

**Report to
Rapport au:**

**Transportation Committee
Comité des transports
4 May 2016 / 4 mai 2016**

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**Submitted by
Soumis par:**

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Ward: SOMERSET (14)

File Number: ACS2016-COS-PWS-0020

SUBJECT: Centretown Local Area Parking Study

OBJET: Étude sur le stationnement local au Centre-ville

REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Transportation Committee receive this report for information.

RECOMMANDATIONS DU RAPPORT

Que le Comité des transports prenne connaissance du présent rapport.

BACKGROUND

The Parking Services Branch has undertaken a Local Area Parking Study (LAPS) for the Centretown area. This was included in the Branch's 2015 Business Plan which was approved by Council on May 13, 2015.

While there has been analysis in the past covering localized parts of the Centretown area, such as Bank Street and Elgin Street, there has never been an integrated look at the entire area. As with much of the central part of the city, growth and intensification are changing the dynamic of the Centretown area, and in turn there is a need to determine the impacts of the changes on both businesses and residents. This type of study also provides critical information to assist in future planning and infrastructure processes.

A Local Area Parking Study (LAPS) provides for a comprehensive review of the state of parking management in a particular neighbourhood or community. These studies are an integral part of the Municipal Parking Management Strategy (MPMS) which was approved by Council on April 22, 2009. The LAPS process is well established through specific Terms of Reference which are included in the MPMS. So too are the objectives of the City's Municipal Parking Management Program:

1. Provide and maintain an appropriate supply of affordable, secure, accessible, convenient, and appealing public parking.
2. Provide and promote affordable short-term parking services, and fair and consistent enforcement services, that support local businesses, institutions, and tourism.
3. Promote, establish, and maintain programs and facilities that encourage the use of alternative modes of transportation including public transit, car/van pooling, taxis, auto sharing, cycling, and walking.
4. Support residential intensification and resolve parking problems within residential areas caused by significant traffic generators or conflicting uses of the roadway, including implementing on-street permit parking programs to relieve area residents and visitors from parking regulations directed at the non-resident.
5. Ensure the revenues generated by the Municipal Parking Program are sufficient to wholly recover all related operating and life-cycle maintenance expenditures; contribute to a reserve fund to finance future parking system development,

operation, and promotion; and then assist in the funding of related initiatives to encourage the use of alternative modes of transportation.

Based on the objectives of the program, it becomes clear that solutions to parking-related issues can be varied and are not exclusively tied to increasing or decreasing parking supply. There is a strong recognition that the Centretown area is unique from other areas in the city in terms of transportation. The means of transportation into and within this area is heavily weighted towards 'alternate modes' (e.g. cycling, walking, transit), the promotion of which is a supported component of the Municipal Parking Management Program.

DISCUSSION

The Centretown study area is bounded by Gloucester Street and Lisgar Street in the north, the Queensway in the south, Bronson Avenue in the west and the Rideau Canal in the east.

Of the nine Local Area Parking Studies that have been undertaken since the Municipal Parking Management Strategy was approved in 2009, the Centretown Local Area Parking Study will examine the largest study area of all. Previous studies have typically focused on areas with a single core commercial zone or main street. In this case, there are multiple such corridors and different neighbourhoods. The adjacent downtown area (north of Gloucester Street) also exists as a parking generator which has impacts to the north of this study area.

Parking Services retained Dillon Consulting to assist in this study. As a starting point, Dillon Consulting established an inventory for all on-street and off-street parking in the study area. In terms of off-street parking, this included paid and unpaid municipal, public, and private parking lots where parking was available for business-related or public use. In total, the study area consists of 12,083 parking spaces (3,042 on-street and 9,426 off-street). Of these, there are 7,250 paid parking spaces (1,408 on-street and 4,785 off-street). There are two municipally-owned facilities in the area, located at City Hall (accessible from Elgin Street with 850 spaces) and at 210 Gloucester Street (immediately west of Bank Street with 206 total spaces - 69 that are publically available on a daily basis and 137 reserved for monthly permit holders).

The 1,408 on-street paid parking spaces in the study area represent 37% of the total on-street paid parking in the area and the 1,056 combined off-street spaces at City Hall and 210 Gloucester Street represent 27% of all of the municipally managed off-street

parking in the city. As such, this area is important for the Municipal Parking Management Program.

Dillon Consulting proceeded to conduct the following surveys:

1. Occupancy Survey in late May and early June 2015 to determine the utilization of parking within the study area. This included on-street and off-street parking (including paid and unpaid parking) and was conducted at different time points on a Thursday, a Saturday and a Sunday.
2. Travel Survey in June 2015 which involved face-to-face interviews with people on the street with the purpose of understanding parking behaviour, attitudes and issues within the study area. A total of 511 surveys were completed and through the course of this, 246 specific comments were received.

