





**AFFECTS
WARDS 1, 2 & 3**

CITY OF HAMILTON

PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
Downtown Renewal Division
and
PUBLIC HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT
Culture and Recreation Division

 Report to: Chairman and Members Planning & Economic Development Committee	 Submitted by: Lee Ann Coveyduck General Manager Joe-Anne Priel General Manager
 Date: September 16, 2005	 Prepared by: Marty Hazell (905) 546-2424 Ext. 4588 Paul Buckle (905) 546-2424 Ext. 2597

 **SUBJECT: Parking Issues in Downtown Hamilton (PED05019/SPH05038)**
(Wards 1, 2 & 3) – Referred from Planning and Economic
Development Committee on August 3, 2004 and City Council on
January 26, 2005

COMMENDATION:

- (a) That the following recommendations be forwarded to the 2006 Budget process:
- (i) That consideration be given to allocating \$200,000 to the Public Health and Community Services Department Budget to allow for the interim financing of the York Boulevard Parkade “one-hour free parking” program, as a Cultural Services initiative, until such time as a market analysis respecting the Hamilton Farmers’ Market, being undertaken by the Cultural Services Section, has been completed.
 - (ii) That, contingent upon the allocation of funds as proposed in sub-section (a)(i), above, “no charge” parking on Saturdays at all on-street parking meters within the Downtown Hamilton Community Improvement Plan area be implemented as a Hamilton Municipal Parking System initiative.
 - (iii) That, contingent upon the allocation of funds as proposed in sub-section (a)(i), above, and the approval of sub-section (b)(i), above, Hamilton Municipal Parking System staff be authorized and directed to consult with the various Downtown Hamilton Community Improvement Plan area

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stakeholders to develop a marketing strategy respecting the “free on-street parking on Saturdays” initiative.

- (iv) That, contingent upon the allocation of funds as proposed in sub-section (a)(i), above, and the approval of sub-section (b)(i), above, a by-law in the form attached hereto as Appendix “A” to Report PED05019/SPH05038, be passed and enacted upon the completion of the 2006 Budget process.

- (b) That the outstanding item entitled “Parking Report from the Market Stallholders’ Association”, referred to staff from the Planning and Economic Development Committee on August 3, 2004, be identified as completed and removed from the Outstanding Business List of the subject Committee.

- (c) That the outstanding item entitled “Parking and Transportation Issues in Downtown Hamilton”, referred to staff from Council on January 26, 2005, be identified as completed and removed from the Outstanding Business List of the Planning and Economic Development Committee.

Lee Ann Coveyduck
General Manager
Planning and Economic Development Department

Joe-Anne Priel
General Manager
Public Health and Community Services

 **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

At its meeting of August 3, 2004, the Planning and Economic Development Committee referred a “report” to staff entitled “The Parking Problem”, submitted by the late Mr. Carmen Misale on behalf of the Hamilton Farmers’ Market Stallholders’ Association. Citing a program implemented in the City of Rock Island, Illinois, the subject report proposed that all parking meters in the downtown core be replaced with time limit parking and that employees of downtown businesses be allowed to purchase time limit exemption permits in order to park in the downtown.¹

In addition to the foregoing, Councillor Murray Ferguson, at the October 13, 2004 meeting of the Strategic Planning and Budgets Committee, requested certain information respecting on-street meter parking, specifically:

¹ C. Misale, “The Parking Problem”, June 2004, p. 10

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- Gross [parking meter] revenue to the City.
- Cost to collect revenue.
- Enforcement part of cost.
- Economic spin off for no charge parking – business case on total parking issue.
- The trend respecting meter use in other municipalities.
- The rationale for street meter fees being less than a parking lot fees.
- Income losses charged to businesses.

As well, at its meeting of January 26, 2005, Council received correspondence from Mr. John Mokrycke, Chairman of the Downtown Hamilton Business Improvement Area, addressing, among other things, such issues as the implementation of a free two-hour parking time limit in combination with the existing parking meter regulations in the downtown core and the introduction of “one non-commercial pick up/drop off space on each retail block”. Subsequently, Council referred the matter to staff for a report respecting parking and transportation issues in the downtown.

In consideration of Mr. Misale’s report and Mr. Mokrycke’s correspondence, Hamilton Municipal Parking System (HMPS) staff and Cultural Services staff, taking a holistic approach to downtown renewal in accordance with Council’s current practices, proposes an alternative parking incentive program. Staff recommends that the “one hour free parking” program, currently in effect as a Hamilton Municipal Parking System (HMPS) initiative at the York Boulevard Parkade, be replaced with “free parking” at all on-street metered parking spaces throughout the Downtown Hamilton Community Improvement Plan (CIP) area, for the entire day each Saturday throughout the year. For the purposes of this report, the CIP area is the area bounded by Queen Street, Cannon Street, Victoria Avenue and Hunter Street and includes both sides of James Street from Charlton Avenue to the old Canadian National Railway line, as shown on the illustration attached hereto as Appendix “B” to Report PED05019/SPH05038.

Essentially, staff suggests the modification of an existing downtown parking initiative such that the benefits to the retail industry of so called “free” parking are extended to include all businesses in the downtown and that said free parking be limited to one day each week. This proposal recognizes that Saturday is one of the more productive retail days of the week and takes advantage of the fact that it is also the day when the majority of office workers will not be parking in the downtown. By limiting its application to one day each week, the recommendation is also in keeping with the Downtown Transportation Master Plan imperative to develop policies that “discourage motor vehicle use and encourage transit use [and] carpooling”². Should the recommendations be approved, HMPS staff have committed to consulting with the various stakeholders operating in the CIP area, with a view to marketing the “free on-street parking on Saturdays” program as an incentive for customers and clients to come into downtown Hamilton.

