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## **Downtown Parking Update**

### **Staff Report to Council**

Report Number: 2025-29

Department(s): Engineering Services

Author(s): Shane MacDonald, Manager of Capital Delivery – Infrastructure Renewals

Meeting Date: May 26, 2025

### **Recommendations**

1. That the report entitled Downtown Parking Update dated May 26, 2025 be received; and,
2. That staff be authorized to proceed with the expansion of the existing parking lot at 500 Water Street; and,
3. That staff be authorized to proceed with the expansion of the existing parking lot in the Fairy Lake (P2) Public Parking; and,
4. That Staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

### **Executive Summary**

At its regular meeting on October 7, 2024, Council discussed the [Downtown Parking Update 2024](#) staff report and adopted the following recommendation:

**That staff report back within 6 months with options to add an additional, minimum 50 parking spaces in the downtown to achieve the original target of approximately 200 new spaces.**

In response to this direction, Engineering Services reviewed four potential locations in the downtown core to provide an update on opportunities to meet the 200 parking space target. The four locations evaluated include:

- The existing gravel parking lot (former tennis courts) and its integration into the existing P3 lot
- The All Our Kids parking lot extension
- 500 Water Street
- Fairy Lake (P2) Public Parking

This report outlines the findings of Engineering Services' review as follows:

Permanently paving and integrating the gravel parking lot (former tennis courts) into the existing P3 parking lot will result in approximately 163 additional parking spaces. Pending Council approval and future budget allocations, expanding the existing parking area at 500 Water Street will create approximately 28 additional spaces, while expanding the Fairy Lake (P2) public parking lot will add approximately 16. Collectively, these improvements would provide a total of 207 new parking spaces in the downtown core.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the construction of the gravel parking lot (former tennis courts), its integration into the existing P3 parking lot, and the total number of parking spaces that will be achieved at this location.

Additionally, this report seeks Council approval to proceed with the expansion of the existing parking lot at 500 Water Street and the expansion of the existing Fairy Lake (P2) public parking lot.

## **Background**

In closed session on September 9, 2024, Council directed staff to cancel the Request for Proposal for a modular parking structure at the former tennis club at 170 Doug Duncan Drive. The proposed modular parking structure would have provided 200 additional parking spaces.

In lieu of the modular parking structure, on October 7, 2024, Council approved the construction of a surface parking lot at the former tennis club site, currently used as a temporary gravel lot, along with improvements to the existing P3 parking area, to achieve over 150 new parking spaces. The new surface parking lot at the former tennis club site will include paved parking, lighting, pavement markings, and Low Impact Design (LID) features to improve stormwater management.

Additionally, staff were directed to report back to Council within six months with options to add approximately 50 more parking spaces in the downtown core, in order to meet the original target of approximately 200 new spaces.

## **Discussion**

### **Conversion of the gravel lot at the former tennis club to permanent parking and integration with the existing P3 parking lot**

As directed by Council, an RFP for the construction of a permanent lot at the gravel parking lot (former Tennis Club) at 170 Doug Duncan and its integration into existing P3 parking lot was awarded on March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

To ensure that over 225 parking spaces remain available to the public throughout construction, the work will be completed in two phases. Phase one will focus on completing all work in the gravel lot area, including concrete work and paving to base asphalt. This phase is currently underway and is scheduled for completion by June 7, 2025. Once completed, the area will reopen, providing approximately 160 additional parking spaces for the summer months. The contractor will then demobilize and return in early September or October 2025 to complete upgrades to the existing P3 parking lot. These upgrades will include new sidewalks, concrete curb repairs, new pavement markings, and asphalt resurfacing. Upon completion, the gravel lot will be fully integrated with the existing P3 parking area, resulting in a total of 394 parking spaces.

As with previous parking lot work, staff will collaborate with the Business Improvement Area to implement the Park and Walk program, which has successfully redirected employees to alternative lots offering extended parking durations. Staff are also implanting temporary signage to highlight available parking options throughout the downtown area.

