

STAFF REPORT:

Planning & Building Services Committee



REPORT TO: Mayor and Members of Council
MEETING DATE: April 6, 2009
REPORT NO.: PL.09.30
SUBJECT: Comprehensive Parking Strategy
PREPARED BY: Cindy Welsh, MCIP, RPP
Senior Policy Planner

A. Recommendations

THAT Council does receive Planning Staff Report #PL.09.30, “Comprehensive Parking Strategy” for information purposes.

B. Background

In October 2006, the Town retained J. D. Barnes Ltd. (Barnes) in association with Dillon Consulting to undertake a Comprehensive Parking Strategy. The purpose of the study was to document the historical problems relating to parking within the municipality and to prepare recommendations for future actions. On June 2, 2008, the consultant presented highlights of the report to Council and outlined the recommendations put forth prior to a public open house being held. On July 28, 2008, the public open house was held in which the consultant presented the findings and recommendations to the public and asked for input.

After the public open house, Barnes prepared a draft final report. The Steering Committee reviewed the document and asked for clarification on a number of points, which has now been done. In January 2009, Barnes presented staff with the final document which is the last step in the work plan agreed upon by the consultant and the Town. The final report is attached for Council’s information.

Although this project did not keep to the original work plan in terms of timing and is being presented to Council at a much later time period than was originally anticipated, Staff are of the mind that the information contained in the report is valuable as we move forward with:

1. Reviewing parking issues and developing recommended actions for various areas of the municipality through the comprehensive zoning by-law process and the community improvement plan process;
2. Developing policies related to retaining, sustaining and enhancing existing buildings in keeping with sustainability planning principles;
3. Developing policies related to residential intensification which will enhance Smart Growth within the municipality;
4. Developing a New Comprehensive Zoning By-law which will incorporate parking requirements utilizing information gained through the Parking study.

5. Reviewing future Development Applications with Smart Growth and sustainability principles at the core of such applications; and,
6. Developing comprehensive Payment-in-Lieu Policies which will be reviewed in concert with the comprehensive zoning by-law process.

Highlights of the study include the following:

- a field survey program to reflect peak demand conditions during the winter which has lead to a good source of objective data to assist with decision- making;
- identified areas for operational and management improvements;
- a need for a strong parking management system at the Village;
- options regarding Cash-in-Lieu of Parking Policy and shared parking;
- potential new zoning by-law standards pertaining to parking; and
- identification of public parking facilities and rural trailheads parking.

Staff has reviewed the 36 recommendations put forth in the study. Each recommendation has been reviewed with the position taken by staff for future actions as either to agree, conduct further review or bring forward the recommendation as part of the work currently being undertaken as part of the Comprehensive Zoning By-law Review Project being conducted by Meridian Planning Consultants. The final study is to be forwarded to Meridian.

Staff have prepared the recommendations for Council's review as a separate document to the final report and have indicated where each of the 36 recommendations fit in terms of the actions indicated above. The Steering Committee's work has ended with the final report being delivered to the Town, however, there may be a need for future meetings with regards to further work needing to be done regarding the recommendations that have been identified as requiring further analysis. The appropriate Departments will be called upon to assist with this review. The Steering Committee will be notified of future meetings.

C. The Blue Mountains' Strategic Plan

The Comprehensive Parking Strategy project is in keeping with the Town's Strategic Plan, namely:

1. *Managing growth to ensure the ongoing health and prosperity of the community.*

D. Environmental Impacts

A comprehensive municipal parking strategy will support Smart Growth land use planning objectives. Parking improvements can assist towards decreasing emissions.

E. Budget Impact

The costs for this study were funded from the 2006 capital budget items and had a budget of \$50,000. The total proposed consultant's fees were estimated not to exceed \$49,515.00 exclusive of GST. The total amount billed to the Town as of April 18, 2008, is \$48,237.61 exclusive of GST, which is on budget for this project.

F. Attachments

1. *Town of The Blue Mountains Parking Strategy Study Report*, January 2009 (e-mailed separately to those on the Agenda Circulation List and posted to the Town's website – www.thebluemountains.ca).
2. *Town of The Blue Mountains Parking Strategy Study Report Recommendations*, January 2009

Submitted by:

Cindy Welsh, MCIP, RPP
Senior Policy Planner
The Blue Mountains
26 Bridge Street E.
Box 310
Thornbury, ON N0H 2P0
Tel: (519) 599-3131, ext. 262
Toll Free: 1-888-258-6867
Fax: (519) 599-3018
E-mail: cwelsh@thebluemountains.ca

David Finbow
Director, Planning & Building
Services/CBO
The Blue Mountains
26 Bridge Street E.
Box 310
Thornbury, ON N0H 2P0
Tel: (519) 599-3131, ext. 246
Toll Free: 1-888-258-6867
Fax: (519) 599-3018
E-mail: dfinbow@thebluemountains.ca

**Town of The Blue Mountains
Parking Strategy Study Report**

RECOMMENDATIONS

January 2009

SECTION 8

Recommendations

The various recommendations from the report have been consolidated in this document. Each recommendation has been reviewed with the position taken by staff for future actions as either to agree (**A**), conduct further review (**R**) or bring forward the recommendation as part of the work currently being undertaken as part of the Comprehensive Zoning By-law Review Project (**R- ZBL Process**).