² Downtown Transportation Master Plan, July 2001, p. 41.

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Notwithstanding the foregoing, staff also recognizes that the arbitrary discontinuation of the “one hour free parking” program at the York Boulevard Parkade may adversely affect the stallholders operating out of the Hamilton Farmers’ Market. The Hamilton Farmers’ Market is a valuable asset for the City of Hamilton, both in terms of the local economy and from the standpoint of community identity. The Market contributes to the City as a whole by filling a niche in Hamilton’s Tourism Industry and, more importantly, it contributes to the revitalization of the City’s downtown core, by providing access to fresh produce for residents of the inner city and by serving as a significant social focal point for the downtown.

Accordingly, staff recommends that consideration be given to the allocation of additional funds, in the order of \$200,000, to the 2006 Public Health and Community Services budget, for the purpose of financing the interim continuation of the York Boulevard “one hour free parking” program, as a Cultural Services initiative, until such time as a comprehensive market analysis respecting the Hamilton Farmers’ Market, being undertaken by Cultural Services, is completed. The long-term continuation of the York Boulevard “one hour free parking” program, as a promotional incentive for the Hamilton Farmers’ Market, would undoubtedly be contingent upon the findings of the subject market analysis and the subsequent development a definitive marketing strategy which addresses the needs of the stallholders and the community they serve.

While the recommendations do not entirely satisfy all the requests submitted by the Market Stallholders’ Association, the Stallholders’ Association recognizes that unlimited free parking would result in abuse by downtown employees and has, therefore, endorsed the recommendations as a reasonable compromise. At the same time, the recommendations also acknowledge the position held by the Downtown Hamilton Business Improvement Area (BIA) by extending the potential benefits of so called “free” parking to a greater number of businesses operating in downtown Hamilton and, as a result, the Downtown Hamilton BIA and the majority of the other CIP area stakeholders, specifically the James Street North and James Street South Business Associations, and the International Village BIA, have each indicated their support of the proposed initiatives. Only the King Street West BIA has indicated opposition to any form of free parking on Saturdays due to concerns respecting the overuse of the parking spaces within its boundaries by Hess Village patrons.

Staff would reiterate that the viability of the program depends entirely upon limiting the proposed free on-street parking on Saturdays program solely to the CIP area and upon transferring the Hamilton Municipal Parking System budget deficit currently supporting the York Boulevard Parkade program, to the free on-street parking on Saturdays program. Despite everything else in this report, staff would point out that, in reality, there is no such thing as “free parking”; rather, there is either “User Pay” parking or “Levy Subsidised” parking. Given that there are costs associated with the operation of any parking facility and the provision of any parking program, so called “free parking” is merely parking that is indirectly financed and, therefore, providing “free parking” necessarily results in someone besides the persons benefiting from the service being

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required to subsidise the service, either by paying higher user fees elsewhere or at other times or by paying higher taxes.

 **BACKGROUND:**

York Boulevard Parkade

The York Boulevard Parkade parking program was originally implemented in August of 1997, as a “one year” Downtown initiative “in exchange for an agreement from the T. Eaton Company to continue to operate the Eaton’s store in the Eaton’s Centre in downtown Hamilton for a minimum period of ten years”³. At present, in the absence of the T. Eaton Company, only those businesses within “walking distance”, i.e., 150 metres for short-term parking⁴, of the intersection of York Boulevard and James Street North enjoy the advantages associated with the existing York Boulevard Parkade program. This issue has been raised on more than one occasion by other Downtown stakeholders operating beyond a reasonable walking distance of the Parkade. Further, while the existing program provides for free parking on a daily basis, it only provides free parking for one hour, which has been identified as insufficient by some business owners in proximity to the Parkade.

On the other hand, providing free parking for the entire day on Saturdays throughout the CIP area would benefit all businesses in the City core on a day when customers from outside the area are most likely to drive into the Downtown and spend the day shopping or otherwise making use of the services being offered by local area business owners. Further, permitting Cultural Services to assume responsibility for the York Boulevard Parkade parking program not only mitigates any affects that might be suffered by the Hamilton Farmers’ Market stallholders as a result of transferring the HMPS budget deficit to facilitate free parking on Saturdays in the CIP area, but also engenders “appropriate ownership” of the York Boulevard Parkade program.

Free Time Limit Parking Downtown

The Hamilton Farmers’ Market Stallholders’ Association recommended that the City of Hamilton adopt a parking program they believed was in effect in Rock Island, Illinois. Essentially, the Rock Island parking program, at least as the Stallholders’ Association presented it, utilizes signed parking time limits to regulate parking in the downtown, instead of parking meters. Further, Rock Island also sells time limit exemption permits to the employees of downtown businesses which allow said employees to park on the street for periods of time exceeding the posted time limits.

Staff would, however, point out that while the program suggested by Mr. Misale and the Stallholders’ Association might be successful in Rock Island, it should be recognized

³ “The Eleventh Report for 1997 to the Council of the Corporation of the City of Hamilton”, the Committee of the Whole, August 7, 1997, Pg. 757.

⁴ Robert A. Weant and Herbert S. Levinson, 1990, Parking, (Washington: Eno Transportation Foundation, 1990).

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that the City of Rock Island is a small, tourist-oriented municipality, having a population of only 39,684 people⁵. To act on the belief that the success of a parking program in the City of Rock Island guarantees the success of the same program in the City of Hamilton, given the obvious differences in demographics and economics, would likely prove detrimental and, for that reason, staff is somewhat sceptical of any proposals based on such an assumption.

