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Toronto councillor aiming to improve information city provides on paying late parking tickets: The Fixer

Councillor Paul Ainslie wants the city's 75-day limit on accepting late payment to be printed on every ticket.



Many people don't know that parking tickets older than 75 days can only be paid at a Service Ontario office. (TODD KOROL / TORONTO STAR FILE PHOTO)

By **JACK LAKEY** The Fixer
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It takes just one high-minded politician to ensure that everyone who gets a parking ticket will know that the city will not accept payment after 75 days.

We recently reported that [parking tickets older than 75 days cannot be paid online](#) or at the city's ticket payment offices, after we tried to pay two tickets online and ended up going in frustrating circles with no idea why.

After talking on the phone to a guy in parking ticket services, we learned that the fine can only be paid at a Service Ontario office and we received a lecture about due dates, along with an admonishment that "if you don't know, that's your problem."

Damn right, bucko. And now one of your bosses is about to fix it.

We got a note from [Councillor Paul Ainslie](#) (Ward 43 Scarborough East), along with a letter to city council's government management committee, proposing that the 75-day limit be clearly printed on all parking tickets, prominently posted on the city website, [toronto.ca](#), and that signs about the limit be put up at the city's parking ticket payment offices.

Ainslie said he recently had lunch with a friend who complained to him that the city wouldn't accept payment for tickets older than 75 days, adding it was also reported in a recent Fixer column.

So he looked up the column, confirmed the details and decided the public should know about the limit without chasing their tails — as we did — while trying to pay on the city website, or lining up at a counter where payment will not be accepted.

Ainslie, who chairs the government management committee, said a policy can be created to increase awareness of the limit with a simple majority vote of the committee, instead of the entire council.

He intends to make a motion at the next committee meeting; if it's approved, it'll be no more than a few months before the information is printed on tickets, posted to the website and displayed at ticket payment offices.

He also wants the city to ask the province to drop its requirement that tickets older than 75 days be paid only at a provincial [Service Ontario](#) office, adding it will require a vote of the entire council.

But Ainslie said he's skeptical that Queen's Park will do it, noting that a hefty \$40 administrative fee tacked onto tickets older than 75 days amounts to a windfall for the province.

While we talked, he agreed that the city's right to tow any vehicle with [three or more outstanding parking tickets older than 75 days](#) needs to be much better communicated, and said he'd add it to his motion.

The bottom line is the public will be better informed about how and where to pay late tickets, and they can thank Ainslie for doing something about it.

What's broken in your neighbourhood? Wherever you are in Greater Toronto, we want to know. Send an email to jlakey@thestar.ca. Report problems and follow us on Twitter @TOStarFixer.

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