

Council-In-Committee Meeting – December 14, 2021

Subject: Seasonal Parking Pilot Project
Report Number: CAO 21-85
Division: Chief Administrative Officer
Department: Clerks and By-Law
Purpose: For Decision

Recommendation(s):

THAT Staff Report CAO 21-85 regarding Seasonal Parking Pilot Project be received as information;

AND THAT Council direct staff to investigate implementing a Seasonal Parking Pilot Project in the communities of Long Point, Turkey Point, Port Dover and Simcoe as outlined in this report;

AND THAT staff proceed with public consultation for feedback on the proposed pilot project;

AND FURTHER THAT staff bring back a report to Council in Q1 of 2022 to consider implementing the pilot project.

Executive Summary:

The purpose of Staff Report CAO 21-85 is to outline a proposed pilot project to implement a temporary Seasonal Parking strategy for the lakefront communities of Long Point, Turkey Point, Port Dover and the downtown core of Simcoe. The Pilot Project will be used to address concerns of increased parking during four months in 2022, and possibly 2023, between May to September, as well as to obtain data for the County-wide Parking Study being completed by a third party consultant.

This report is seeking Council's approval to explore this program further and complete public consultation for a 30-day period with a report back to Council in Q1 of 2022 for consideration of proceeding with the pilot project.

Discussion:

Background

Staff Reports CAO 21-70 Parking Group Update (Sept. 14/21), CAO 21-71 Downtown Simcoe Parking Pilot Project (Sept. 14/21) and CAO 21-73 Parking Function Resource Allocation (Nov. 9/21) referenced numerous parking challenges that the County of Norfolk has been experiencing over the past few years. The reports provided updates

and recommendations that staff were proposing to bring forward to address those challenges.

Norfolk County offers a variety of seasonal activities, many of which are most sought after during the summer months: lakes, ponds, trails, heritage sites, wineries, to name a few. Visitors from urban centres and other jurisdictions travel to Norfolk to enjoy these amenities, combined with residents taking advantage of the adventures in their own “backyard”. Along with the benefit that such tourism and local utilization brings to Norfolk County and its many tourism-engaged businesses, there is a related issue that is generated due to the increase of vehicles and the demand for parking. Both Council and staff receive numerous public complaints throughout the summer months (May to September) related to parking infractions including:

- Parking in “no parking” zones
- Parking in excess of posted time limits
- Parking on private property

By-Law Enforcement receives requests for additional enforcement measures during these peak periods, and in particular, in the lakefront communities of Long Point, Turkey Point and Port Dover along with Downtown Simcoe.

At the November 9, 2021 Council-in-Committee meeting (ratified on November 19, 2021), Council approved proceeding with a County-wide Parking Study. The Parking Study will assess the four noted communities, along with other smaller centres and hamlets in Norfolk, and provide recommendations related to parking provisions across the County. It is anticipated the study will capture such matters as parking standards, parking strategies, paid parking, public lots, enforcement measures and signage. The study is expected to conclude by the end of 2022 with recommendations coming forward to Council in early 2023.

Municipal parking across Norfolk County is currently provided to the public and visitors at no cost. It is important to recognize however that there is always a cost to parking, regardless of whether users are paying for it or not. Norfolk County taxpayers are currently subsidizing the provision of all parking-related infrastructure including allotted space signage, lot lighting, enforcement and staff resources including ticket printing, processing, mailing and court time.

Staff recognize that many other municipalities in southern Ontario, especially those with popular beach and tourist areas such as ours, have already implemented user-pay parking models as a means to balance the expenses related to parking, to ensure there is both a means to continue to improve and enhance parking availability, and to direct costs to the appropriate usage.

Seasonal Parking

Staff undertook a review of Ontario municipalities who were experiencing similar seasonal parking issues as seen in Norfolk County. A summary of the findings are

attached as Attachment 1 and media communications related to some of the communities is attached as Attachment 2.

