

ST. JOHN'S

“What we heard”

Public engagement process
April- June 2018

Water St. and Duckworth St. Overnight Winter
Parking Restriction -Pilot Project



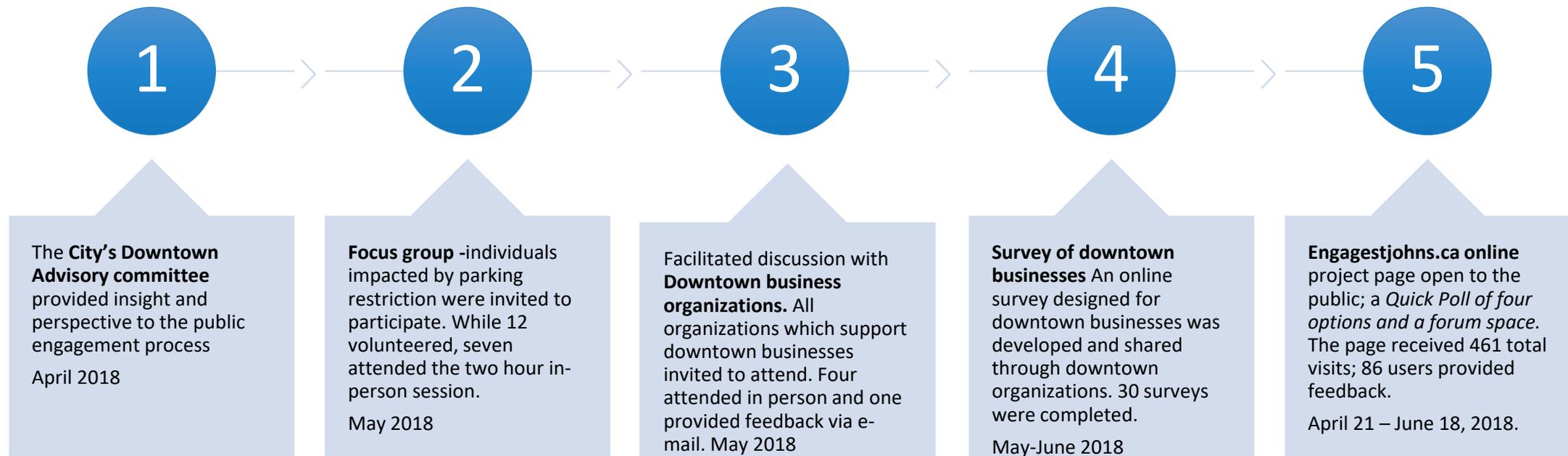
Background

- On January 30, 2018 the City initiated an overnight parking restriction in certain areas of Water St. and Duckworth St. between the hours of 3:30 and 6:30 a.m.
- The pilot project was the result of conversations with downtown stakeholders who noted that cars left on street parking spaces overnight hampered snow clearing efforts which resulted in fewer on street parking spaces being available following snow events.
- The purpose of the restriction was to plow snow close to the curb to minimize impacts on parking and traffic between snow removals.
- Communications informing the public about the change was carried out through a variety of channels leading up to the change and during the change.
- The restriction was lifted on March 26, 2018
- A public engagement process was designed in Spring 2018 to help evaluate the pilot project and inform a recommendation for the future.



Engage!
St. John's

ST. JOHN'S



Engagement Process and Timeline



Engagement topics/questions

Primary topics for engagement included:

- Whether the parking restriction had been effective in achieving its goal
- Effectiveness of communications before and during the restriction
- The level and type of impact on residents, businesses, patrons and employees

Four options for the future were presented through all engagement activities:

- Whether to continue with the restriction as it was piloted in 2018?
- Whether to continue in a modified format?
- Whether to develop an alternative to solve the problem?
- Whether to discontinue the ban and return to status quo?



The city of St. John's is looking for feedback on its winter overnight parking ban – what advice would you give the city?

Keep it, it makes snow clearing easier 57%

Get rid of it, it's inconvenient and doesn't work 31%

I don't know 12%

Total Votes: 1533

VOCM Poll (June 2, 2018)

- During the engagement process, VOCM posted a question of the day related to the topic as well. While not part of the City's overall engagement process, it is worth noting here since over 1500 votes were cast.