8.1 Field Survey Program

1. Although there would appear to be ample total parking capacity in the village parking master plan, the practical parking capacity may be less, thus indicating a need for a strong parking management strategy. **A**

8.2 Cash-in-Lieu of Parking Policy

2. There is a concerted municipal interest in providing for the continued vitality of the harbour facility, as well as a companion interest in fostering the improvement of the northerly portion of Bruce Street to, in effect, extend a 'Main Street' condition north to the waterfront. This objective is a good candidate for a CiL incentive (if not an outright exemption). The Town may also want to consider incentives for uses adjoining the 'Pond' as a long-term downtown area diversification/improvement program. Mixed-use proposals or desirable personal service/entertainment uses of any scale or character in this area should be supported through a CiL policy. **R**
3. With parking demands being typically substantive at the Village at Blue, we would not anticipate this area being a strong candidate for a CiL program; the application of shared parking principles is a better solution. **A**
4. Ideally, in establishing the amount to be incorporated as part of the Town's policy, values should be confirmed by an Appraiser to be selected by the Town. The terms of reference for the appraisal should be clear in establishing the intended 'limited' use of the land. **R**
5. A true value of \$10,000.00 per space appears appropriate for consideration in establishing the base quantum for a cash-in-lieu policy. **R**

8.3 Shared Parking

6. The application of shared principles can be applied to a mix of uses within the confines of a single mixed-use site, as well as to varying/complimentary uses on contiguous sites. We generally prefer and recommend that shared provisions for individual mixed-use sites be incorporated in By-laws as-of-right such that the rules are clear and the benefit of such standards is readily available. The application of such principles to contiguous sites is clearly a matter to be addressed by exception on a case-by-case basis. **R- ZBL Process**

7. As a general rule, we prefer and recommend the incorporation of shared parking criteria within the statutory By-law as a means of:
- clearly establishing municipal interests and objectives;
 - making it clear to all concerned what the rules are; and
 - providing a statutory basis for consideration of any variances or departures from the accepted criteria and principles. **R- ZBL Process**

8.4 Parking for the Physically Disabled

8. The following recommended standards are based on recent data from the Transportation Association of Canada and the Institute of Transportation Engineers, supplemented by professional judgement:

Capacity of Parking Area (number of parking spaces)	Minimum Number of Spaces to be Reserved for Physically Disabled Persons (Normal Use*)	Minimum Number of Spaces to be Reserved for Physically Disabled Persons (Low Use**)
0-7	0	0
8-25	1	1
26-50	2	1
51-75	3	2
76-100	4	2
101-150	5	3
151-200	6	4
201 – 1000	3% of number of parking spaces	2% of number of parking spaces
1000 and over	30 plus 1% of number of parking spaces over 1000	20 plus 1% of number of parking spaces over 1000

* **Normal Use** is defined as any use of land or a building where an average number of physically disabled persons can be anticipated, including but not limited to hospitals, outpatient treatment facilities, senior's care facilities, medical office buildings (except Veterinary), social service agencies, rehabilitation centres, municipal buildings, major shopping centres, community centres, educational facilities such as colleges and universities, major entertainment centres etc.

** **Low Use** is defined as any use of land or a building not deemed to be a normal use, including but not limited to office buildings, business parks, industrial buildings, convenience-oriented retail, gymnasiums etc. **R**

8.6 Private Parking on In-vicinity Properties

9. We generally recommend against an as-of-right regime permitting demand to be met on other private property in the vicinity. **R- ZBL Process**

8.7 Local Transit and Shuttle Operations

10. The recent addition of a number of new buses to local service in Collingwood may suggest some opportunity for TOTBM to approach the provision of some local service through the municipality's Joint Services Board. Any and all such opportunities should be aggressively pursued by the Town in the interest of beginning to reduce reliance on private vehicle use. **R**
11. Though it is apparent a large part of the Town's 'seasonal' population clearly arrives by private vehicle, the internal workings of a four seasons recreational resort area should offer more transit/higher occupancy vehicle based opportunities; and the Town should pursue such options to augment the private shuttle operations currently offered by BMR/Intrawest. **R**

8.8 Limiting At-grade Parking

12. Within the context of the Village, there may be opportunities for the Town, in conjunction with Intrawest/BMR, to effectively implement maximum at-grade parking standards in the interests of achieving design-driven objectives for Village precincts, while, at the same time, requiring some Cash-in-Lieu in return for associated shortfalls from prescribed standards for provision of public parking elsewhere in the vicinity. **R**

8.9 On-Street Parking

13. There is a growing recognition that parking on streets, both in commercial and residential areas, tends to provide a level of traffic-calming as well as enhancing pedestrian comfort and feeling of safety. An increasing number of municipalities are in fact, turning their thinking to encourage and specifically design for on-street parking for the above reasons, as well as acknowledging at a policy level that on-street supply will be considered in establishing minimum off-street standards for private properties in the vicinity. **R**