### **Analysis of three viable locations for potential additional parking spaces**

Staff identified and analyzed three viable locations for additional parking to achieve the target of 50 new spaces, complementing the 163 parking spots that will be available at the former Tennis Club site. Several potential sites were reviewed, with detailed analysis conducted on three options: the expansion of the existing parking lots at 500 Water Street, Fairy Lake (P2) Public Parking, and All Our Kids (AOK) Park (See Attachment A). These locations were evaluated based on factors including site suitability, location, constructability, approval and permitting requirements, cost, and anticipated frequency of use (i.e., how often the spaces are likely to be occupied).

Given that all identified locations fall within the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority (LSRCA) Regulated Area and require LSRCA approvals and permits, staff initiated pre-consultation with the LSRCA to clarify permitting requirements and conditions. This proactive step was taken to accurately assess both the potential costs and the number of additional parking spaces that could be achieved at each location. The LSRCA confirmed its approval and permitting requirements and indicated that the parking lots could be expanded, provided that all necessary criteria for construction within a regulated area are met.

## **Expanding the existing parking area at 500 Water Street will create approximately 28 additional parking spaces.**

The expansion of the 500 Water Street parking lot has been identified as one of the potential downtown locations for further exploration in terms of achievable parking capacity, feasibility, and cost. Staff have completed a preliminary design for extending the existing parking lot, which indicates that approximately 28 additional parking spaces can be added at the rear of the property. The Town owns this property and has entered into a 10-year lease with Bar Locale Inc. ("Locale"). The restaurant is set to open this summer. The existing parking at 500 Water Street provides 20 spaces that are for the exclusive use of Locale.

The proposed parking extension is located south of the area leased to Locale, on a portion of the property that is currently unusable due to grading and access constraints.

Staff anticipate encountering construction debris during excavation and have included potential additional costs for debris removal and disposal in the cost estimate. Several existing trees on Town-owned property will need to be removed to accommodate the expansion. The extent of required tree removal will be further assessed during the detailed design phase. To mitigate visual impacts on the adjacent residential building, wood fencing and new tree plantings will be incorporated to provide a visual buffer.

The need for additional parking to support restaurants and businesses in the area, combined with the general demand for public parking at the south end of Main Street South, indicates that the new parking spaces at this location would likely experience higher occupancy rates compared to other sites analyzed. Therefore, it is recommended that this location be considered for the downtown parking expansion, and that staff be authorized to commence discussions with Bar Locale Inc. about amending the existing lease agreement in order to facilitate this expansion.

## **Expanding the Fairy Lake (P2) public parking lot will result in approximately 16 additional parking spaces.**

The existing Fairy Lake (P2) Public Parking Lot currently provides 39 spaces and has the potential to be expanded to accommodate a minimum of 16 additional spaces. The exact number will be confirmed through the detailed design process, in collaboration with the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority (LSRCA). Additional geotechnical investigations are required to assess soil stability and groundwater levels. The Town is working with the LSRCA to obtain permissions to carry out these studies and complete a site survey. To allow sufficient time for site access, completion of geotechnical investigations, and the detailed design of the parking expansion, it is recommended that the project be scheduled and budgeted for construction in 2027. This timeline also allows for a more thorough analysis of downtown parking patterns and demand, including the impacts of the newly added capacity at the Gravel Parking Lot and P3, as well as the proposed expansion at 500 Water Street.

## **Parking expansion for All Our Kids parking lot is a viable option, but not recommended at this time**

The existing All Our Kids (AOK) parking lot currently has 28 spaces. A design for an expansion, which would add 27 additional spaces, was completed and included as a provisional component in the P3 Parking Lot and Gravel Lot Request for Proposal (RFP). Although lower-than-expected costs were received during the procurement process for the expansion, it was determined that the location of the AOK parking lot would likely result in underutilization, with low occupancy hours, particularly in comparison to the 500 Water Street and Fairy Lake (P2) options. Given that the expanded AOK lot would primarily function as surge parking during large events, the decision was made not to proceed with the expansion at this time. The Town will continue to monitor downtown parking needs and will reconsider this location in the future if demand warrants it.

