



Working together with our community

Council-In-Committee Meeting – November 15, 2023

Subject: Seasonal Paid Parking – Two-Year Pilot Project Summary
Report Number: OPS-23-029
Division: Operations
Department: Roads
Ward: All Wards
Purpose: For Information

Recommendation(s):

That Staff Report OPS-23-029 Re: Seasonal Paid Parking – Two Year Pilot Project Summary be received as information.

Executive Summary:

Staff Report OPS-23-029 provides information to Council for consideration in relation to transitioning the completed 2-year seasonal paid parking pilot project. Staff are continuing to consult with the community partners and will provide a further staff report in first quarter of 2024 with recommendations on future options.

Discussion:

Staff presented staff report CAO 23-046 Re: Paid Parking Pilot Project Extension at the March 28, 2023, Council meeting. Council passed the following motion:

“THAT Staff Report CAO 23-056 Re: Paid Parking Pilot Project Extension Follow-up to CAO 23-046 and that Staff Report CAO 23-046 be received for information;

AND THAT Council approve extension of a temporary seasonal paid parking program to be implemented in Long Point, Port Dover and Turkey Point from June 15 to September 5, 2023 as follows:

- Seasonal Parking Pilot Project
- Duration: June 15 to September 5, 2023
- Time: 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. daily
- Rate: \$4/hour
- Zones: As outlined in Attachments A, B and C

Resident permits available to Norfolk County residents at a cost of \$35/permit for the 2023 season, with a reduced rate for additional passes per property of \$20/permit.

Permits will have a 4-hour time limit per day. Permits will be issued based on proof of vehicle registration showing a verified Norfolk County address or individuals listed as owners on a Norfolk County property tax notice.

The Pilot Project will include an enhanced communications strategy, improved signage and parking space markings, the purchase of additional pay stations, a data analytics report and an additional By-law Enforcement Summer Student to be funded from the paid parking revenues. Additional signage erected directing traffic to the County paid parking and public parking lots in Port Dover.

AND THAT Council direct staff to bring forward a by-law to implement the seasonal paid parking zones in Long Point, Port Dover and Turkey Point as identified in Attachments A, B and C;

AND THAT Council authorizes a single source supply as outlined in Norfolk County Purchasing Policy CS-02, Section 4.8.4 with Hotspot for a three (3) month term commencing June 15, 2023 and ending September 5, 2023 to provide mobile and stationary parking services as identified within this Staff Report through a cost share agreement structured 80/20 in favour of Norfolk County, managing of the issuance of resident permits at a cost of 20% of the applicable permit fee + \$1.00 per transaction , and development of a data report through Curb IQ at a cost not to exceed \$10,000;

AND THAT Council authorize a single source as outlined in Norfolk County Purchasing Policy CS-02, Section 4.8.4, purchase and installation of additional stand-alone pay stations for the use within the paid parking pilot project zones not to exceed \$56,000; CAO-23-056

AND THAT Council approve the hiring of an additional By-law Enforcement Summer Student to provide enhanced enforcement in the pilot project areas with the costs for the position being allocated from the seasonal paid parking program revenues;

AND FURTHER THAT Council authorizes the Project Manager – Traffic Services to negotiate an agreement with Hotspot for the provision of parking related services for the 2023 temporary seasonal paid parking program for the period June 15, 2023 to September 5, 2023.”

Discussion

Staff have reviewed the 2023 paid parking pilot project data, the financial results, and have sought consultation with the Port Dover Board of Trade, Turkey Point Property Owners Association, Turkey Point Summerfest Committee, Long Point Rate Payers Association, Long Point Country Chamber of Commerce and Long Point Business Group.

In 4th quarter of 2023 staff have reached out to community partners and will be presenting to Council in the 1st quarter of 2024 a staff report with recommendations.

2023 Pilot Project Financials

The table below shows a simplified summary of the pilot program financial outcomes:

	2023 (\$)	2022 (\$)
REVENUES		
Gross parking fees (all payment methods)	239,237	158,303
Resident permits - 152 @ \$20 each	3,040	-
Paid parking fine revenue (issued and collected at time of report)	<u>47,350</u>	<u>33,000</u>
Total revenue	289,627	191,303
EXPENDITURES		
Processing fees and deductions (variable costs)	47,742	37,192
Other operating costs (staff time and consumable operating supplies)	<u>64,418</u>	<u>27,150</u>
Total operating costs	112,160	64,342
Net operating revenue before one-time costs	177,467	126,961
Parking pay stations	55,459	56,960
Signage and communications	12,540	12,538
HotSpot custom development - enforcement	7,632	-
HotSpot Curb IQ Report	<u>8,650</u>	<u>-</u>
Total one-time costs	84,280	69,498
NET SURPLUS	<u>93,186</u>	<u>57,463</u>