8.10 On-Street Permit Parking

14. Perhaps like cash-in-lieu, Permit Parking Systems have enjoyed somewhat limited success, particularly in smaller or emerging municipalities, where the sheer numbers of users may not, or do not yet exist to warrant the associated administrative costs. **R**

8.11 Commercial and Recreational Vehicle Parking

15. We suggest the Town consider adding a further provision for urban residential zones to require that such vehicles, when parked in a front or exterior side yard, be located no closer than 9.0 metres from the edge of the paved surface of any public street. This provision is intended to prevent encroachments on sidewalks and blockage of sight lines along curved roads and at, or near corner lots. **R- ZBL Process**

8.12 Minimum Parking Standards

16. Minimum By-law standards are outlined in Section 5 of this report. **R- ZBL Process**
17. A new approach to establishing minimum requirements for multiple unit residential developments is recommended. **R- ZBL Process**
18. A staggered set of standards based on unit size/composition is the most effective and responsive approach, as follows:

<u>Unit Type</u>	<u>Range</u> (spaces per unit)	<u>Recommended Standard</u> (spaces per unit)
Studio/Bachelor	0.85 – 1.25	1.0
1 Bedroom	1.0 – 1.5	1.25
2 Bedroom	1.5 – 2.0	1.75
3 Bedroom or Larger	1.75 – 2.5	2.25

R- ZBL Process

8.13 Public Parking Facilities in Thorbury/Clarksburg

Hester Street Lot:

19. Given their obviously strong relationship to Bruce Street, the Pond, the Municipal offices site, and close proximity to the possible northerly improvement of Bruce Street and associated connection to the harbour, there is no question the consolidation of these lands for public parking should be an important strategic target for the Town. **R**
20. Funding the purchase of such lands would not be achievable with Development Charge revenues. The Town could however, consider DC policy/payment adjustments in the interest of encouraging the provision of public rights-of-way on private land for such purposes. **R**
21. Revenues from other sources including Cash-in-Lieu and potentially Community Improvement grants may be relied upon. **R**
22. Bonussing provisions pursuant to Section 37 of *The Planning Act* could also be brought into play to assist in securing land dedications or conveyances to the Town. **R**

Clarksburg:

23. There may be opportunities for the public use and enjoyment of this site for more than public parking; that is, there are portions of the site adjoining the river where tree cover is limited and could accordingly offer some opportunity for public respite. **R**

8.13 Rural Trailheads and Waterfront Assets

24. There is no question these increased demands can be argued as growth-related, and thus candidates for some form of DC funding. **R**
25. As a municipality with such an abundance of trails assets – and such a strongly expressed trails development program – Town Council and senior staff should (both politically and technically) aggressively pursue the preparation of management plans for existing trails facilities as another potential opportunity for the Town to benefit from such MNR resources. **R**
26. The ability to allocate some local staff resources/support to the program, and pursuing the assistance and potential financial support of trails user groups should clearly assist the Town's prospects in this regard. **R**

8.14 Parking Facilities Management

27. A Wayfinding management system appears warranted, involving a series of concise verbal and non-verbal messages and signs which can be clearly understood by a variety of patrons. Installing a series of stationary signs can clearly label available parking areas, and assist in guiding patrons from full lots to the overflow parking areas. This parking system management measure is low cost and improves service, particularly for new visitors. **A**
28. Paved lots, in prime locations, would be high demand and could be operated as pay parking lots; full-time or during peak periods (daily or seasonal). **R**
29. Automatic gates can be controlled by parking revenue collection systems or 'Lot Full Control' systems that prevent entry into lots at capacity. Gate equipment is associated with some higher costs as they generally require some lot improvements during installation, such as paving areas to protect the detector loops and installing islands to separate the in and out lanes. **R**
30. Parking system management can be improved by the use of real-time, electronic variable-message signs. These signs can display information regarding parking, such as occupancy status or directions to available parking areas. **R**
31. Possible parking system management solutions for the conditions observed at the Blue Mountain Resorts could include a combination of readily available measures and/or technology. Adding static signs for wayfinding would improve the efficiency and service of the parking system. This improvement would be helpful even in the off-peak seasons. **R**
32. An automated system in which all lots had automated gates with detector loops at entrances and exits could be combined with a 'Lot Full Control' system. This would help prevent over-crowding in prime parking areas. **R**
33. Development of the Village and attendant uses, including the Convention Centre has, in our view, reached a stage where the intended permanent parking areas should be finished to a full 'urban' standard as the focus of parking demand and usage throughout the year. **R**

34. The prime lots at the Village Core should be finished, delineated, and effectively monitored either with a concerted attendant program or equipped with mechanical monitoring/access systems. **R**
35. Arguably in our view, the Town's intentions for completion of the facilities supporting the Village Core area are not being met. The Town should accordingly review its options for imposing conditions on forth-coming development phases at the Village, including the assistance of legal counsel as required. **R**
36. There is an undeniable need for parking tiers to be properly delineated in all lots. **R**