Engagement and communications

- When asked how effectively the restriction was communicated, the results were mixed.
- All Downtown business organizations agreed that a solution to the problem was needed but felt the City should have done more engagement and communications prior to the restriction being implemented. This was reiterated in the focus group and business survey.
- There was a view that communications was hurried and confusing but that signs and message boards were good once put in place. There was a view that people may not have understood the why – most focus was on the what – impact.
- Some suggested that downtown organizations and individual businesses could have helped with communication.
- Should the city continue with a restriction, more time is needed to work together on effective communications strategies to ensure awareness and understanding.

Impact on businesses/public

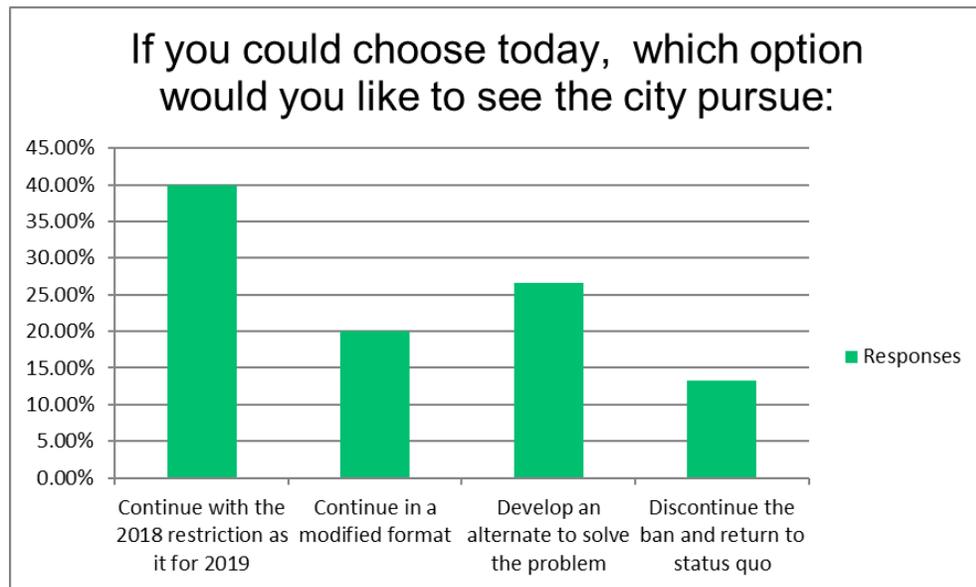
- The level and type of impact varied depending on the type of business.
- When asked if, and how, they were impacted, some businesses noted it was very positive and others noted there were some challenges for their employees and their patrons.
- The general public's comments focused primarily on the impact of parking overnight when visiting late night establishments and towing vehicles when there was no snow.

Options for the future

- Four options were considered – continue as per 2018, continue with modifications, develop an alternate solution or go back to status quo
- **Downtown organizations** and the **focus group** suggested the best approach was:
 - To continue a restriction but with modifications:
 - Have it be incident based
 - Start at 4 a.m. and finish at 6 a.m.
 - Use a beacon system for notifications
 - Communicate with app/e-update (like snow removal and street cleaning)
 - The focus group suggested the idea of a ‘park at your own risk’ – use some form of signage and put the onus on the customer to be informed. Make signage to include where to call/check to see if the restriction is in effect and keep that up to date.

Options for the future

- Through the **Downtown business community survey** it was clear that going back to status quo was not the preferred option. However, there was no majority vote for one of the other options.

