

# ***Paradigm Transportation Solutions Parking Study Draft***

## **Executive Summary**

### **Introduction**

Given that seven years have passed since parking in the downtown was last assessed. and that on-going intensification and redevelopment continues to occur. the Town of Cobourg has identified the need for a comprehensive parking strategy aimed at successfully managing future parking demands over the next 10 years.

The primary objectives of this study were to:

- Undertake a parking utilization and duration study in order to quantify existing parking needs within the downtown and waterfront areas;
- Review policies that affect the creation and management of the parking supply including the By-law which governs parking requirements;
- Identify deficiencies in the existing supply, management and operation of parking within the downtown;
- Generate future parking demands for both the five and ten-year planning horizons and estimate the potential impact as a result of planned development .
- Develop a range of reasonable. practical and feasible solutions that respond to the unique needs of the downtown community; and
- Through consultation with stakeholders. affected parties and the general public. develop a comprehensive, parking management strategy that reflects the unique parking needs of the downtown business community and support continued economic growth and prosperity .

It is recognized. that the long term success of the recommended parking strategy will be dependent upon achieving and maintaining the downtown parking equilibrium. where existing parking stalls lost to future development are successfully replaced through the identification of new parking opportunities. while continuing to optimize efficiency of the existing parking supply and promote alternate modes of travel.

The recommendations developed as part of this study are intended to be strategic in nature and are intended to provide guidance for future planning decisions related to parking management and operations.

### **Existing Parking Management Supply and Demand**

Cobourg currently maintains all on-street parking within the downtown. along with a number of public off street parking lots. Shared parking is common amongst various land uses and is provided by way of private off-street parking lots, which are for the most part publically accessible, and used to accommodate parking demands associated with nearby commercial establishments.

In total, there are approximately 2,238 parking spaces available in the downtown. Cobourg owns and maintains 418 on-street. and 755 public off-street parking spaces for a total of 1,173 municipal parking spaces (52%) while the remaining 1,065 stalls are provided by way of privately owned, publically accessible parking lots (48%).

Compared to the 2006 study which reported a total supply of 2,119 parking spaces, there has been a slight increase (5.6%) in overall parking supply over the past 6 years. Gains in parking supply occurred primarily within municipally controlled off-street parking lots.

Several types of parking are offered throughout the downtown and waterfront areas consisting of time limited free parking, on-street and off-street metered / pay and display parking, as well as daily, monthly and yearly parking permits. On-street parking throughout the King Street corridor is time-limited free parking (1 hour maximum) which is primarily utilized by patrons to downtown retail establishments. Fifteen minute time-limited parking is available at select locations and is generally located adjacent to high-turnover generators (i.e. Canada Post).

In terms of off-street parking, the following municipal lots offer time-limited free parking (various durations) with payment options available for durations in excess of the allowable free parking, with the exception of the Victoria Hall lot which does not allow permit parking.

- Trinity Lot (Lot #5) - 2 Hours Free
- Third Street Lot [Lot #4) - 2 Hours Free
- Covert Street Lot - 2 Hours Free
- Albert Street (Lot #6) - 2 Hours Free
- Hibernia Street Lot (Lot #2) - 2 Hours Free
- Victoria Hall - 3 Hours Free

Metered on-street parking is available at various locations throughout the downtown and waterfront areas. In particular, metered on-street parking is located along Charles Street, McGill Street, Queen Street and Church Street with the majority of metered on-street parking located adjacent to Victoria Park. On-street parking rates are generally \$2.00 per hour and are in effect from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., during the period from Victoria Day Weekend to Thanksgiving Day Weekend.

Pay parking is available at a number of off-street parking lots for patrons who wish to park longer than the time-limited free parking; up to a maximum of 8 hours. Off-street parking rates are generally \$2.00 per hour and are in effect from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. the following municipal lots offer pay and display parking:

- Marina Lot
- YMCA Pool Lot
- Esplanade Lots
- McGill Street Lot
- Charles Street Lot
- Paul Currelly Way
- Division Street South Lot

In addition, the Town Offers monthly, 6-month and 12-month permits which can be used to park in specific municipal off-street parking lots.

