

Background

A report on downtown parking was presented to Council on December 12th, 2017. The purpose for this report was to address concerns that projects in the downtown, in particular, Place des Art and the Elgin Greenway will result in the loss of approximately 140 parking spaces. In response to this report Council requested that staff return to the Finance Committee in mid 2018 to provide a further update on parking concerns and initiatives in the downtown core. This report will provide more detail on the initiatives that members of Council had identified at the above mentioned meeting as they relate to on-street parking, overall parking capacity and staff's current work plan.

On-Street Parking

The City has 438 single space meters in the downtown core. The on-street meters are intended to service short stay hourly customers. The cost of hourly parking is \$1.30 per hour, 2-hour maximum with the exception of Elm Street at \$2.00 per hour with a 1-hour maximum. Concerns have been expressed by downtown business owners that the time allotted maximums are being exceeded and some on-street parking is being used for all day parking. All day parking is more suited to a monthly pass in an off-street lot and on-street parking left available for short stay customers. Downtown business owners support this viewpoint and routinely express concern with the upcoming losses of parking lot space and the scarcity of available on-street parking for their customers. .

In order to more accurately gauge the utilization level of on-street parking, staff performed a utilization survey. The survey was performed over the course of a four week period from late April to late May 2018. Parking was surveyed 3 times daily at 9am, 2pm and 5pm. Aggregated results from the survey indicate a higher utilization in the downtown core and less utilization on the perimeter. The streets most utilized for parking were Durham (76%), Lisgar (74%), Cedar (69%) and Larch (61%). Some of the less utilized streets for parking were Applegrove (15%), Elm West (19%), and Elm East (25%).

Parking Capacity

Major initiatives being undertaken or considered for the downtown core of Sudbury in the near future will have a direct impact on the supply of parking in the downtown core. The proposed Place des Arts and Phase 1 of the Elgin Greenway will cause reductions of 59 and 90 spaces respectively. Additionally, the consideration of a new Art Gallery/ Library and / or proposed Synergy Centre will require parking solutions which will impact supply but are independent of the initiatives described in this report. Any large project in the downtown would require a further review of parking demand and how that demand would best be addressed in terms of future supply.

Staff has further investigated the potential projects as outlined in the December 12th report to Council on parking options. Per Council's direction, staff reviewed/revisited increasing parking supply via the Pedestrian Overpass – Energy Court Expansion, Louis Street/Vincent Street (unopened road allowance) and the Dufferin Street Road allowance. Additionally, staff have met with and received information from parking services providers on a range of possible managed parking solutions for City owned downtown parking lots and on-street spaces. The integration of the recommendations in this report and a more holistic approach to managing parking supply, demand, pricing and subsidy considerations will form a part of our 2019 work plan.

Pedestrian Overpass – Energy Court Expansion

As a result of the supply loss due to Place des Arts, Elgin Greenway and the proposed Art Gallery/ Library and / or proposed Synergy Centre, the Pedestrian Overpass – Energy Court Expansion was put forth as it was an opportunity to add supply to the downtown parking utilizing existing City-owned lands. Figure 1 shows the existing energy court lot outlined in red and the potential expansion area outlined in blue. The existing Energy Court parking lot is comprised of 218 spaces that are approximately 70% utilized. Expansion into the adjacent City owned lands could add approximately 180 spaces. Utilization of this lot is hampered by the perception of the distance needed to walk to the Elm Street railway crossing in order to traverse the railway tracks. The City has an easement agreement with the abutting land owner that allows pedestrians to traverse the property in order to access Elm Street. This easement agreement would not extend to an expansion of the Energy Court parking lot.

Figure 1



There has been private sector interest in partnering with the City in order to build a pedestrian bridge that would link the Energy Court parking lot directly to Elgin Street. This would provide a more direct route to the downtown core, thus increasing the marketability of the lot. In exploring the option of a pedestrian bridge, the downtown B.I.A. and Canadian Pacific Railway agreed to partner with the City to employ a local engineering firm to develop a Conceptual Design report in order to provide Council with a point of reference in terms of scope and cost. Appendix “A” to this report is the Conceptual Design Report for a pedestrian link from Energy Court parking lot to Elgin Street at Larch Street parking lot.

The conceptual design contemplates a covered bridge that is approximately 37 metres in length and 3 metres wide. The concept bridge is covered and is compliant with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (A.O.D.A.) as well as the standards for railway clearance published by Transport Canada. Access to the bridge from Energy Court is provided by a ramp and stairs. The ramp is approximately 140 metres long and 3 metres wide due to the height of the bridge and in order to comply with A.O.D.A. requirements. Access to the bridge via Elgin Street at Larch Street is provided by stairs and an elevator. The concept bridge is constructed from galvanized steel and ramps and stairs are concrete. Other attributes considered include electrical service to provide lighting design consistent with Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (C.P.T.E.D.) as well as closed circuit television cameras on the bridge and in the vestibules for security.