Council approved an additional seasonal temporary full-time By-law Enforcement Summer Student for a period of May 1st, 2023 to September 5th 2023 which was to be dedicated to the paid parking pilot. The 4 students were assigned to various communities across Norfolk to cover the three paid parking areas as well as the other communities in Norfolk where regular parking enforcement is required. The cost of this dedicated parking enforcement student is included in the Other Operating Costs line of the 2023 Pilot Project Financials along with other staffing costs and supplies. It is important to note that minor refinements to staffing costs included above may occur as data is further reviewed.

Incremental revenue collected specific to paid parking fines totaled approximately \$47,350 with approximately \$3,375 unpaid as of October 18th 2023. Unpaid fines for matters not set for trial are subject to a collection process through Norfolk's POA office and possible plate renewal suspension through the MTO.

The 2023 costs related to overtime worked by the regular By-law Enforcement Officers over the summer months in relation to the paid parking pilot project, as well as Administration time related to dedicated time committed to the project, are summarized below:

Overtime: 1 regular officer on one date to cover a shift shortage (7 hours OT) \$450
By-law Supervisor Admin time: (24 hours) \$1,500

These staffing costs are also included in the Other Operating Costs line of the 2023 Pilot Project Financials.

2023 Overall Project Scope

Staff set out a project scope in staff report CAO 23-046 Re: Paid Parking Pilot Project Extension where improvements were to be made in Communications, Signage, Accessible Spaces, Payment Types, Resident Parking Permits and Data Analysis for the 2023 season.

Communications

Staff worked closely with staff from the Communications Department to put out social media blasts across multiple platforms outlining the 2023 program including dates, costs, locations and the new resident permit availability. Norfolk's website was also updated with all the relevant information, and new to the 2023 program was a detailed FAQ page covering all aspects of the 2023 paid parking program including resident permits and how to obtain and use them.

Signage

Staff increased the number of QR ("Tap") and paid parking signs in both Port Dover and the Abigail Becker parking lot in Long Point to be more visible and used the same formula for the installation of QR and paid parking signs in the paid parking areas in Turkey Point and Long Point. "Gateway" entrance signs were also installed this year advising visitors that paid parking was in effect along with the dates and times. In Port Dover additional new green "P" parking signs were added directing the public to Norfolk's two paid parking lots located on Clinton Street and the lift bridge at the end of Harbour Street. New "Pay Station" signs were also added at all standalone pay stations to enhance visibility to the public.

As a new initiative, specific parking stalls in all areas were painted with green lines to assist motorists in clearly identifying the allocated paid parking spaces. Feedback to staff regarding the green paint was favourable and appreciated by both visitors and residents.

Accessible Spaces

At the beginning of the paid parking program accessible spots were subject to the regular paid parking fees, as approved by Council, however staff encountered pushback from accessible parking permit owners and others who questioned the decision. Following consultation with other municipalities utilizing paid parking, staff made the decision to pivot on this issue and revert to no-charge parking for the use of accessible parking spaces for drivers with a valid MTO-issued permit. Two (2) new signed accessible parking spaces were also added in Turkey Point on Cedar Drive at the Provincial Park parking lot entrance. These spaces were chosen in consideration of their proximity to a paved walkway extending from Cedar Drive to the accessible washrooms in the Provincial Park parking lot. Feedback to staff on the addition of these two spaces for those with mobility limitations was favourable.

Payment Options

Various payment options were made available for the 2023 season. Users had access to HotSpot's free mobile app, "Tap"/QR signs and stand-alone pay stations with the option of inserting a credit card or the enhanced ability for 2023 to tap an Interac tap-enabled debit card. Cash transactions were not accepted due to the complexity and added expense in staff time of handling cash throughout the season.

Resident Permits

As directed by Council, staff implemented a resident parking permit system, available for purchase on Hotspot's free webpage or mobile app. Residents were required to submit proof of residency, or proof of owning property in Norfolk, along with their vehicle license plate number using their MTO-issued vehicle registration. Customer license plates were then registered in the HotSpot Parking system and recognizable as paid when later checked by enforcement officers. If a resident was seeking multiple resident permits, they were required to purchase a separate permit for each additional vehicle. The cost of resident paid parking permits was approved at \$35 for the first permit with any additional permits set at \$20 each. Due to issues with the resident permit process provided by the parking vendor, the cost for any permit was set at \$20. A total of 153 resident permits were issued for 2023.