While this information provided a basis for the study, additional information was also gathered by Parking Services and was critical to ensuring that the branch took a holistic approach to the LAPS. This included enforcement data, bike parking data (supply and demand), turnover data, recent and future development information, parking permit information relating to zones and usage, modal split data and population / employment forecasts.

Consultation is a key component in any LAPS process. The feedback received from the Travel Surveys was one piece of this, but staff also connected at various points with key stakeholders to ensure all issues were captured and all parties were properly engaged throughout the process. These stakeholders included the Business Improvement Areas (Bank Street, Somerset Chinatown and Somerset Village), the Centretown Citizens Community Association and representatives from different institutions and other interested groups.

Parking Services was responsible for conducting the balance of the consultation, undertaking the data review and analysis, as well as developing the Centretown Local Area Parking Study report (Document 1).

Due to the size and complexity of the area, specific corridors and areas were analysed through the course of the study. The following represents some of the key findings resulting from both the consultation and data collection. Additional data as well as the full outcomes of the consultation process can be found in Document 1.

Bronson Avenue to Kent Street (primarily residential)

- Area-wide, demand for on-street parking stays relatively constant across all time periods (48-57% full). Demand is highest on Saturday in general and the peak period is Saturday afternoon.
- Occupancy rates are higher on some streets in the north of the study area during the week (e.g. Gloucester Street), and along Bay Street and Lyon Street where there is longer parking permitted (3-hour limit).
- Some future growth is expected in the north (Gloucester Street / Nepean Street) and along Gladstone Avenue.
- Demand for bike parking is highest along Kent Street.

Kent Street to Metcalfe Street (Bank Street & O'Connor Street Corridors)

- Area-wide, when paid parking is in effect the level of parking demand is moderate (45-56% full). Demand for on-street parking is much higher during weekday evenings and weekends
- Demand for parking along Bank Street and O'Connor Street (and side streets) is highest north of Gilmour Street.
- The municipal parking garage at 210 Gloucester Street has limited available supply during weekdays in the daytime and is heavily used by long-term parkers.
- There are some large pockets of expected future growth, particularly north of Cooper Street and along Bank Street south of Gilmour Street.
- Some concerns were expressed about the availability of parking on Gladstone Avenue which has been impacted by recent developments. Currently, there is an availability of parking at all times, although demand is approaching 'practical capacity' (> 85% full), particularly east of Bank Street.
- Turnover along Bank Street is frequent with 89% of vehicles staying an average of 1-hour or less and only 4% of vehicles staying beyond the 2-hour time limit.
- 34% of people surveyed on Bank Street and Gladstone Avenue drove to the area while 11% cycled, 39% walked and 13% took transit.
- There are 760 bike parking spaces in this portion of the study area on the public right-of-way (including 234 along Bank Street).
- In addition to Bank Street, there are some side streets that have a high demand for bike parking, including Cooper Street, Frank Street, Gladstone Avenue and Argyle Street.

Metcalfe Street to Cartier Street (Elgin Street & Metcalfe Street Corridors)

- Area-wide, there are different periods where occupancy exceeds 'practical capacity' (>85% full).

- Parking demand in the immediate vicinity of Elgin Street is the highest in the entire Centretown study area.
 - While there is generally capacity during the day on weekdays, Elgin Street and the side streets also experience high demand over the weekend, particularly during lunch time and in the evenings
 - This is particularly an issue for the north part of Elgin Street. Parking only becomes readily available at all times when south of Gladstone Avenue.
- When surveyed, 29% of drivers visiting Elgin Street indicated that they, “frequently have difficulty finding a parking space”.
- The City Hall parking garage is underutilized when on-street parking in the area is in greatest demand.
- Turnover along Elgin Street occurs less frequently compared to Bank Street, despite the shorter time limits (1-hour). 24% of vehicles stay for longer than one hour on average, but only 5% stay for longer than two hours on average.
- Through consultation, the time limits along and in the immediate vicinity of Elgin Street were identified multiple times as ‘insufficient’ for visitors.
- On-street parking demand is slightly higher in the area around the Museum of Nature and the police station compared with other streets in the immediate area, but there is also an available supply of off-street parking at all times.
- 29% of people surveyed on Elgin Street drove to the area while 5% cycled, 51% walked and 12% took transit.
- There are 495 bike parking spaces on the public right-of-way in this portion of the area (including 120 along Elgin Street). A number of streets experience a high demand for bike parking, including Elgin Street and the north part of Metcalfe Street.