When contemplating the Stallholders' Association report, one might infer that the City of Rock Island decided to replace their parking meters with time limit parking because doing so was consistent with common practice or in keeping with a prevailing trend. One might also infer that a significant number of U.S. cities do not use, or have abandoned parking meters to regulate parking in their business districts. Research into the matter, however, argues that these inferences would be entirely inaccurate and, in view of the foregoing and for other reasons included in the "Analysis of Alternatives" section of this report, staff recommends that the Rock Island parking program, or any other general time limit regulation program in the downtown core, not be adopted.

Free Two Hour Parking in combination with existing Metered Parking

The same concerns respecting the implementation and enforcement of parking time limit regulations in place of parking meter regulations also apply with respect to the Downtown Hamilton BIA position favouring free two-hour on-street parking in addition to the time limits imposed and regulated by parking meters in the core. Further, the combination of time limit and meter regulations with respect to a single use of the same parking space would, in staff's view, undoubtedly lead to increased levels of inadvertent parking violations due to confusion on the part of the motorist and, thus, a higher incidence of parking ticket issuance. Staff appreciates that "free" time limit parking is commonly believed to be a factor contributing to the success of the retail sector, however, an analysis of the experiences of other municipalities where such programs have been implemented, as set out below, indicates that this is often not the case.

Survey Results

Staff reviewed the practices of 25 Canadian cities, having populations over 100,000 but less than 1,000,000⁶, in order to provide a sufficiently broad "base-line" from which to draw supportable conclusions. Staff also reviewed the practices of 20 cities from across the United States, having populations over 400,000 but less than 600,000⁷, being the range which would include Hamilton's population and which, therefore, would be reasonably suitable for comparison purposes.

⁵ www.ri.lincon.org/pdf/rifinancialreport2004.pdf, P. vi

⁶ Based on Statistics Canada estimates for 2004 adjusted to conform to current statistics as reported by each City

⁷ Based on U.S. Census Bureau estimates for 2004 adjusted to conform to current statistics as reported by each City

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Canadian Cities	Pop.	Meter Use	Hours of Operation	Days in Effect	Hourly Rate
Calgary, Alberta	933,495	Yes	9 a.m. - 6 p.m.	Mon – Sat	\$1.00 - \$3.50
Ottawa, Ontario	774,072	Yes	8 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.	Mon – Sat	\$2.50 ⁸
Edmonton, Alberta	667,000	Yes	6 a.m. - 6 p.m.	Mon – Sat	\$0.50 - \$1.25
Winnipeg, Manitoba	619,544	Yes	9 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.	Mon – Fri	\$1.00
Mississauga, Ontario ⁹	612,925	Yes	10 a.m. - 5 p.m.	Mon – Sat	\$0.50
Vancouver, B. C.	560,000	Yes	9 a.m. - 8 p.m.	Mon – Sun	\$0.50 - \$2.00
Hamilton, Ontario	503,000	Yes	8 a.m. - 6 p.m. ¹⁰	Mon – Sat	\$0.50 - \$1.00
Halifax, Nova Scotia	377,932	Yes	7 a.m. - 6 p.m.	Mon – Fri	\$1.00
Surrey, B. C.	347,800	Yes ¹¹	8 a.m. - 10 p.m.	Mon – Sun	\$1.00
London, Ontario	336,539	Yes	8 a.m. - 6 p.m.	Mon – Sat	\$1.25
Brampton, Ontario	325,428	Yes	9 a.m. - 6 p.m.	Mon – Sat	\$0.80 - \$1.00
Windsor, Ontario	208,402	Yes	8 a.m. - 6 p.m.	Mon – Sat	\$1.00 - \$2.00
Kitchener, Ontario	206,799	No			
Saskatoon, Sask.	205,900	Yes	9 a.m. - 6 p.m.	Mon – Sat	\$0.25 - \$1.00
Burnaby, B. C.	197,292	Yes	7 a.m. - 8 p.m.	Mon – Sun	\$1.00
Regina, Saskatchewan	190,400	Yes	8 a.m. - 6 p.m.	Mon – Fri	\$1.00
Vaughan, Ontario	182,022	No			
Burlington, Ontario	155,836	Yes	9 a.m. - 6 p.m.	Mon – Fri	\$0.50
Sudbury, Ontario	155,219	Yes	9 a.m. - 6 p.m.	Mon – Fri	\$0.50
Oakville, Ontario	144,738	Yes	9 a.m. - 6 p.m.	Mon – Sat	
Oshawa, Ontario	139,051	Yes	8 a.m. - 6 p.m.	Mon – Fri	\$1.00
St. Catharines, Ontario	129,170	Yes	9 a.m. - 6 p.m.	Mon – Fri	\$0.20 - \$0.40
Kingston, Ontario ¹²	114,195	Yes	9:30 am - 5:30 pm	Mon – Sat	\$1.00 - \$1.50
Thunder Bay, Ontario	109,016	Yes	9 a.m. - 5 p.m.	Mon – Sat	\$1.00
Guelph, Ontario	106,170	Yes	9 a.m. - 6 p.m.	Mon – Sat	\$1.50
Barrie, Ontario	103,719	Yes	9 a.m. - 5 p.m.	Mon – Fri	\$0.20 - \$0.40

(Figure 1)

⁸ No charge on Saturday in the Central Business District

⁹ Port Credit only, however, expansion of metered parking is under review

¹⁰ 8 a.m. - 9 p.m. on Thursday and Friday, outside the Downtown core

¹¹ High turnover areas only.