The communities implemented a variety of mechanisms to manage the increased tourism and seasonal traffic including:

- Increased parking fines
- Paid parking through a combination of online parking apps, metres and permits
- Visitor and Resident parking permits
- Increased enforcement coverage

Although some of the mechanisms assisted in the management of these issues, there were also friction points experienced including but not limited to:

- Excessive traffic
- Residents not being able to enjoy the local amenities
- Dissatisfaction by residents who had to pay to park
- Frustration for visitors in understanding where and how to pay for parking
- Communications of the new processes

Staff completed a review of the programs implemented to assess the benefits and challenges of each program. Staff believe that a simple pilot project could be offered for four (4) months in the summer of 2022, with an option to extend to summer 2023, to help mitigate the issues of parking pressures in these communities and provide an opportunity to evaluate the merits of some of the available programs. It is anticipated that the third-party consultant who will be completing the County-wide parking study could use the data from the pilot project for analysis of the usage, fines and fees to make a more informed recommendation regarding the continuation, modification or elimination of paid parking in Norfolk County.

The collection of parking revenue would also open up opportunities to allocate a portion of the collected funds for enhancements within the applicable communities including but not limited to improved parking availability, signage lighting and line painting, increased waste pickup and washroom facilities and perhaps community beautification projects, among others.

Increased Parking Fines

It is staff's opinion that individuals are not often deterred by parking fines that do not hurt their pocket book. Many individuals recognize that parking fines for tourist areas across the province and at provincial parks range from \$15-\$30 and are satisfied to pay such fines on the "chance" that they may be found parking in contravention of the parking regulations.

Staff would suggest implementing a By-Law to provide for higher fine provisions during the seasonal months of May through September of 2022 related to "No Parking" and time restriction zones. Staff propose initial fines for this pilot project as follows:

No Parking: currently \$75 increased to \$150

Parking in excess of time limit: currently \$30 increased to \$75

The increased fines are suggested to be implemented in the lakefront communities of Long Point, Turkey Point and Port Dover in relation to high volume seasonal parking areas, not County-wide, and only for a 4-month period in summer months each year.

Turkey Point

Staff have identified that there are sections along Ordinance Avenue in Turkey Point that have “no parking” signage painted on the pavement; however this restriction has never been formally approved by Council and is not enforceable. Staff also note that the ground painted signage is not legible in many areas and many users miss seeing them all together, resulting in a great deal of parking occurring along this stretch during the summer months causing enforcement issues and disputes each year.

Staff would recommend implementation of the “no parking” restriction in this area along the portions of roadway that it applies to, through a by-law amendment and requiring that proper signage be installed to mark this stretch of road.

This By-Law amendment will be required regardless of whether paid parking is implemented in Turkey Point or not. Staff will bring an amending by-law forward to a future Council meeting to address this matter.

Staff also recognize the annual challenges of residents and visitors finding enough parking when visiting Turkey Point in the summer months, including frequent long lineups to enter the limited Turkey Point Provincial Park beachside parking lot. Staff have identified part of a field attached to the municipally owned Turkey Point Park and pavilion just north of the beach where additional, and potentially paid, parking could be introduced at a relatively low cost through application of base aggregate and soil, signage, a simple barrier and adjustments to existing fencing. Staff would recommend exploring this further and possibly including it as part of the paid parking project. Staff would also explore adding several dedicated Accessible parking spaces along Cedar Drive among the new paid parking spaces.

Long Point

Staff have identified that parking enhancements could be completed with minimal expenditures at the Abigail Becker parking lot in Long Point that would result in additional defined parking spaces. Staff would also explore adding dedicated Accessible parking spaces. If the pilot project is approved, staff would request approval to proceed with these enhancements.

Staff have also commenced discussions with the Provincial Park administration to investigate areas where we can collaborate on parking matters in both Long Point and Turkey Point.