## **Surface parking approach achieved a greater number of spots at a significantly lower cost**

Based on the preliminary analysis conducted by the Town's consulting firms for the potential locations, the estimated construction costs and the cost per spot for each site have been prepared. As anticipated, there is a cost variance between the locations. The table below summarizes the number of spots that can be achieved, the estimated construction cost, and the estimated cost per spot.

<b>Location</b>	<b>Potential New Parking Spots</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>	<b>Cost per Spot</b>
Existing P3 Parking Lot and Gravel Lot (Former Tennis Club)	163	\$995,233*	\$6,105
500 Water Street Parking Lot Expansion	28	\$589,370 \$689,370	\$21,049 \$24,620
Fairy Lake (P2) Public Parking Lot Expansion	16 (TBD)	\$150,000	\$9,375
<b>Combined Totals</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>\$1,734,603</b> <b>\$1,834,603</b>	<b>\$8,380- \$8,863</b>

\*Cost based on actual RFP Cost, excluding contingencies and provisional items.

Cost per spot based on estimated construction costs only.

## **Sufficient budget to complete the work at the existing P3 Parking Lot**

Due to lower-than-anticipated tendered costs for the former Tennis Club site and improvements to the existing P3 parking lot, there is sufficient budget in 2025 to convert

the gravel lot at the former Tennis Club into a permanent paved parking lot, as well as to make improvements to the existing P3 parking lot. In addition, funding is available to advance the detailed design work for the proposed expansion of the 500 Water Street parking lot, if approved by Council.

The at-grade approach to adding over 200 new parking spaces in the downtown core is significantly more cost-effective than construction a modular parking structure. In addition, it will distribute parking more evenly across the downtown area, offering visitors more convenient options when accessing Newmarket's Historic Main Street and the Fairy Lake area.

### **Town dedicated to make improvements to the downtown parking experience**

In addition, at the January 2024 Committee of the Whole meeting, Council directed staff to explore an overall downtown parking strategy focused on monitoring, wayfinding and the overall parking experience. This project is now underway, and a final report will be provided to Council in Q3 2025.

### **Conclusion**

Permanently paving and integrating the gravel parking lot at the former tennis courts into the existing P3 parking lot will result in approximately 163 additional parking spaces. In addition, if approved by Council, expanding the existing parking area at 500 Water Street will create approximately 28 new spaces, while extending the Fairy Lake (P2) public parking lot will add about 16. Together, these improvements would provide a total of 207 new parking spaces in the downtown area.

Based on their locations, the proposed parking expansions at 500 Water Street and Fairy Lake (P2) are expected to achieve high hourly occupancy rates and experience strong, year-round usage throughout the week. If approved, they would also provide more evenly distributed parking options across the downtown area, significantly supporting the growing demand driven by the increasing popularity of the downtown core in the foreseeable future.

### **Consultation**

Legislative Services, Legal and Procurement Services, Engineering Services, Community and Economic Innovation and Corporate Communications were all consulted in this report.

### **Council Priority Association**

This report aligns with the following Council Priority: Community and Economic Vibrancy

## **Human Resource Considerations**

N/A

## **Budget Impact**

Sufficient funds are available in the 2025 budget to support the conversion of the gravel parking lot into permanent parking and its integration with the existing P3 lot. In addition, funding is available to advance the detailed design work for the proposed expansion of the 500 Water Street parking lot, if approved by Council. Any remaining funds required to complete the detailed design, along with the associated construction costs, can be included in the 2026 budget approval process, pending Council's endorsement of the expansion at this location.

Similarly, the funding required to undertake the detailed design for the proposed Fairy Lake (P2) public parking lot expansion—if approved by Council—can be requested through the 2026 budget process. Subject to Council approval, the construction costs for the Fairy Lake (P2) public parking lot expansion can be planned for inclusion in the 2027 budget.

## **Attachments**

**Attachment A – Location Map**

## **Approval for Submission**

Sepideh Majdi, M.Sc., P.Eng. Director, Engineering Services

Karen Reynar, Director Legal Services

Peter Noehammer, P.Eng. Commissioner, Development and Infrastructure Services

Ian McDougall, Chief Administrative Officer, Office of the CAO

## **Report Contact**

For more information on this report, contact [info@newmarket.ca](mailto:info@newmarket.ca).