Cartier Street to the Rideau Canal (residential – ‘Golden Triangle’)

- During standard survey periods, area-wide demand for on-street parking similarly consistent and only slightly higher than west of Kent Street (48-64%)
- Due to the proximity to Elgin Street, demand for on-street parking increases in the evening and on weekends. This is demonstrated by a Friday night count (9-10pm) which showed that 51% of all blocks were at or above capacity
- Cartier Street experiences very high demand at most times.
- There is limited projected growth / development in the area, but could be impacted by changes on or near Elgin Street.

Overall, across the study area there are some pressures and some specific issues that have been identified, but for the most part there is an adequate parking supply to handle most of the demand. The areas of primary concern are Elgin Street and the north part of the study area which is in immediate proximity to the downtown core and has experienced continuing intensification. Beyond these 'hot spots', there are other areas which require monitoring going forward to ensure there is no change to the current balance (e.g. Bank Street and Gladstone Avenue).

Having clarified the magnitude and scope of the current issues, it is possible to identify potential solutions for the above mentioned problem areas. To this end, there is a 'toolbox' of available measures that are considered when looking to improve parking management. These include various mechanisms to influence the supply of public parking, the availability of parking and also the viability of alternative modes of transportation.

Along Elgin Street, demand for parking is highest moving north towards Lisgar Street. This is primarily an issue during the evening and weekend periods. The parking garage at City Hall offers close proximity parking for much of the north end of Elgin Street. Upon leaving City Hall, all businesses along Elgin Street down to MacLaren Street can be reached with a 450m walk. To this point, the City Hall facility has been underutilized at those times when on-street parking is in greatest demand in the area. Previous efforts have been made to lower rates during these times in order to make parking at City Hall more attractive. Currently, to park on the weekend it would cost someone \$0.50 per half hour with a maximum charge of \$2.00. After review, more can be done to better promote the facility and create a consistent rate structure. To this end, additional signage will be installed directing people towards the garage. Key to this will be adding signs along Elgin Street which will draw visitors who are actively searching for parking. A rate reduction for weekday evenings (after 6pm) will also be implemented which will bring the half hour rate in line with the weekend rates.

The improved signage will also be augmented by initiatives that are underway to install a Parking Guidance System at the City Hall garage which will be similar to systems that have been recently put in place in the City's ByWard Market garages and in the new Glebe Garage. This will help to increase the visibility of the facility and communicate the availability of parking.

While not a formal recommendation of the study, work will also be undertaken to collaborate with business owners along Elgin Street. There are different potential opportunities to explore to better direct customers and/or employees to park at City Hall

(particularly in the evenings and on the weekend). Any re-distribution of the parking demand would have the potential for a cascading effect and would make parking more available and convenient for both local residents and visitors to the general area.

As noted previously, the time limit on Elgin Street and the adjacent side streets is currently 1 hour. In the last few years, extended time limits have been trialed in commercial areas with paid parking (e.g. Bank Street, the ByWard Market and Upper Rideau). The results have been positive from both a business and visitor perspective. After the time limits in the ByWard Market were extended from 1 hour to 2 hours, the number of visitors remained relatively the same while the average amount of time purchased only increased from 42 minutes to 53 minutes. Increased time limits would address business and visitor feedback that was received through this study, provide people with greater flexibility when visiting the area and create a more level playing field between commercial areas which have paid parking. As such, an outcome of this study will be to extend the time limits to 2 hours along Elgin Street and on those side streets that have paid parking. There are also some smaller areas of Bank Street (between McLeod Street and Flora Street), and Somerset Street (between Kent Street and Metcalfe Street) where the same change will take place.

With regards to the pressures that exist along the north end of the study area, these cross different types of land use. To the west, it is primarily residential, made up in part of medium and high density condominium buildings. Starting around Kent Street and moving east to Elgin Street, it is almost exclusively businesses and office space. The key commercial area in this stretch is Bank Street around which on-street parking experiences periods of high demand. The parking garage at 210 Gloucester Street is well situated to support businesses in the area and absorb some of the demand. As noted, this facility offers 76 spaces to people seeking short-term or daily parking and an additional 137 spaces are reserved on upper floors for monthly permit holders. During the week, this facility is very heavily used during the daytime, effectively at capacity throughout the day. Most of those people parking (80%) are charged the daily maximum which means they are parking there for 3.25 hours or more. This means that only 20% of spaces are available to, and used by the shorter-term visitors to the area who are more likely to be those supporting local businesses.