Port Dover:

Parking space for visitors and residents is at a premium in the popular harbour, pier and beach area of Port Dover during summer months. Staff have identified that there is a large gravel turnaround at the end of Harbour Street adjacent to the lift bridge that could be enhanced and include simple barriers to provide permanent defined parking spaces in this area at low cost. Staff believe this County-owned property to be an under-utilized and relatively unknown area that could provide a suitable parking solution in an area with very few other opportunities to do so. Staff would recommend proceeding with this and including it as part of the paid parking project.

Paid Parking:

Paid parking areas provide a mechanism for controlling parking in an efficient manner and generating revenue to offset parking improvements, enforcement measures, traffic enhancements, communications and signage. Staff also recognize that paid parking is being utilized in beach communities across southern Ontario to deal with capacity issues and downtown cores to provide improved customer experience in accessing businesses in a convenient manner. Paid parking does not have to be punitive and can be set at a reasonable rate to provide users with the comfort of knowing they can enjoy the time they paid for and not worry about enforcement measures and paying parking tickets after the fact.

Paid parking areas could be implemented using one of a variety of online parking platforms and the initial set-up costs could be recovered through parking fees. Some stand-alone pay stations would be required to facilitate paying for parking for those who do not have access to the online system, for accessibility purposes and to mitigate possible cellular connectivity issues. In addition, adequate signage will need to be installed to advertise the new paid parking policy and procedure. Through the procurement process, staff would request options to reduce the County's upfront capital costs related to the pilot project.

Staff would recommend paid parking fees ranging from \$2 to \$4 per hour and \$15 to \$20 per day during the pilot project period. These amounts are at or below most other comparator municipalities and would not offer a competitive advantage over Provincial Park parking fees in Long Point and Turkey point. Staff are confident that the costs to implement the pilot project would be recovered through the paid parking fees however it is noted that capital funding for this project was deferred to 2023 and could be brought forward should it be deemed necessary.

Paid parking has the flexibility to establish the use of Zones, allowing for flexible time/day restrictions. For example, some zones may require paid parking commencing at 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., others may require 9:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., etc. Staff can also explore options related to 15 minute parking zones in the business sections of the applicable communities through this pilot project period.

It is suggested that the pilot project be implemented from May 1 to September 6, 2022 recognizing the commencement of the project will be subject to the procurement process for a vendor to provide the service. In reviewing the needs for the pilot project,

and in consultation with the local Councillors of each area, staff are suggesting the pilot project consist of paid parking as follows:

- **Long Point** – along Erie Boulevard & Abigail Becker Parking Lot

Daily: 9:00 am to 6:00 pm

Rates: \$3/hour and \$20/day

- **Turkey Point** – along Ordinance Avenue and Cedar Drive

Daily: 9:00 am to 6:00 pm

Rates \$3/hour and \$20/day

- **Port Dover**

Daily: 9:30 am to 5:00 pm

Rates \$3/hour and \$20/day

- Walker – north side – between the beach and Main street
- Walker – south side – between St George and Main
- St George – both sides – between Clinton and Harbour
- Clinton – between St. George and St. Andrew including the County-owned parking lot
- Harbour – north side – between the pier and Main
- Harbour – south side – between the pier and St George
- Harbour – south side – between St Andrew and the lift bridge
- Lift bridge parking lot

- **Downtown Simcoe** - along Norfolk Street between Young Street and Water Street, Robinson St. between Kent St. and Norfolk Street, Argyle Street between Norfolk Street and Lynnwood Avenue;

Monday to Friday: 9:30 am to 5:00 pm

Rates: \$2/hour

Maps of the proposed locations are included as Attachment 3.

Staff would also be seeking an option to extend the pilot project to 2023, if it is deemed successful, to allow for a proper procurement should it be determined that paid parking become a permanent solution.

It is important to note that the paid parking would be applicable to both visitors and residents for the duration of the 2022 pilot project period and could be re-evaluated prior to an extension to 2023, if required.

At the conclusion of the pilot project, the online paid platform contract could be suspended and the parking pay stations could be removed or simply placed out of commission. Should the County-wide parking study recommend paid parking in these communities on a go-forward basis, the paid parking mechanisms could be reinstated quick and easily.