The Engineer's opinion of probable costs for the project is approximately \$7.1 million which includes engineering and construction of approximately \$6.2 million.

The overall cost of a pedestrian bridge and expansion of Energy Court would entail a number of other costs that were not included in the above estimate. Other costs of the project would include land acquisition and parking lot development costs.

- Land Acquisition: As can be seen in Figure 1 above and in Appendix A, land would be required along the west side of the railway tracks in order to construct a pedestrian overpass.
- Lot Development Costs: Costs to expand the Energy Court parking lot with an asphalt surface and pay machines would be approximately \$750,000.

In considering the above estimates, the total cost for such a project would be approximately \$8 million. This scale of project would represent a cost of approximately \$45,000 per space based on a 180 space lot expansion. At this price and assuming 100% capacity, at the current monthly rate structure it would take 91.5 years to pay off the investment. Alternatively, the cost per space of a parking structure according to the Canadian Parking Association is approximately \$30,000 – \$35,000. A parking structure could be built in a more favourable location and along with attributes such as covered parking could garner a much higher rate structure than Energy Court and in turn a lower payback period.

In consideration of the opinion of probable cost and the location relative to existing parking demand as well as future demand that may be driven from an Art Gallery/Library or Synergy Centre, it is not recommended that the City proceed with the Pedestrian Link to Energy Court parking lot. It is possible that the Downtown Business Improvement Area Board and Canadian Pacific will continue to pursue this project and may approach Council for a contribution towards the total cost.

Louis Street/Vincent Street (unopened road allowance)

This lot is located on Louis Street/Vincent Street (unopened road allowance) at the bridge that traverses Junction Creek. This property is designated parkland and is part of the linear park known as the Junction Creek Waterway Park. The intention is for this lot to be utilized by patrons of the park as well as City crews in order to maintain the park. It is not intended to be for all day parking. As with the linear park, this lot is not maintained during the winter months. Using this parkland for all day parking may present some environmental concerns such as salt, oils, and silt runoff due to its proximity to Junction Creek. It is recommended that the area remain parkland and enforcement be increased in this area.

Dufferin Street Road Allowance

The City owns a parcel of property described as the Dufferin Street road allowance, at the east end of Pine Street that could be opened up, and used to create an additional 40 spaces. It is currently a gravel

lot and the intention would be to keep it in this condition. The location of the lot is slightly outside of the downtown core; however it is certainly within walking distance, would not present any traffic issues and would increase parking capacity for long term stays.

The cost to open this lot would be approximately \$40,000 which would be required to grade, provide drainage, fencing, signage and for a pay machine. This is a viable option, and would be relatively quick to implement, however it is not in the high demand downtown core. Due to the ease of implementation, it is recommended that the Dufferin Street Road Allowance lot remain as an option for parking lot development as demand for parking expands beyond the current downtown core.

Current Workplan

The current work plan for capital improvements to parking consists of implementing pay by plate technology, new signage, and lighting improvements at select parking lots.

Pay by Plate Technology

As per City Council Resolution #CC2017-377, staff is exploring the implementation of pay by plate technology for on-street parking in the downtown core. Pay by plate technology enables customers to purchase parking time by using their license plate number. Pay by plate offers some distinct advantages over the current coin operated meters or pay by space that include affecting demand for long term stays, efficiency of enforcement, flexibility of payment and efficiency of operation.

A pay by plate system offers the ability to affect demand for on-street parking by limiting parking to a maximum time frame based on a license plate. Once a license plate exceeds the allotted time frame, there is no further ability to extend the parking privilege in that particular area. Downtown business owners have expressed concerns regarding the practice of patrons feeding the meters and staying in excess of the 2 hour parking maximum, particularly along Cedar, Larch, Durham and Lisgar streets. However, enforcement of this 2 hour parking maximum is quite onerous and difficult to apply consistently given the City's current parking meter arrangement. Pay-by-plate systems manage enforcement by comparing which license plates are parked with the ones that have activated parking sessions. As there is no requirement for enforcement officer on foot to check each meter, pay-by-plate systems can achieve higher compliance rates with less enforcement personnel.

The flexibility of payment methods that is offered via pay by plate technology will also be an advantage for users. Through online payment capability and fixed machines throughout downtown, pay by plate would provide a user with the ability to pay by coin, credit card or online using a smart phone. The current meters only accept coin and in an increasingly electronic age, this method of payment is diminishing rapidly. Additionally, if more time is required patrons are able to buy additional time online

via a smart phone or at the nearest pay station. This level of convenience eliminates the need to walk back to the vehicle to buy additional time providing customers with increased level of satisfaction.