¹² 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. Mon - Fri near hospital and university

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U. S. Cities	Pop.	Meter Use	Hours of Operation	Days in Effect	Hourly Rate¹³
Milwaukee, Wisconsin	586,941	Yes	8 a.m. - 6 p.m.	Mon – Fri	\$0.90 - \$1.20
Fort Worth, Texas	585,122	Yes	8 a.m. - 6 p.m.	Mon – Fri	\$0.25 - \$0.85
Charlotte, N. Carolina	584,658	Yes	8 a.m. - 6 p.m.	Mon – Fri	\$0.60 - \$1.20
Boston, Massachusetts	581,616	Yes	8 a.m. - 8 p.m.	Mon – Sat	\$1.20
Seattle, Washington	569,101	Yes	8 a.m. - 6 p.m.	Mon – Sat	\$1.80
Washington, D. C.	563,384	Yes	7 a.m. - 6:30 p.m.	Mon - Fri	\$0.60 - \$1.20
Georgetown Area		Yes	7 a.m. - 10 p.m.	Mon - Sat	\$1.20
Denver, Colorado	557,478	Yes	8 a.m. - 10 p.m.	Mon - Sat	\$1.20
Portland, Oregon	538,544	Yes	8 a.m. - 7 a.m.	Mon - Sat	\$1.80
Oklahoma, Oklahoma	523,303	Yes	8 a.m. - 6 p.m.	Mon - Sat	\$0.60 - \$1.20
Las Vegas, Nevada	517,017	Yes	8 a.m. - 8 p.m.	Mon - Sat	\$1.80
Tucson, Arizona	507,658	Yes	8 a.m. - 5 p.m.	Mon - Fri	\$0.60 - \$1.20
Long Beach, California	475,460	Yes	8 a.m. - 6 p.m.	Mon - Sat	\$0.60
Beach Area		Yes	8 a.m. - 6 p.m.	Mon - Sun	\$1.20
New Orleans, Louisiana	469,032	Yes	8 a.m. - 6 p.m.	Mon - Fri	\$1.55
Cleveland, Ohio	461,324	Yes	7 a.m. - 6 p.m.	Mon - Fri	\$0.30 - \$0.85
Fresno, California	451,455	Yes	6 a.m. - 6 p.m.	Mon - Sat	\$0.75
Sacramento, California	445,335	Yes	8 a.m. - 8 p.m.	Mon - Sat	\$0.30 - \$1.20
Kansas, Missouri	442,768	Yes	7 a.m. - 6 p.m.	Mon - Fri	\$0.90 - \$1.80
Virginia Beach, Virginia	439,467	Yes	6 a.m. - 8 p.m.	Mon - Sun	\$0.90
Oceanfront / Apr - Sep		Yes	24 hrs. per. Day	Mon - Sun	\$0.90
Mesa, Arizona	432,376	No			
Atlanta, Georgia	423,019	Yes	24 hrs. per day	Mon - Sat	\$1.20 - \$2.40

(Figure 2)

As can be seen in the preceding charts, *(Figure 1 and Figure 2)*, 42 of the 45 cities studied (93%) report the use of parking meters as the preferred means to promote parking turnover in their respective business centres.

It should be noted that the Cities of Toronto and Montreal, by virtue of their populations, were specifically excluded from the Canadian study as being statistically incomparable with the City of Hamilton. It might be mentioned, however, that both municipalities, both of which could be viewed as “world class” cities, report the use of parking meters to regulate parking in their business centres.

Also, the City of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, although also outside the demographic scope of the study with a population of 325,337 was, nevertheless, contacted since there is a “perceived” similarity to Hamilton as a steel manufacturing and industrial city. Pittsburgh parking control staff confirmed the use of parking meters in the downtown core from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Saturday, and advised that parking fee rates (reported in Canadian funds) averaged \$2.40 per hour.

¹³ In Canadian funds.

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Case Study Outcomes

Further research into the practices of municipalities in the United States has also revealed that both the City of Albany, New York¹⁴ and the City of Macon, Georgia¹⁵ replaced the parking meters in their downtown areas with parking time limits in 1980 and 1993, respectively. Each municipality removed their parking meters in hopes of making their downtowns “more business friendly”. Both municipalities have since reinstalled their parking meters¹⁶ to combat the rampant parking congestion that, predictably, ensued - notwithstanding consistent enforcement of the parking time limit regulations. It is interesting to note that, in both cases, said parking congestion was identified as being caused primarily by the employees of downtown businesses using various ploys to circumvent the time limit regulations.

As an additional point of discussion, it is also interesting to note that, contrary to the Stallholders’ Association presentation, the City of Rock Island does, indeed, maintain parking meters within their two hour parking time limit zones, to generate a faster parking turnover rate in the vicinity of certain businesses, (e.g. banks, drug stores, etc.)

The foregoing information, staff believes, speaks to Councillor Ferguson’s request for information respecting the “trend in other municipalities”. Both the survey and the case studies indicate that the trend in other municipalities, having similar, or at least comparable, demographics to Hamilton, is to rely on parking meters as the method of choice to promote parking turnover in their business districts. In fact, according to a recent article in *The Parking Professional*, an International Parking Institute Inc. publication, the issue isn’t about whether or not to utilize parking meters, but rather it’s about which of the available payment options, including paper money and credit card payments, should be offered to motorists when they park at a meter¹⁷.