Data Analysis

In March of 2023 Council approved the purchase of the "Curb IQ" report from Hotspot Parking at a cost not to exceed \$10,000. Staff were able to renegotiate the cost of this report to \$8500. The Curb IQ report offers a more detailed analysis of the 2023 paid parking project than staff could provide and includes some comparators to the 2022 program. The Curb IQ report will be presented in the first quarter of 2024.

Approved Paid Parking Zones

Port Dover

- As directed by Council, no changes were made to the paid parking areas that had been in place in 2022. Refer to Attachment A.

Turkey Point

- Paid parking was added to Turkey Point for the 2023 season, along Cedar Drive from the Turkey Point Provincial Park entrance to Old Hill Drive. Refer to Attachment B.

Long Point

- In addition to the Abigail Becker parking lot utilized in 2022, two new paid parking zones were added along Erie Boulevard east and west of the Abigail Becker parking lot. Refer to Attachment C.

Parking Rates

The paid parking rate approved by Council for the 2023 pilot was \$4/hour in all three communities. The “1st hour free” feature in place in 2022 for Port Dover was discontinued as resident permits were being made available instead.

Parking Hours

10 am to 6 PM daily

2023 Paid Parking Transaction Data

Source	Transactions	Gross Income	Avg. Payment	% Usage
HotSpot (App)	1,714	8,281	6.09	6.0
HotSpot (QR/Tap)	16,680	142,855	10.8	59.3
Pay Stations	9,751	88,102	9.6	34.7
Total	28,145	239,238	8.83	100.0

2023 Paid Parking Enforcement Data (charges by zone)

Zone	Location	Spaces	Charges
1	Clinton Street lot	14	2
2	Lift Bridge lot	20	22
3	Harbour Street (north)	28	26
4	Harbour Street (south)	13	75
5	St George Street	21	108
6	Walker Street	42	130
7	Cedar Drive (north)	39	19
8	Cedar Drive (south)	67	189
9	Abigail Becker lot	40	128

10	Erie Boulevard (east)	33	24
11	Erie Boulevard (west)	130	108
Total Number		447	831

As of October 18th, 2023 a total of 786 paid parking tickets had been paid out of 831 tickets issued (95%). Of these, 464 were paid at the reduced early payment rate of \$50 (\$23,200) while the balance of 322 tickets were paid at the unreduced rate of \$75 (24,150) for a total of \$47,350 in ticket revenue. The “unreduced” rate applies if a parking ticket remains unpaid after 7 days. The remaining 45 parking tickets, representing outstanding debt of \$3,375, are a mix of those drivers who may be taking the matter to trial and those who simply haven’t responded to the ticket, which will then go to collections after 60 days.

Challenges and Resolutions

As with any pilot project and new initiative challenges were encountered and lessons learned. Staff from various departments worked collaboratively to achieve a financially successful season 2 of paid parking while operating within tight timelines.

With regard to the challenges this year, staff were once again able to pivot and make necessary changes and improvements in a timely manner to ensure the program ran as smoothly as possible. Listed below is a detailed summary of the challenges:

- Five (5) new standalone pay stations were required to accommodate the locations added to the program for 2023. Initially new machines (matching Norfolk’s current inventory) were ordered from the previous supplier. In early May, just 6 weeks before paid parking was to begin, staff were notified that the vendor would not be able to fill the order until late August due to shipping delays. Staff looked into several other options available and chose to instead source the new machines from a Canadian company located in Halifax with an expected delivery date in mid to late June. Due to other delivery commitments by the new vendor MacKay Meters, the new units were not received and installed until July 12th. However, it should be noted the six pay stations purchased in 2022 were installed on time in Port Dover and Long Point this year. The delay with installing the new pay stations did not appear to have had a significant financial or customer impact due to poor weekend weather experienced in Norfolk.
- Norfolk’s vendor HotSpot Parking contacted staff after the 2023 program had begun and informed staff that they had under-estimated the length of time it would take them to re-program and comply with the request for a resident permit system featuring a 4-hour maximum use per day. Residents were still able to obtain a permit and use it, however because the required programming was not completed in time permit holders were able to park for a full 8 hours instead of just 4. At that time just 37 resident passes had been sold and no complaints were received from the public about the temporary change to permit functionality. Staff adjusted the website FAQ’s accordingly to make sure the public was kept

informed. The 4-hour time limit for resident permits became effective July 4th. HotSpot Support then contacted each paid permit holder and supplied instructions on how to proceed with their resident permit using a common 4-digit code. Norfolk was not charged for the delay in programming time or the outreach to permit holders. It is estimated the programming time and public outreach was valued at \$10,000 which HotSpot agreed to cover in full.