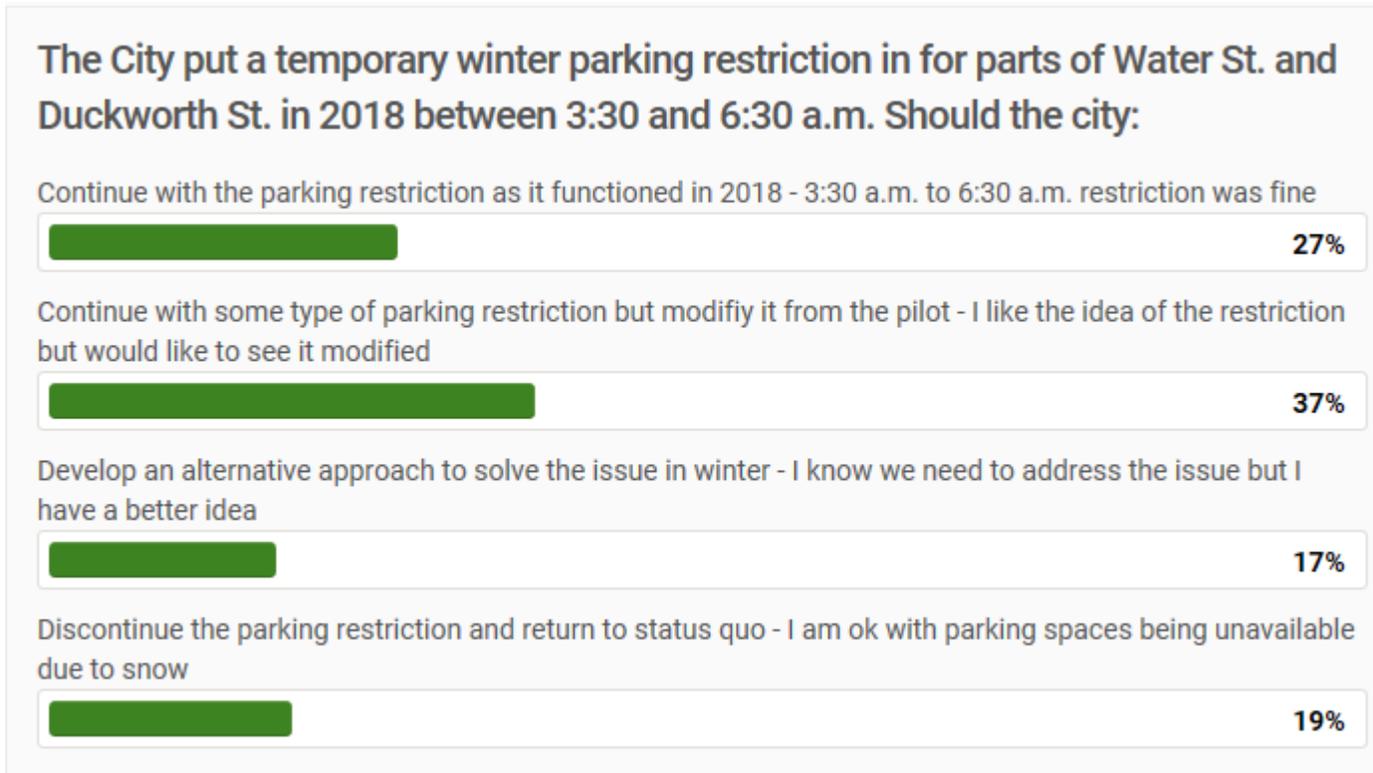


Comments throughout the survey included such things as:

- Not enough snow this year to really see if it worked
- People visited establishments where there was no parking restriction
- It worked, we need to keep it
- Have an incident based system
- Be flexible – weather based
- Ensure there is time to plan well and communicate effectively
- Change the hours
- Consider safety of late night employees and patrons having to park far away from the establishments

Options for the future

- On the [engage page](#), the general public provided their input. Of the 87 people who voted in the quick poll, going back to status quo was not the preferred option. However, there was no majority vote for one of the other options.



Comments provided in the forum included:

- Nice to be able to walk without snow banks
- Restriction is needed
- Ticket but don't tow – towing is too punitive – no snow – no tow
- Need discretion and flexibility
- Consider impact on those who work downtown late nights – parking permit option?
- Consider impact on musicians who play at bars and have to carry gear when bars close.
- Use real time text or e-updates to keep people informed if ban in place
- Consider using restriction for certain nights or alternating different sides of the street

Overall themes across all consultation methods

- In all face-to-face public engagement opportunities it was the view of those in attendance that the objective of the pilot was achieved.
- The daytime users of the downtown need to have snow-free streets and sidewalks
- There is parking available elsewhere, Harbour Drive and parking garages for evenings – people need to know about where to park
- Pedestrians need safe streets at all hours –streets and sidewalks (make them ice free) and stairs that are cleared
- Don't tow when there is no snow. Have a parking ban tied to weather forecast – keep it incident based.
- Improve notifications – Provide real-time text updating to those who work downtown (something the way NL Power does power outage notifications, Website reference or e-updates or 311)
- Change the start time to 4 a.m. to better accommodate those who work late nights and finish at 6 a.m. to accommodate those who start early mornings.
- Start planning early and engage with the downtown community on best approaches.

- Share findings of public engagement process with staff–develop solution/recommendations.
- Meet with Downtown Stakeholder organizations prior to a recommendation being made.
- Bring forward a recommendation to Committee of the Whole.
- Develop appropriate and comprehensive engagement and communications strategy.
- For more information and to stay connected follow the project on engagestjohns.ca
- Any further comments, send to engage@stjohns.ca

Next Steps