With respect to Councillor Ferguson’s question about “economic spin off”, staff would advise that no information has been found that unequivocally indicates a direct and quantifiable “Return on Investment”, in the form of economic spin off, associated with the removal of parking meters from a downtown business districts.

In 1995 the City of Kitchener, Ontario, replaced their parking meters with a two-hour parking time limit and a prohibition against re-parking in the downtown within five hours of initially parking. Although there have been improvements in the downtown since then, including a decline in the retail vacancy rate by 4.6%¹⁸, Kitchener’s Director of Transportation Planning, Mr. John McBride points out that “the total parking incentives implemented since 1995 are currently costing approximately \$600,000 annually”¹⁹. In a

¹⁴ Bob Schaffner, “Meters Solve Problems”, *The Parking Professional*, September 1998, P.26.

¹⁵ “Parking in the News”, *The Parking Professional*, June 2004, P.13.

¹⁶ Albany in 1998 and Macon in 2004.

¹⁷ “Meter Users Like Payment Options But Struggle With Variety” (Parking in the News) *The Parking Professional*, June 2005. p. 7.

¹⁸ J. McBride, “Is Free On-Street Parking the Answer?” Ontario Traffic Conference, Sept. 2004, P. 2.

¹⁹ Ditto

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presentation to the Ontario Traffic Conference, Mr. McBride advised that only 10% of the total number of parking spaces were designated as “free” and stated; “While I wish that free parking could take the credit for this turnaround [in Kitchener’s business district], it was only one of many different initiatives that restored confidence in the downtown”²⁰

Another aspect of the same dilemma is demonstrated by the experience of the City of Brantford²¹, Ontario. In 1995, Brantford City Council caused 218 of the parking meters to be removed from the downtown and, again, in 2000 the remaining 256 meters were removed, all in hopes of revitalizing the core. Despite this effort, Brantford’s downtown, with its 80% vacancy rate, continued to languish well into 2001. According to Brantford City staff, the provision of free parking in the downtown “made no difference whatsoever”. However, since 2002 Brantford has implemented a number of initiatives which include:

- A “Brownfields” redevelopment program;
- A five million dollar grants program to encourage private investment in the core;
- The development of off-campus student housing in the downtown; and,
- The award of the Civic Square “private/public partnership” contract, valued at over \$20M.

As a result of these and other initiatives, Brantford’s downtown has started to show signs of recovery. In fact, recent studies by Brantford City staff have indicated that the increase in residential development in downtown Brantford has created a parking shortage of some 600 spaces. Plans are underway to study various methods of discouraging long-term on-street parking and encouraging parking turnover to benefit both new and surviving local businesses. Ironically, the reintroduction of on-street parking meters is now being considered as a means to regulate long-term parking in Brantford’s downtown.

In view of the experiences of Albany, New York, Macon, Georgia and Kitchener and Brantford, Ontario, the supposed economic “spin-offs” from so called “free” parking on a full time basis in a municipal downtown, if any, are indeterminate at best. It would not, in staff’s view, be unreasonable to argue that any theoretical short-term economic benefits derived from the removal of parking meters from the core would fail to justify the increases in parking congestion, non-compliance, enforcement costs, and the potential for long-term consumer dissatisfaction.

In summary, staff would argue that the Rock Island program or any generally applied “parking time limit” enforcement program, if implemented in the City of Hamilton’s downtown core, would create more problems than it would solve.

²⁰ Ditto

²¹ Population 86,417

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ANALYSIS OF ALTERNATIVES:

The following chart summarizes the alternatives to staff's recommendations,

Downtown Free Programs Parking Analysis		
Option	Financial Implications	Comments
Free all day parking at on-street meters in CIP on Saturdays - 1 hour free parking at the York Boulevard Parkade eliminated.	\$192,000 annual cost of York Boulevard Parkade program transferred to CIP program - No impact on existing budgets.	Hamilton Farmers' Market Stallholders' Association opposed. Merchants Associations and BIAs (except King St. W.) in favour.
Free parking at on-street meters in CIP all day on Saturdays - 1 hour free parking in York Boulevard Parkade maintained by Cultural Services until completion of Market Analysis.	\$192,000 annual cost of York Boulevard Parkade program transferred to CIP program. \$200,000 allocated to PHCS for 2006 to finance continuation of York Boulevard Parkade program, pending outcome of Market Analysis.	Recommended Program. Protects Market parking until market study completed. \$200,000 PHSC Budget implication for 2006.
Free time limit parking in CIP for 7 days per week - 1 hour free parking at the York Boulevard Parkade eliminated.	Approx. \$330,000 increase in annual enforcement costs - no increase in fine revenues. Approx \$500,000 annual loss of meter revenues (excluding parking lots). \$192,000 annual cost of York Boulevard program transferred to CIP program. Approx. \$30,000 for sign installation and \$2,000 annually for maintenance. 3,000 for meter removal.	Annual cost increase: \$332,000 Annual revenue loss: \$ 500,000 One time costs: \$33,000 HMPS no longer self-sustaining - becomes a levy dependant operation.
Free time limit parking in CIP 7 days per week - 1 hour free parking at York Boulevard Parkade maintained.	Approx. \$330,000 annual increase in enforcement costs - No increase in fine revenues. Approx. \$500,000 annual loss of meter revenue excluding parking lots. \$200,000 for York Blvd. Program. Approx. \$33,000 for sign installation and meter removal. Approx. \$2,000 annually for sign maintenance. Losses suffered by off-street lots, (private and public) indeterminate.	Annual cost increase: \$532,000 \$500,000 revenue loss. One time costs: \$33,000 HMPS no longer self-sustaining - becomes a levy dependant operation.
Status Quo: Meter parking on Saturdays remains in effect - 1 hour free parking York Boulevard Parkade remains in effect.	No change in financial implications.	No change to parking opportunities in downtown - regulatory conformity with the remainder of the City is maintained. HMPS remains self-sustaining.
No Free Parking Programs: Meter parking on Saturdays remains in effect - 1 hour free parking at York Boulevard Parkade eliminated.	\$192,000 savings accrues to HMPS operating budget.	HMPS remains self-sustaining. Larger HMPS contribution to levy. Hamilton Farmers' Market adversely affected. No advantage to downtown retailers.