In order to determine current parking demands, parking utilization and turnover surveys were undertaken. The weekday parking survey was conducted on Wednesday, June 12th, 2013 and the weekend survey was conducted on Saturday, June 15th, 2013. It is noted that the weekend survey coincided with the 50th Annual Cobourg Highland Games which took place at Victoria Park. Therefore the weekend survey results are representative of "special event" parking conditions and are not necessarily indicative of "typical" weekend conditions.

<b>Public On-Street Demand (Supply)</b>	<b>Public Off-Street Demand (Supply)</b>	<b>Private Off-Street Demand (Supply)</b>	<b>Total Parking Demand (Supply)</b>
<i>Weekday Parking Utilization - Wednesday June 12, 2013 2:00</i>			
194 (418)	303 (755)	447 (1,065)	944 (2,238)
46%	40%	42%	42%
<i>Weekend Parking Utilization - Saturday June 15, 2013 (2:00 p.m.)</i>			
353 (418)	685 (755)	638 (1,065)	1,676 (2,238)
84%	91%	60%	75%

### Key findings of the parking survey are summarized as follows:

- Overall weekday parking utilization is low. Peak weekday utilization occurred between 11 :00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. and was measured at: approximately 42% of the *available* parking supply (public and private inclusive). The parking, survey indicated low weekday demand with excess supply, particularly in the waterfront and periphery lots;
- Overall weekend utilization occurred between 2:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m. and was measured at approximately 75% of the available parking supply (public and private inclusive);
- In terms of utilization of public parking facilities peak weekday utilization was measured at approximately 43% while peak weekend utilization was measured at approximately 89%. Although the peak weekend utilization exceeds "effective capacity", it is noted that the survey represents "special event" conditions and is not representative of "typical" weekend periods. Given the increased weekend parking demands associated with the Cobourg Highland Games, the survey concludes that there is sufficient reserve capacity *available* in order to accommodate "typical" weekend parking demands:
- The existing parking supply (all facilities combined) was found to be sufficient in accommodating peak parking demands. Given that surplus capacity exists within the private off-street lots, partnership opportunities exist in which private land owners can potentially offer special event parking in order to reduce demand on the municipal parking system during special events;
- Given that the weekend survey was conducted during a special event, the fact that the existing parking supply can adequately accommodate peak parking demands is encouraging, and confirms that a municipal parking structure is not required at present;
- A sensitivity analysis was undertaken in order to estimate the *level* of impact the future closure of the Second Street parking lot would have on the surrounding parking system. The analysis confirms that there is adequate reserve capacity in which to accommodate any potential parking displacement caused as a result of the future closure of the Second Street parking lot;
- The majority of on-street parking was found to be short in duration [length of stay less than 2 hours). A detailed analysis of the King Street corridor confirmed that the majority of motorists comply with the time-limited parking restrictions during the weekday period. However, a review of weekend on-street parking durations indicated that approximately 26% of motorists exceed the 1- hour time-limited free parking along King Street; and
- Parking durations within off-street public lots were found to be relatively consistent between the weekday and weekend periods and confirmed that the majority of vehicles parked within municipal parking lots parked for short duration stays [2 hours or less).

### Future Parking Needs

Based on the analysis of existing parking demands, it can be concluded that the current parking system [consisting of both public and private parking supply) is operating well below effective capacity during peak Weekday and Weekend periods. However, it is recognized that as a result of continued tourism as well as potential redevelopment and intensification within the downtown, there may be increased parking demands in the future, requiring the existing parking system to evolve in order to accommodate future parking needs.

It is anticipated that some intensification may occur on lands that are currently utilized for parking or on lands that could easily be converted to future low-cost surface parking, thereby resulting in an increased demand for municipal parking while decreasing the future potential parking supply.

