tags are only cancelled once staff satisfy themselves of the validity of the reason (ie - by-law exemptions, missing signs, medical emergencies etc.)
- With respect to the 4% of tickets that remain outstanding after the plate denial stage, the Finance Department recently completed a one-year pilot-project whereby a collection agency was hired in February 2003 to pursue parking offenders with outstanding fines. A full evaluation of the pilot project is being completed and staff will report out to Administration Committee on the outcome of the project by July 2004.

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**Dated:** March 22, 2004