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The Rock Island Program

Councillor Ferguson's request for information about meter regulated parking in Hamilton²², addresses a number of matters associated with staff's concerns respecting the Rock Island parking program and any argument in favour of parking time limits over parking meters.

In response to Councillor Ferguson's questions respecting gross and net revenues, staff advises as follows:

- Gross revenue to the City from on-street parking meters throughout the City is in the order of \$1,216,400 (excluding fine revenues);
- The cost to collect said revenue, city wide, (including wages, benefits, vehicles and equipment) is, at present, in the order of \$310,500; and,
- Net revenue, therefore, is in the order of \$905,900.

Staff advises of the following concerns respecting the implementation of the Rock Island Program:

1. In order to maintain the same levels of compliance and parking turnover, enforcement of the suggested time limit parking regulations will require at least twice the manpower that is currently utilized in the enforcement of the existing parking meter regulations.
2. The provision of time limit exemption permits to employees of businesses in the downtown core will increase parking congestion in the core and will displace customers currently using on-street parking. Moreover, when regulated, "on-street parking" in commercial areas has traditionally been reserved for short-term "customer" parking, while long-term parking in a municipality's business district is normally relegated to off-street parking facilities, where parking turnover is not a concern.
3. The provision of time limit exemption permits to employees of downtown businesses is also contrary to a central goal of the Downtown Transportation Master Plan, that being, to "discourage automobile use by commuters".²³
4. The concerns raised in the Stallholders' Association report, with respect to customers receiving parking tickets for parking meter violations will not, in any way, be resolved by implementing the Rock Island program. There is no reason to expect motorists to exhibit a higher rate of compliance with respect to parking time limits than is exhibited with respect to parking meters and, thus, the same number of persons would likely receive parking tickets for parking time limit violations.

²² Strategic Planning and Budgets Committee, meeting of October, 2004

²³ Downtown Transportation Master Plan, July 2001, P. 91.

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5. While there is no proof that daily free parking in the downtown is the panacea the Market Stallholders' Association report claims it to be, there is no doubt that such free parking will have an unequivocally adverse effect on the businesses of local private parking operators. It should be noted that certain private parking operators have already indicated their serious objection to any proposal which includes free on-street parking on a daily basis.
6. The costs associated with sign erection and ongoing sign maintenance will negatively affect the HMPS budget and, by extension, the tax levy, whereas meter installation and maintenance costs are entirely offset by the revenue generated by the meters themselves.

Further to the foregoing, staff holds that the replacement of parking meters with parking time limits would not result in a corresponding reduction in operating costs. In fact, given that there would be additional sign erection and maintenance expenses, such a program would increase operating and enforcement costs without any corresponding cost recovery. Consequently, adoption of the Rock Island program or a similar parking time limit program in the downtown would result in a loss of approximately \$500,000. (If such a program were implemented city-wide, losses would be in the order of \$900,000). At present, HMPS is self-sustaining and, in 2004, contributed approximately \$250,000 to the levy. A net revenue loss of \$500,000 would result in HMPS becoming financially dependent upon the tax base and would give rise to a significant realty tax increase.

Since the trend in virtually all other comparable municipalities across North America is to maintain or reintroduce the use of parking meters for the purpose of regulating short-term, on-street parking and encourage parking turnover in their business districts, staff respectfully recommends that parking initiatives similar to the Rock Island program be rejected.

Status Quo

The status quo might be seen as a "safe" alternative, since its outcomes are a known quantity, however, staff suggests that aspects of some of the present parking programs within the CIP area may no longer be as advantageous to the City as they once were, in light of the City's "Downtown Renewal" goals.

Since both the downtown merchants and the City are looking for ways to attract customers, residents and new businesses to the downtown for the purpose of improving commerce and revitalizing the core, it would be appropriate to review existing programs, in a bid to more fully realize such ends. Accordingly, a program such as the York Boulevard Parkade parking program, with benefits that apply only to a localized area, should be subject to review to ensure firstly, that its benefits are consistent with the best interests of the community at large as well as those businesses that it currently serves and secondly, that it falls within the purview of the appropriate municipal department.

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At the same time, it is imperative not to undervalue “parking” as a commodity or squander this limited resource in the name of expediency. If there is any lesson to be learned from the experiences of the Cities of Albany, Macon, Kitchener and Brantford, it is simply that the easily articulated “quick fix”, no matter how seemingly obvious, rarely works - at least not in the long run. Jack Neely, in his column, “What They Say”, published at http://metropulse.com/dir_zine/dir_2004/1426/t_gamut.htm on the World Wide Web, included the following in an article entitled; “Downtown’s Greatest Need: Free Parking?”

Anytime people start talking about free parking, we first need to acknowledge the obvious; there ain’t no such thing. When somebody supplies a 150-square-foot space of asphalted prime real estate on which random strangers can leave, for an indefinite period, a machine that weighs 2,000 to 7,000 pounds and may or may not be leaking corrosive fluids, you can bet somebody’s paying something.