Costs:

- The costs for implementation of the online parking platform will be dependent on the vendor selected. It appears there is a range of options available that include

upfront capital costs being supplied either by the vendor or the municipality, cost-share agreements, direct purchase and lease options. Staff will bring further information forward for the next report related to costing mechanisms.

- The cost for pay station installation will be approximately \$10,000/pay station.
 - Initial estimates indicate that 4-8 parking pay stations would be required for all communities in total
 - Monthly operating costs for pay stations will range from \$150-200/month (utilities, internet, etc.)
- The cost for enhancements at Abigail Becker Parking lot, Long Point would be approximately \$15,000
- The cost for enhancements at the Port Dover lift bridge parking location would be approximately \$4,000.
- The cost for enhancements at the Turkey Point parking location would be approximately \$10,000.
- Community Contribution: 5-10% of net revenues generated*

* As this would be Norfolk County's initial venture into the paid parking regime, it is difficult to predict the true revenue or costs associated with the project. Although staff are confident that the pilot project will generate revenue, the recommendation is that the community contribution would be set at a lower rate initially to ensure the commitment could be made. Should the revenues substantially exceed the costs at the end of the pilot project, Council could consider an increase to that contribution.

Revenue

Potential revenue, based on early projections for the pilot project period (May-Sept.) is based on an estimate of parking spaces available in each community. Staff have completed a mapping exercise to determine potential daily gross revenue during the pilot project period. The data is based on the recommended parking locations at the daily rate of \$20/day (Long Point, Turkey Point and Port Dover) and \$16/day (Simcoe) using a full usage scenario and a conservative estimate of 50% daily usage:

Full usage:

Long Point: 321 parking spots	potential \$6,420/day
Turkey Point: 235 parking spots	potential \$4,700/day
Port Dover: 217 parking spots	potential \$4,340/day
Simcoe: 61 parking spots	potential \$976/day

Conservative 50% usage:

Long Point: 321 parking spots	potential \$3,210/day
Turkey Point: 235 parking spots	potential \$2,350/day
Port Dover: 217 parking spots	potential \$2,170/day
Simcoe: 61 parking spots	potential \$488/day

* These projections do not include the additional parking spaces being proposed through the improvements at the dedicated lots in Turkey Point (Turkey Point Park) and

Long Point (Abigail Becker parking lot expansion). This would be additional potential revenue.

Staff recognize it is difficult to predict the actual revenue generation as there are no specific Norfolk County statistics to use in determining the income from paid parking or the actual number of users per day. It will also be difficult to estimate if users would pay per hour or daily rates on a more regular basis. These revenue projections will be refined in further updates. The pilot project would provide the County with statistical data that would drive the consideration of a permanent solution.

Permit Parking

As the Downtown Simcoe Pilot Project will conclude at the end of 2021, Council must decide whether to continue with the 48 hour parking provisions in the three designated parking lots or to conclude the Downtown Simcoe pilot project. If the project is concluded consideration could be given to providing Permit parking in one or more of the parking lots used during the pilot project, to determine if residents and businesses would benefit from having the ability to pay for designated parking on a monthly basis.

A pilot project could consist of a simple process whereby individuals could apply for a monthly parking pass based on license plate. This would result in the pass not being transferable but easier to manage and reduce the need for tracking the number of passes issued or replacement passes being required. Staff would recommend delaying the use of permit parking until the conclusion of the County-wide parking strategy.

Staff note that the Downtown Simcoe Pilot Project has resulted in increased parking in the designated lots. Should Council move forward with a paid parking program in the summer of 2022, it may be beneficial to leave these as 48 hour lots for the ability of residents, visitors and business staff to use as a cost-free option for parking in the downtown core of Simcoe, significantly reducing their exposure to parking enforcement.

Public Consultation

If Council would like staff to explore these options further, staff would recommend a 30-day public consultation process consisting of media communications, social media, community group engagement and public consultation sessions. Although staff would target the consultation to the affected communities, we would invite consultation County-wide as parking access within these communities may affect many County residents. Attachment 4 outlines the proposed consultation plan.