- Another issue with the resident permits was discovered once HotSpot began working on programming. HotSpot staff had initially advised Norfolk staff that they could “do anything” with the permit system and tailor it to Norfolk’s needs, a comment relayed to Council by staff in March in good faith. HotSpot subsequently learned that their system would not allow the two different permit payment amounts which Norfolk had envisioned (\$35 for the first, \$20 for each subsequent permit in the same family). With no ability to consult Council in a timely manner, staff made the decision to charge all permit holders the lower amount of \$20 for all resident permits rather than the higher amount which could have been poorly perceived and criticized by users.
- “Gateway” entrance signs, when designed and reviewed on a computer screen, appeared to be what staff were looking for. However, once the completed signs were delivered it was clear that the lettering should have been larger to make them more easily readable to the public.
- During the first week of the program staff received complaints about drivers with a valid MTO-issued accessibility permit having to pay for parking in an accessible parking space in the paid parking areas. Following discussions with senior staff a decision was made to offer free parking to anyone displaying a valid MTO-issued Accessibility permit. New signs were ordered to display this updated decision and stickers were placed on all the information signage posted on the QR/Tap signs, removing the reference to paid accessible spaces.
- There were a few instances where drivers were mistakenly allowed to pay for parking on June 14th, the day before the paid parking program started. This only occurred with the pay stations and all affected customers were refunded immediately. This isolated issue was determined to be a programming error by the machine supplier.
- Cell signal strength was very weak at times at the Abigail Becker lot in Long Point, causing issues with visitors trying to pay with their mobile devices using the QR/Tap signs or via the HotSpot app. The issue seemed to be predominately with Bell customers on the 5G network. If the program is to continue in the future Norfolk’s IT department is confident that we would be able to create a data “hotspot” in any area experiencing poor cell connectivity, at nominal expense to the program.

- Just after the paid parking program began in Turkey Point staff received two complaints from business owners on Cedar Drive asking where their staff would be able to park without paying. Staff suggested that impacted businesses employees utilize free parking space at the Turkey Point Park/Pavilion lot near the intersection of Turkey Point Road and Cedar Drive as an alternative.
- Within weeks of the program starting staff began receiving complaints from upset motorists claiming they had paid for parking but were issued a parking ticket anyway. It was determined, and as we also experienced in 2022, that these visitors had entered their license plate information into the parking system incorrectly, resulting in an “Unpaid” response when an enforcement officer later scanned their actual vehicle plate. Initially staff kept to the approved procedure and held the public accountable for their data entry errors, however negative feedback was received from numerous customers upset that they had paid to park but were being unfairly treated for a simple clerical error. Senior staff were consulted and agreed that Bylaw should void tickets in cases where parking sessions were paid for and where proof was presented that a simple data entry error had been made by the user. In total 176 tickets were voided by Bylaw in 2023, up from 64 in 2022. About 95% of the affected tickets involved customer data entry errors with the other 5% related to cell connectivity issues. Each voided ticket took approximately 8 minutes to handle administratively; a total of approximately 24 hours of staff time to resolve. Staff were able to determine that this was the most common issue in other municipalities using paid parking as well, and that common practice was to void the ticket when proof of payment is made. Should paid parking proceed again, staff recommend that this procedure be retained.
- In early July four motorcycles arrived together in Port Dover and parked in one space in a paid parking area, believing they were only required to pay once for the space that they occupied. Parking tickets were subsequently issued to the other 3 drivers as they had not paid. Complaints were subsequently received by both Council and staff. There was discussion internally on how to best handle the situation going forward and it was decided that because parking in a paid parking zone comes with the benefit of being close to the waterfront and beach that parking should be paid for by all vehicles and not per space. Staff have discussed the matter further and have reached out to colleagues in Central Elgin where motorcycles are permitted to park at no charge in a designated motorcycle parking area near the beach in Port Stanley. Staff feel that we could and should set up a similar area in Port Dover where a high percentage of motorcyclists visit in summer. Should Council wish to pursue paid parking in the future, and include Port Dover, staff will begin the process of identifying a suitable location for consideration.
- The issue of over-sized vehicles in paid parking spaces came up in 2023, in both Turkey Point and Long Point, an issue not encountered in 2022. Specifically, enforcement officers encountered boats and trailers as well as large RV’s taking

up numerous paid parking spaces in prime locations. Should Council wish to pursue paid parking in future, staff recommend a policy of prohibiting vehicles with trailers or Recreational Vehicles from parking in a paid parking area.

