

New parking fine option aims to keep people out of court

King Township is offering a new option when it comes to parking tickets, one designed to keep people out of court, reduce costs and improve customer service.

The new option ? called a first attendance hearing ? offers people who have received a parking ticket the opportunity to ask a bylaw officer for a reduction or elimination of a fine based on its circumstances. In the past, anyone ticketed had two options ? either paying the fine or contesting it in court. The new option starts next week.

?Adding this new option will reduce the amount of time spent in court by staff, court administration and defendants. The goal is to resolve parking matters out of court,? said Kathryn Moyle, King Township's clerk and head of the bylaw department. ?This will lead to a direct reduction in cost to King Township and a better customer service experience for defendants.?

When a trial is requested, it can take several months before a court date is scheduled, not including the time the trial itself takes.

?By offering a way to avoid court, our bylaw officers will have more time to devote to parking enforcement, education and compliance, improving the safety of King Township,? Moyle said.

The minimum set fine is increasing from \$30 to \$40 to match increases across York Region and ensure fines have the intended effect of discouraging illegal parking.

Other municipalities typically offer a 50 per cent reduction of the fine if it's confirmed to be a first offence and a valid explanation is provided, such as parking illegally for an emergency situation. Under unique and rare cases, some tickets may be cancelled entirely. Anyone wanting to dispute a ticket can request a hearing in person at 2075 King Road between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. Tuesdays to Thursdays. Hearings are time sensitive so requests need to be made promptly. Also, requests for trial will no longer be accepted by mail. This change allows staff an opportunity to discuss the matter and potentially resolve the matter out of court.