The following summarizes the existing and estimated parking demand, supply and resulting parking utilization under the existing and future 5-year and 10-year downtown development scenarios. The estimated future parking utilization rates represents "peak" weekday conditions (period between 2:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m.).

Scenario	Demand Estimate	Supply Estimate*	Utilization	Surplus (Deficiency)
Existing Conditions [2013 Weekday]	944	2,238	42%	1,294
Five-Year Horizon [2018 Weekday]	1,336	2,175	61%	839
Ten-Year Horizon [2023 Weekday]	1,624	2,392	68%	768

*Note: \* Estimated supply includes both public and private parking facilities.*

The ten-year planning horizon represents full realization of the projected 10-year development scenario including the changes in parking supply and demand resulting from intensification, planned development and continued population growth. A review of future parking demands suggests that there is not sufficient redevelopment demand within the downtown to warrant the planning of a municipal parking structure. The current overall parking supply is sufficient to accommodate future parking demands for at least the next 10 years.

Although the need for a substantial increase in parking supply has not been identified, Cobourg should continue to endeavor to maintain the parking equilibrium by planning for the replacement of any large scale loss of public off-street parking through the expansion of existing facilities or acquisition of property for future facilities.

### **Downtown Stakeholder Input**

A stakeholder meeting with representatives of the Downtown Business Improvement Area (DBIA) was held during the afternoon of Thursday July 18, 2013 to discuss parking issues facing the downtown. Through discussions with members of the DBIA who were in attendance, it was concluded that on the whole, the existing downtown parking systems operates satisfactorily.

Most of the concerns raised by stakeholders were primarily related to the lack of clear and consistent wayfinding and parking lot signage within the downtown, need for increased parking enforcement during weekends and special events, improved maintenance of barrier-free parking and pedestrian facilities during the winter months, and a need for consistent parking regulations and pricing within the downtown area.

Discussion concerning the current fee structure and practice of providing free parking within the downtown revealed that the DBIA is in full support of a pay parking system. Specifically, the DBIA expressed support for implementing a pay for use parking system, given that it be sustainable and competitive with other similar sized municipalities.

The allocation of potential parking revenues was discussed and it was noted that parking revenues could be allocated towards "priority" issues which could potentially include:

- Improved sidewalk maintenance during winter months i.e. prompt removal of snow along King Street sidewalks;
- Improved barrier-free parking i.e. provision of ramps between accessible parking stalls and sidewalk along King Street;
- Enhanced wayfinding and signage to direct visitors to public parking areas and identify barrier-free parking facilities and
- Improved bicycle parking within municipal lots.

As such, the project team was directed to examine the feasibility of instituting a pay for use parking system and developing recommendations with respect to rate structure and time-limited restrictions.

## **Recommended Parking Strategy and Required Action**

Based on a review of existing parking conditions within the downtown, identification of parking user issues and concerns, and an estimate of future parking needs associated with planned development, a preliminary parking strategy was developed which was aimed at optimizing existing parking operations, identifying opportunities for future parking expansion, and reducing overall vehicle and parking demands within the downtown. The preliminary parking strategy was presented on Wednesday August 14th, 2013 where members of the public, affected agencies and key stakeholders had the opportunity to review the parking management strategy and provide comment and suggestions for improvement.

Comments received through the working group exercise were used to refine the preliminary parking strategy and develop a recommended parking strategy which included a series of actions aimed at optimizing existing parking operations, identifying opportunities for future parking expansion, and reducing overall vehicle and parking demands within the downtown.

The recommended parking strategy complements and expands upon the improvements identified as part of the 2006 study and takes into consideration the on-going work being undertaken as part of the Downtown Vitalization study.

The recommended program of strategies and actions were developed in a manner in which the parking strategy can be carried out under a range of time horizons through on-going planning and capital budgeting. "Quick Win" strategies are those that can be implemented immediately, which are relatively low-cost and easy to implement. Medium term strategies are anticipated to require moderate planning and budgeting in order to be implemented effectively and are considered applicable over a five-year horizon [2013 – 2018]. Long term strategies may require comprehensive planning, possible land acquisition, and/or considerable cost in order to implement and are considered applicable over a ten-year horizon (2018 - 2023).