Upon completion of the public consultation process, staff would bring a staff report forward in Q1 of 2022 including a summary of the comments/concerns received for Council decision on implementing a full or partial pilot project during May to September of 2022.

It is expected that adequate public consultation would cost approximately \$5,000 mainly related to advertising expenses.

If this project is approved by Council at CIC, staff would commence the public consultation piece immediately, recognizing this decision requires ratification on December 21, 2021. If by chance the decision is reversed on December 21, staff would terminate the consultation process.

Communication Strategy

Should Council proceed with the Pilot Project when the report is brought back for Council decision in Q1 of 2022, staff would undertake a comprehensive communications strategy to notify residents and visitors of the parking changes.

The strategy would include:

- Direct mail out to residents through property tax notification
- Media releases and media advertisements
- Social media
- Radio announcements
- Website updates
- Enhanced signage
- Networking with local BIAs, Chamber of Commerce, Community Associations and Service Clubs

Part of the communications strategy would be to encourage residents and community members to use active transportation (bikes, walking, in-line skating) and car-pooling whenever possible.

It is anticipated an adequate communications strategy would cost between \$8,000 – 10,000.

Future Considerations

If the pilot project is introduced in 2022, staff will compile the results (financial, impacts, feedback, challenges, benefits) and bring a further report to Council at the end of 2022 on whether paid parking pilot should be extended to 2023, and/or if it should be continued as a permanent option, terminated, expanded or modified. This will be further supplemented by the County-wide Parking Strategy that is expected to be completed along the same timelines.

During these considerations, at the end of 2022, staff can further explore a variety of options including but not limited to:

- Parking permits
- Resident monthly/seasonal passes
- 15-Minute Parking Zones
- Weekday vs weekend rate adjustments
- Municipal parking lot expansions
- Community improvements funded by the parking revenue

Financial Services Comments:

Public Consultation

Based on staff recommendations, Council would be approving an initial 30-day public consultation to determine how a seasonal parking pilot project would be implemented (see Attachment 4 for the Public Consultation Plan). The results from the engagement will then be provided for Council's consideration of a pilot project.

Should Council approve the recommendations, the Approved 2021 Levy Supported Operating Budget includes sufficient resources to support the public consultation request for an estimated \$5,000.

Pilot Project

Further analysis on the parking fines, paid parking initiative and permit parking will be required and provided to Council within the follow-up report, should the public consultation initiative be approved.

It should be noted that the amounts provided within this report are high-level estimates and have been included to provide an initial range of potential revenues and expenditures. Additional financials will be identified within the follow up report at which point more accurate projections can be provided.

Interdepartmental Implications:

Consultation(s):

This report has included consultation with Clerks, By-law Enforcement, Engineering, Operations, Roads, Planning, Economic Development, Communications and the Ward Councillors of the designated areas.

Strategic Plan Linkage:

This report aligns with the 2019-2022 Council Strategic Priorities "Foster Vibrant, Creative Communities", "Quality Infrastructure" and "Focus on Service".

Explanation: Provision of adequate and accessible parking to access business, residential and community interests in the downtown core; modernizing processes and services to increase economic development and maintain community standards and improving approaches to manage by-law enforcement needs.

Conclusion:

This report recommends further investigation and public consultation related to implementation of a Seasonal Parking Pilot Project in Long Point, Turkey Point, Port

Dover and Downtown Simcoe to address parking challenges experienced during the summer months.

Should Council be willing to explore this program further, staff will move forward with public consultation for a 30-day period and further investigation of online parking platforms. At the conclusion of the public consultation period, staff will bring a report back to Council summarizing the public feedback and making a recommendation on whether to proceed with the pilot project in 2022 or initiate portions thereof.

Attachment(s):

Attachment 1: Summary of Seasonal Parking in Municipalities

Attachment 2: Media Articles on Seasonal Parking

Attachment 3: Maps of Suggested Parking Locations

Attachment 4: Public Consultation Plan

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