Of course, if downtown parking were “free”, it wouldn’t be free, really, we’d just pay for it differently. We’d pay for it once a year, when we pay our taxes.²⁴

Insofar as “parking” is concerned, whether viewed in this context as a commodity, or as an operation, the status quo as it applies to the York Boulevard Parkade program, in the opinion of staff, is no longer desirable from a parking operations perspective. While staff does not recommend radical or ill-considered changes to the City’s parking policies, procedures and operations, staff does support a soberly considered evolution of the City’s initiatives as a part of an over-all Downtown Renewal process.

Rejecting the recommendations set out in this report, notwithstanding staff’s above stated concerns, would maintain the somewhat contentious status quo with respect to parking currently in effect. It nevertheless remains staff’s opinion that the Hamilton Farmers’ Market would be best served by the professional market analysis being undertaken by Cultural Services to ascertain what initiatives, if any, would be best suited to facilitate the Market’s operation as a key component of the City’s cultural and economic wellbeing.

Recommended Program

The recommended parking initiative calls for the discontinuation of the York Boulevard Parkade free one-hour parking program as an HMPS initiative, and the implementation of a free on-street parking program, throughout the CIP area on Saturdays. So called “free” parking on Saturdays would extend no-charge parking at all metered spaces within the CIP from Friday evening through to Monday morning. In short, no parking fees would be charged for parking at any on-street meter in the CIP area for the entire weekend. Referring, once again, to Figures 1 and 2, it can be seen that 23 municipalities (51%) enforce metered parking on Saturdays, five municipalities (12%)

²⁴ Jack Neely, “Downtown’s Greatest Need: Free Parking?” *What They Say*, http://metropulse.com/dir_zine/dir_2004/1426/t_gamut.htm, September 2004, P. 1.

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extend metered parking to include Sundays, and 16 municipalities (36%) allow free parking on Saturdays²⁵. Essentially, except in areas of consistent high demand, metered parking on Saturday comes down to “the flip of a coin”.

It should be noted that parking time limit regulations are not generally being considered to replace the repealed parking meter regulations on Saturdays²⁶, for the following reasons:

1. The enforcement of parking time limits necessitates twice the manpower required for metered parking enforcement to achieve comparable compliance levels.
2. Parking time limit regulations are traditionally applicable only in residential, i.e., non-commercial, areas.
3. The necessary additional signage for the CIP area would:
 - (a) Dramatically increase “visual pollution” in the downtown;
 - (b) Create confusion in the minds of the motoring public resulting in an increase in unintentional by-law violations and increased enforcement activities; and,
 - (c) Generate unrecoverable sign installation and maintenance costs.
4. Competition for on-street parking would not include “office workers” who do not typically work on Saturdays.
5. Employees of businesses that normally operate on Saturdays have already developed alternative parking options and should, therefore, not contribute to parking congestion, save and except for employees who are currently required to pay for parking.

Customers may, therefore, park for extended periods of time, limited only by the “general provision” parking time limits. However, since the subject recommendation will directly benefit businesses in the CIP area, staff expects that the business operators will act in their own best interests insofar as “employee parking” competing with “customer parking” is concerned. All other parking and traffic regulations would remain in force and enforcement activities in the CIP area would be redirected to focus on parking and stopping regulations and complaint driven enforcement.

²⁵ Washington D.C. operates its meters Mon - Fri and Mon - Sat, and Long Beach, California, operates its meters on Mon - Sat and Mon - Sun, depending upon location.

²⁶ Notwithstanding the general position, HMPS would consider implementing time limit regulations on a case by case basis, in areas where unrestricted long-term parking on Saturdays was conclusively proven to adversely affect local businesses.

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The CIP area was selected for the implementation of the recommended initiative because it reflects the redefined boundaries used for other Downtown Renewal programs and, since these boundaries extend beyond those formerly used to define the “downtown”, a greater number of stakeholders will benefit.

Since 1998, the downtown has enjoyed the benefit of a number of parking initiatives specifically intended to promote short-term parking, including:

1. A 150% increase in the number of on-street parking meters from 200 to 500 spaces.
2. A reduction in the hourly parking meter rate from \$1.00 per hour to \$0.50 per hour.
3. A reduction in the overall level of parking enforcement.
4. The provision of an additional “built in” grace time for parking meters to allow additional time for motorists to return to their vehicles.
5. A reduction in the hours of meter operation on Thursdays and Fridays from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
6. The development and maintenance of a regular working relationship with the area BIAs to facilitate further parking initiatives.

The “free parking on Saturdays” program, as proposed by staff, may also engender a more positive consumer experience for customers doing business in the CIP area which, although a somewhat intangible benefit, promotes the perception of Hamilton as “a City of Growth and Opportunity” and “a City Where People Come First”. For this reason, staff feels that an advertising strategy, developed with input from the various downtown businesses, would be beneficial to all concerned.

 **FINANCIAL/STAFFING/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:**

Financial Implications

Should the aforesaid recommendations be approved, staff anticipates a slight reduction in revenue losses suffered by HMPS. Currently, estimated recoverable revenue losses respecting the existing York Boulevard Parkade “free parking” program are in the order of \$192,000 per annum. Staff anticipates that revenue losses for the proposed “free parking on Saturdays in the CIP Area” will be in the order of \$181,000 per annum. Therefore, staff estimates that HMPS revenue losses will be reduced by about \$11,000 per annum.