- Bylaw received several reports where motorists who had paid for either Turkey Point Provincial Park or Long Point Provincial Park parking online later arrived in the area and parked in a Norfolk County paid parking space instead, believing that where they parked was part of a provincial park. With the two paid parking areas being so close together at both locations it is understandable that there would be some confusion. The few people this affected and who were ticketed had their parking tickets voided. Going forward, staff would include improved communication on our website and would communicate more effectively with Ontario Parks to add a paid parking warning for those attending Turkey Point or Long Point beaches.
- Complaints were received from visitors in 2023 using the Year 1 (2022) pay stations in both Port Dover and Long Point. Common complaints were that the screens were difficult to see and read, the interface was not user friendly, touch buttons were not clearly labelled, and the touch buttons were not very receptive to touch. Similar complaints were received in 2022 when staff had the company change the screen background from white to black to help with the visibility of the information on the screens in sunlight. The colour change was an improvement but did not fully resolve the issues. The Year 2 (2023) pay stations in use in Turkey Point and along Erie Boulevard in Long Point were not subject to the same complaints. Staff reviewed these machines after they were installed and noticed that the screens were set at an angle and therefore visible without having to crouch down to read them and were easily legible in bright light. All buttons were clearly labeled and more receptive to touch, all of which were marked improvements from the previously purchased machines.
- One final challenge for the future of the paid parking pilot project will be the element of staffing. The pilot project is presently being managed by the temporary full time Project Manager, Traffic Services; however, as this position is temporary this position will be completed in March 2024. Staff will make recommendations on staffing within the 2024 council staff report. Possible options being discussed are being discussed for Council's consideration.
- Following the 2022 season and Council approval to extend the project by an additional year, staff researched vendor contracts with other comparable municipalities and leveraged the information obtained to amend Norfolk's contract in more favorable terms for Norfolk, negotiating an 85/15 split where Norfolk had agreed to an 80/20 retention in 2022.

Financial Services Comments:

Finance staff collaborated with Operations and By-law staff to prepare the financial information presented within the body of this report. Based on a reconciliation of the 2023 Paid Parking Pilot program activity, the year 2 pilot generated an overall surplus of approximately \$93,200 from 447 available parking spaces within Long Point, Turkey Point and Port Dover. Net operating revenue before one-time costs was \$177,500 or 61.3% of total revenue, which represents the potential ongoing benefit that could be achieved using the current year program scope (i.e., number of parking spaces, zones, parking rates, and staffing level, etc.).

For comparison, the 2022 Pilot program generated a net surplus of \$57,463 (revised per CAO-23-046 from March 21, 2023 CIC) from 182 parking spaces in Long Point and Port Dover with net operating revenue of \$126,961 before one-time costs, which represents an operating margin of 66.4%. It should be noted that Other Operating Costs consist primarily of Roads and By-law staff time to support the program, which are relatively fixed within a reasonable activity level. This accounts for the higher operating margin in 2023 given the similar resource allocation in both years.

The total surplus for the two-year paid parking pilot program is \$150,650, with \$57,463 currently being held in the contingency reserve. Recommendations on the use of these funds will be presented in a future report to Council.

Interdepartmental Implications:

N/A

Consultation(s):

Staff have consulted with The Municipality of Central Elgin
The Municipality of Lambton Shores
IBI Group (HotSpot Parking)
IBI Group (Curb IQ)
Waterfront Community Partners

Strategic Plan Linkage:

This report aligns with the 2022-2026 Council Strategic Priority Serving Norfolk - Ensuring a fiscally responsible organization with engaged employees who value excellent service.

Explanation: Facilitating innovative solutions that address infrastructure management strategies, modernizing Norfolk County's approach to by-law development and enforcement and engaging employees to work collaboratively across multiple divisions with the goal of finding savings and efficiencies which support a fiscally responsible organization.

Conclusion:

Based on the summaries provided in relation to the paid parking pilot project in 2022, and 2023, the project has generated positive additional revenue for Norfolk County. Staff have been able to meet technological and logistical challenges as they arose to meet the resolutions and approvals from council.

Attachment(s):

- A - Map (Port Dover)
- B - Map (Turkey Point)
- C - Map (Long Point)

Approval:

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