## Quick Win Parking Strategies

Strategy		Recommended Action	Cost
Optimize Supply and Increase Efficiency	Maximize capacity by Redesign	1. Identify opportunities to reduce any wasted space in existing parking lots and improve lot design [i.e. improved delineation, pave gravel lots, etc.]	\$35,000
	Enforcement	2. Expand current enforcement efforts to include weekends and special events. Enforcing current parking regulations and pricing during weekend periods will result in additional revenues, optimized utilization and increased turnover .	\$20,000
	Improved User Info and Wayfinding	3. In conjunction with the Downtown Vitalization study, develop and institute a comprehensive wayfinding signage system which is to be located in key corridors to assist in directing tourists to the municipal parking facilities .	\$20,000
		4. As part of the Downtown Vitalization study, develop and institute new, comprehensive parking identification signage which clearly and consistently identifies municipal parking lots. Use of signage similar to the <i>Heritage Harbour</i> signs should be considered in conjunction with standardized <i>Green "P"</i> symbols and clearly identified maximum parking. limits. Municipal parking signage should include comprehensive maps which identify pedestrian linkages in attempts to encourage "park once" trips and promote walking .	\$20,000
		5. Update the Parking Map, including the possible development of a free Cobourg tourism app to accurately identify the location of municipal parking facilities, parking rates, time limits, location of barrier-free and bicycle parking, and identify key pedestrian linkages. Reference to parking lots should be consistent between the parking website and the parking map.	\$3000
	Winter Maintenance	6. Improve winter maintenance snow removal throughout the King Street corridor in order to maintain pedestrian access-parking supply. Maintenance efforts should include snow plowing of sidewalks as well as ensuring snow is removed from	\$20,000
Reduce Parking Demand	Permit Parking	7. Increase Cost of monthly, semi-annual and annual permits in order to reflect rates consistent with other municipalities. increase revenues, and encourage the use of alternate modes of transportation. In general, the monthly parking permit should cost as much, or more than a monthly transit pass.	\$5000
	Bike Racks	8. Provide secure bicycle parking at the Covert Street parking lot, install additional bike racks along King Street at key locations i.e. at store and bank entrances.	\$5000

## Medium Term Parking Strategies

Strategy		Recommended Action	Cost
Expand parking Supply	Public Private partnerships	9. As development throughout the downtown continues. identify public private partnership opportunities to expand municipal parking supply or dedicate portion of private supply to public use.	N/A
		10. Work with private land owners to identify available parking supply that could be utilized during peak periods or during special events to increase available supply.	N/A
Optimize Supply and Increase Efficiency	Improve Aesthetics and Pedestrian Linkages	11. Continued on-going improvement to the overall aesthetics of parking areas by providing landscaping / use of decorative fencing. etc. Priority lots include Covert Street and Third Street parking lots.	\$10,000
		12. Strengthen pedestrian connections through continued provision of sidewalks adjacent to parking areas. Sidewalks are recommended within the Covert Street parking lot to facilitate pedestrian movement and improve safety.	\$60,000
		13. On-going maintenance should include upgrading parking facilities (both on-street and off-street) to include drop curbs and accessible ramps in order to ensure barrier-free access from parking areas to the adjacent sidewalk network.	\$25,000
	Stall Allocation	14. Allocate employee parking to dedicated <i>areas</i> within the peripheral parking lots (i.e. Trinity Lot, McGill Street Lot and Hibernia Street lots) through the dedication of employee parking stalls (signage and/or pavement markings). Consider prohibiting employee parking from occurring within the "prime" parking lots through the use of time-	\$40,000
Reduce Parking Demand	Parking Pricing	15. Institute pay for use parking ,throughout the King Street corridor to reflect the convenience and limitation of on-street parking supply. Suggested parking rate of \$2.00 per hour for maximum 2 hour duration. Use of pay and display machines is recommended over meters due to enhanced user convenience.	\$150,000
		16. Institute pay for use parking amongst the prime off-street public parking lots (Covert Street and Victoria Hall lots) in attempts to better accommodate short duration stays arid distribute overall parking demand. First half-hour free of charge with a suggested subsequent rate of \$1.50 per hour for maximum 4-hour duration. Implementation of pay and display technology is recommended as it offers the flexibility to implement variable pricing.	\$45,000
		17. Revise parking rates within the periphery public parking lots in order to encourage longer duration stays. First two hours free of charge with a suggested subsequent rate of \$1.00 per hour to a maximum of 8-hour (weekday). Permit parking to be accommodated in periphery lots as a means to allocate employee parking. Use of variable pricing to increase weekend parking rates within the periphery lots located near the waterfront (i.e. Esplanade lots, McGill Street lots, etc.) to the current rate of \$2.00 per hour.	\$5,000