If realized, this reduction in losses may mitigate other operating expenses recently incurred by HMPS. It should be recognized, however, that the foregoing estimates are

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based upon high level assumptions only and any program cost reductions should not be viewed as available for application outside the HMPS budget. Staff anticipates that any surplus arising as a result of the implementation of the subject recommendations will be needed to cover additional costs associated with, among other things, the security and cashiering contract currently in place at the York Boulevard Parkade.

In addition to the foregoing, staff reiterates that approval of the recommendations set out herein includes consideration being given during the 2006 Current Budget process, to the allocation of \$200,000 to the Public Health and Community Services 2006 operating budget for the purpose of financing the York Boulevard Parkade "one-hour free parking" program, at least until such time as the market analysis respecting the Hamilton Farmers' Market, being undertaken by Cultural Services, has been completed.

Staffing Implications

No staffing implications are expected, since enforcement staff will be redeployed to address parking and stopping regulations and complaint driven enforcement and collections staff do not normally work on Saturdays.

Legal Implications

Except the amendment of the On-Street Parking By-law (attached hereto as Appendix "A" to Report PED05019/SPH05038), being City of Hamilton By-law No. 01-218, no legal implications apply.

POLICIES AFFECTING PROPOSAL:

The Downtown Transportation Master Plan policies respecting "a well organized, comprehensive system of parking"²⁷ affect the subject proposal.

CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT DEPARTMENTS/AGENCIES:

Staff from Legal Counsel and Corporate Services were consulted and identified no concerns. Staff from Finance and Administration were consulted and identified no concerns. The James Street North Businesses Association and the James Street South Business Association were consulted and support the recommendations. The King Street West Business Improvement Area advises that their members are opposed to the recommendations due to concerns that patrons of nearby Hess Village will occupy the meters near their businesses for protracted periods of time. The Downtown Hamilton Business Improvement Area and the International Village Business Improvement Area support the recommendations and have expressed the opinion that this is "a step in the right direction". The Hamilton Farmers' Market Stallholders' Association was also

²⁷ "Downtown Transportation Master Plan", July 2001, P. 48.

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consulted and supports the recommendations, holding, however, that the York Boulevard Parkade program should be increased to two hours of free parking.

KEY STRATEGIC COMMITMENT:

Health Impacts

No health impacts apply.

Social Impacts

The recommendation supports the achievement of service excellence by effectively managing change and adopting best practices. The recommendation is consistent with HMPS Mission to manage the life cycle of its parking facilities “in support of the residential and business communities and the City’s Land Use, Transportation and Economic Development initiatives”. The recommendation also addresses the City’s commitment to providing quality services that residents can rely on and to support the community’s quality of life by promoting the development of culture and heritage.

Environmental Impacts

No significant environmental impacts apply.

Economic Impacts

The recommendation speaks to the intent of the City’s Strategic Plan by supporting fiscal accountability, encouraging innovation and promoting excellence in service since the HMPS mandate to operate as a self sustaining business unit reduces the tax burden borne by the constituency.

MBH/PDB/
Attachs. (2)

Appendix "A" to Report No. PED05019/SPH05038

Authority: Item , Name of Committee
Report
CM: Date

Bill No.

CITY OF HAMILTON

BY-LAW NO. _____

**To Amend By-law No. 01-218, as amended,
Being a By-law To Regulate On-Street Parking**

WHEREAS Section 11(1)1 of the Municipal Act 2001, S.O. 2001, Chapter 25, as amended, confers upon the councils of all municipalities the power to enact by-laws for regulating parking and traffic on highways subject to the Highway Traffic Act;

AND WHEREAS on the 18th day of September, 2001, the Council of the City of Hamilton enacted By-law No. 01-218 to regulate on-street parking;

AND WHEREAS it is necessary to amend By-law No. 01-218, as amended;

NOW THEREFORE the Council of the City of Hamilton enacts as follows:

1. By-law No. 01-218, as amended, is hereby further amended by deleting from Section 8 thereof, Subsection (3) in its entirety and by substituting in its place the following Subsection, namely:

"(3) (a) Provisions requiring the payment of parking fees and prohibitions against using parking spaces while no "paid for" and unexpired period of time is indicated on the adjacent parking meter, or against parking for more than the specified time in any parking space, in the geographic area of the City bounded on the west by Queen Street and on the east by Victoria Avenue and on the south by Hunter Street and on the north by Cannon Street and including both east and west sides of James Street commencing at Charlton Avenue and extending northerly therefrom to the Canadian National Railway line, shall apply only between the hours indicated on the parking meter, and shall not apply on Saturdays, Sundays or holidays.

(b) Provisions requiring the payment of parking fees and prohibitions against using parking spaces while no "paid for" and unexpired period of time is indicated on the adjacent parking meter, or against parking for more than the specified time in any parking space, in all areas of the City save and except the area defined in Subsection

8(3)(a), above, shall apply only between the hours indicated on the parking meter, and shall not apply on Sundays or holidays."

2. Subject to the amendments made in this By-law, in all other respects, By-law No. 01-218, as amended and including all Schedules thereto, is hereby confirmed unchanged.
3. This By-law shall come into force and take effect on the date of its passing and enactment.

PASSED and ENACTED this day of , 2005





MAYOR

CLERK



CIP Area

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Scale: N.T.S.	Downtown Hamilton	 Hamilton Planning & Development Department
Date: May 3, 2005	Former Municipality of Hamilton	
	Legend  Area Bounded By Queen St., Cannon St., Victoria Ave., and Hunter St., Including both sides of James St. from Charlton Ave. To C.N.R. Line.	
	 Average Walking Distance from York Boulevard Parkette (150 metre - Short Term Parking)	