The number of active monthly permits at 210 Gloucester Street is currently at a level where it is possible to re-allocate some of the reserved spaces on the upper floors of the garage. By moving the access gate up a full floor, 47 additional spaces will be created which will increase the parking supply. This parking will be available to both long-term and short-term parkers, but in an effort to specifically promote short-term

parking in support of local businesses, there will be a corresponding increase to the daily maximum charged (from \$13 to \$15). This will better align with rates in the area and the objectives of the Municipal Parking Management Program.

Area-wide, there needs to be a continued push to support alternate modes of transportation. Infrastructure such as the LRT and bike lanes will help in this, as will providing sufficient bike parking. Currently, there are 591 bike racks in the area which provide 1,521 bike parking spaces. As another follow-up to this study, the data on bike parking supply and demand will be used to explore additional opportunities for bike parking. Locations on Elgin Street, Bank Street, Gladstone Avenue, Kent Street, Metcalfe Street, Frank Street, Argyle Street, Cooper Street, Lisgar Street and O'Connor Street have been identified as potential considerations.

While the focus of the outcomes of this study is in addressing issues in specific areas, the study also considers trends elsewhere in the study area and while it has been determined that there is currently a suitable supply of parking in most of the area, it is known that development and intensification will occur in the future. As a go-forward requirement, Parking Services will monitor the entire area to ensure that any changes in parking and any issues that arise are captured and handled appropriately under the branch's delegated authority, and will be reported as part of the branch's annual report if required. This is particularly the case with the Gladstone Avenue and Bank Street corridors. Monitoring will also take place to gauge the effectiveness of the recommendations of this study so as to determine if additional action is required.

RURAL IMPLICATIONS

The recommendations of this report will not affect rural residents, lands, services or businesses.

CONSULTATION

The following stakeholders were consulted through this process. Their feedback can be found within the Centretown Local Area Parking Study document (Document 1).

Stakeholders that were consulted through this process included the Business Improvement Areas (Bank Street, Chinatown, Somerset Village), Centretown Citizens Community Association (CCCA), Friends of James and Bay, Centretown Citizens Ottawa Corporation (CCOC), Local Places of Worship, Community Support Organizations (e.g. Meals-on-Wheels and Care for Health and Community Services), Community Centres / Schools, the Museum of Nature and visitors to the area (through 511 travel surveys).

The following is a summary of the key consultation activities:

- April 2015 – ‘Start up’ notice distributed to key stakeholders via e-mail. This described the study, identified the purpose and solicited any comments and was supported by an advertisement in the Centretown News.
- May / June 2015 – Travel Surveys
- June / September / December 2015 – Update provided to Parking Stakeholder Consultation Group
- July 2015 – Stakeholder Meeting #1 (summarized the study and encouraged discussion / feedback on the approach and issues or concerns)
- September 2015 – Study update hand delivered to many individual businesses outside of the BIA zones (e.g. Elgin Street, Gladstone Avenue and Kent Street)
- November 2015 – Stakeholder Meeting #2 (summarized the data and some of the key issues that had been identified to that point, encouraging additional feedback on concerns / issues)
- February 2016 – Public Open House
- March 2016 – Briefing provided to the Parking Stakeholder Consultation Group on the outcomes of the study.
- March 2016 – Summary of the study, including findings and recommendations circulated to all key stakeholders with an invitation to provide comments.

In addition, one-on-one briefings and updates occurred with various stakeholders (such as the Bank Street BIA, representatives from the Centretown Citizens Community Association, and the Ward Councillor) as required through the entire process. Internal staff groups (notably Planning & Growth Management and Traffic Services) have been engaged and will continue to be consulted through the implementation of the recommendations.

COMMENTS BY THE WARD COUNCILLOR(S)

The Councillor’s Office has reviewed the report and supports the recommendations.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal impediments to receiving this report for information.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no risk management implications associated with implementing the recommendations in this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications resulting from the recommendations contained in this report.

ACCESSIBILITY IMPACTS

Staff will ensure that any applicable accessibility standards are adhered to during the execution of the recommendations identified in this report. This will involve consulting with the appropriate staff within the City.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

Appropriately managed short-term parking promotes long-term sustainability and reduces our environmental footprint by maintaining and improving the quality of our air by ensuring people who are driving are not creating traffic congestion and contributing more to green-house gases by cruising for parking. Shared short-term public parking is also more land-efficient than scattered private use-specific parking facilities.

TERM OF COUNCIL PRIORITIES

The recommendations of this report align to the 2015 – 2018 Strategic Priorities of Economic Prosperity, specifically EP2 – Support growth of local economy, and Transportation and Mobility, specifically TM2 – Provide and promote infrastructure to support safe mobility choices.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Document 1 – Centretown Local Area Parking Study

DISPOSITION

Upon receipt of this report, the Public Works department will implement the Centretown Local Area Parking Study.