## Long Term Parking Strategies

Strategy		Recommended Action	Cost
Expand Parking Supply	New Parking Facilities	18. Initiate planning for expanded Marina parking lot to provide 40 additional stalls with opportunity for further expansion through private/public partnerships.	N/A
		19. If required, consider planning for construction of angled on-street parking along Third Street (at Hibernia Street] in order to provide additional parking supply.	N/A
		20. If additional supply is required, consider initiating planning for expanded parking facility at the Esplanade (40 - 80 stall capacity).	N/A
Reduce Parking Demand	Active Transportation and Transit	21. Promote the use of active transportation through the implementation of the recommendations made as part of the Transportation Master Plan regarding walking and cycling enhancements and use of TDM initiatives.	N/A
		22. Continued implementation of transit supportive measures as per the Transportation Master Plan. Consider charging a higher rate for monthly parking in municipal lots compared to the cost of a monthly adult transit pass as an incentive to use transit.	N/A

## Next Steps

In order to ensure the successful implementation of the recommended parking management strategies, the following Town initiatives are required:

- It is recommended that the Parking Committee and Town staff work closely with the Downtown Vitalization Study Team in order to provide key input into the development of a comprehensive signage system that is consistent, cohesive and maintains a standardized look. The resulting signage program should ensure that signs clearly identify municipal parking facilities and achieve the goal of directing visitors to the downtown and from one parking lot (if full) to the next available lot.
- It is recommended that the Parking Committee undertake a rate review study which will review the current parking fee structure in downtown Cobourg, as well as fee structures of other similar sized area municipalities. Through consultation with the DBIA, the rate review study should aim to develop an appropriate fee structure that considers the unique characteristics of downtown Cobourg while balancing the sometimes conflicting needs of parking users and downtown merchants;
- It is recommended that the Town of Cobourg develop an annual condition assessment program for all municipally operated parking facilities. Initially, the assessment should include a detailed inventory of all barrier-free parking facilities and identify potential deficiencies with respect to hazards and/or obstructions. The data collected through the barrier-free inventory will be beneficial in addressing the winter maintenance issues identified as part of this study. Subsequent assessments should focus on parking lot surface conditions which will be beneficial in identifying operational concerns and/or opportunities for enhancement, assisting in the development of a prioritization strategy for future capital improvements; and
- An on-going monitoring program should be initiated after the completion of this study which would consist of an annual review of parking supply and peak demand. The monitoring program should also

keep track of development / intensification within the downtown and confirm the amount of parking that each development provides, thereby creating a real-time parking inventory.

The monitoring program will also serve as a tool to guide the implementation of the recommended parking strategy. If developments within the downtown consistently result in increased pressure on the municipal parking system, or if a deficiency in parking supply becomes apparent, the monitoring program will help to identify when appropriate action should be taken and where additional supply is required.

***Above is an exact copy of text although some formatting may differ.***