Lastly, operational efficiencies can also be achieved using pay by plate technology. Pay stations do not need to be placed in such close proximity to parking spaces to accommodate customers walking back to their vehicles. As a result, fewer pay stations than meters need to be deployed, as they can be conveniently spaced along key pedestrian routes. For parking operations, this results in reduced coin collection and maintenance costs. Additionally, the availability of real time data regarding parking trends such as utilization can be used to more specifically tailor parking services to meet the needs of the public.

Implementation of Pay by Plate

The implementation of pay by plate for on street parking is being implemented in two phases. The first phase will be the implementation of a smart phone pay by plate application which will provide users with an additional method of payment. The second phase will be to replace existing meters with pay by plate machines.

Phase One

Phase one will be implemented in 2018. It will entail the procurement of a pay by plate application that considers synchronization with enforcement software, ease of use, financial cost and reputation.

Looking to neighboring municipalities of North Bay and Timmins that currently utilize a pay by plate application, staff will prepare and release an expression of interest in order to begin a relationship with a vendor that supports current enforcement software. With options in the software that allow for businesses to validate customer parking, and potential controls to manage the two (2) hour limits for parking through a tiered pricing structure, staff believe this system will better support parking in the downtown core. The onboarding of this app will allow residents to be educated on this different technology slowly while working toward the removal of meters and install of pay by plate machines.

Phase Two

Phase two will require the replacement of existing meters in the downtown core with strategically placed pay by plate machines. These machines will accept various forms of payment such as cash, credit, debit and will require the user to identify the plate of the vehicle. The planning for this phase is being worked on in 2018 with procurement expected in early 2019 and implementation during the summer of 2019. Staff have retrieved information from various vendors and are currently developing the specifications for the pay by plate machines. The estimated cost is approximately \$250,000.

Approximately \$200,000 will be funded from previous years capital budgets and the staff will budget the

remaining via the 2019 Capital Budget process. A significant ancillary benefit of pay by plate technology and machines is the removal of traditional sidewalk parking meters in the downtown allowing for much more economical enhancements to winter sidewalk maintenance.

Signage

City staff has designed a standardized sign that articulates the presence of a municipal parking lot as well as including wayfinding to other municipal parking lots. The signs are constructed of aluminum and are approximately 12 feet high and 3 feet wide. The design is attached as Appendix "B". It is expected that the signs will be manufactured and installed by the fall of 2018. The signs have been quoted at approximately \$45,000 for 10 signs and will be funded from prior years Council approved capital budgets.

Lighting Improvements

Several City owned parking lots have been identified as requiring increased illumination in order to prevent crime and to promote safety. City staff has identified areas of improvement in 3 lots (Shaughnessy Street East, Shaughnessy Street West and Sudbury Arena Annex) and have designed lighting solutions to help address the safety issues. Staff is currently requesting quotations with work expected to commence during the summer and be completed by the fall of 2018. The cost is estimated to be approximately \$50,000 and will be funded from prior years Council approved capital budgets.

Parking and Transportation Demand Management Initiatives

As Council is aware, staff are exploring a number of transportation demand management initiatives aimed at encouraging more sustainable travel options in the long term that over time, would ease demand for parking. Strategies like Transit Pass Programs, Emergency Ride Home, Bikeshare and Carshare Programs, Ridematching, Bicycle Parking and related End of Trip Facilities are all potentially programmable in the downtown.

Council received a report at its June 26th, 2018 meeting entitled Affordable Transit Fare Structure which contained a number of fare structure and subsidy recommendations. An Employer pass is one option available within our Transit fare structure and with the number of City employees working in the downtown, Council requested that staff review the potential for a City staff program to demonstrate leadership in this area and create a program that could ease demand on downtown parking. This report indicated that the employer pass program was unsuccessful to date and that marketing efforts could be undertaken to promote a discounted Adult monthly pass. Staff will explore this option and make recommendations in the form of a business case for the 2019 budget deliberations.

Conclusion

- Due to the location and high cost of development relative to other large parking developments it is not recommended that the City proceed with the Pedestrian Overpass – Energy Court Expansion
- It is recommended that the Louis Street/Vincent Street (unopened road allowance) remain parkland and that enforcement be increased to ensure it is not being used as an all day parking lot.
- It is recommended that the Dufferin Road allowance lot not be developed at this time, but remain as an option for parking lot development as demand for parking expands beyond the downtown core.

Staff will continue to work towards completing the parking lot lighting, signage and phase 1 of the pay by plate projects for 2018 and employer pass program. Phase 2 of the pay by plate project will be planned in 2018 and procured and completed for 2019. Further, staff will include work on a more holistic approach to managing parking supply, demand, pricing and subsidy considerations in our 2019 work plan.