

**Transportation Standing Committee  
March 5, 2014**

**TO:** Chair and Members of the Transportation Standing Committee

**SUBMITTED BY:** Original signed  
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Jane Fraser Director, Planning and Infrastructure

**DATE:** February 16, 2014

**SUBJECT:** Parking Strategy Project - Roadmap  
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**ORIGIN**

Planning and Infrastructure 2013/14 approved operating budget and business plan, ecoMOBILITY Project: Second Initiative (item 10.3.1) Halifax Regional Council June 28, 2011 and Regional Parking Strategy (item 4) Committee of the Whole February 3, 2009.

**LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY**

Section 70(1)(d) of the HRM Charter states that the Municipality may establish or maintain parking facilities. Sections 153 and 154 of the Motor Vehicle Act allow Regional Council, by by-law, to restrict or regulate parking.

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Transportation Standing Committee recommend to Regional Council that staff in Planning and Infrastructure be directed to review the 2008 Regional Parking Strategy Functional Plan and to come forward with a roadmap that addresses the implementation considerations in the August 2008, Halifax Regional Municipality, Regional Parking Strategy Functional Plan. Specifically addressing the recommendations of: governance, use of technology for parking payment (such as pay by plate technology) and the management of parking in high-demand residential neighbourhoods.

## **BACKGROUND**

The Parking Strategy was one of the five functional plans that were prepared as a deliverable of the 2006 Regional Plan.

As discussed in the 2008 Regional Parking Strategy, parking is closely linked to land use, economic development, and active transportation. Having the right amount of parking is essential to the functioning of commercial development and to the residents of HRM.

The 2008 Regional Parking Strategy is a 25 year plan to ensure that parking in the HRM will be designed, supplied and managed to:

- **Support a choice of integrated travel modes** emphasizing active transportation, public transit and carpooling.
- **Encourage alternatives to the single occupant vehicle trip.**
- **Help mitigate traffic congestion**-in the Regional Centre and outlying employment and retail centres.
- **Promote efficient land use and support the development of mixed-use**, transit and pedestrian oriented centres as outlined in the Regional Plan.
- **Operate efficiently and equitably** and be affordable to the Municipality and its citizens.
- **Support local business, tourism and service sectors** and the community's economic development.
- **Protect the environment** by minimizing impacts of parking facilities on air, water land and other natural resources.
- **Link with other ongoing studies**, such as the Urban Design Study, Public Transit Functional Plan and Transportation Demand Management Functional Plan.

Using these guiding principles and public input as a focal the 2008 Regional Parking Strategy developed a set of strategies that were categorized into three broad themes (see attachment one for the full list of strategies as well as implementing actions):

1. **Strategies that increased the efficiency of the existing parking system:** revise the parking zone standards, improve user information, optimize on-street parking management, and expand municipally owned public parking supply.
2. **Strategies that reduces parking demand:** improve transit options, promote active transportation, encourage ridesharing and Transportation Demand Management, and parking pricing.
3. **Supporting strategies:** update parking governance structure, funding parking management and development, parking payment technology, and urban design.

The original Regional Parking Strategy had looked at parking in all of HRM (urban and rural areas). For the purposes of this project the geographic boundary will include the five Business Improvement Districts within the Regional Centre as well as areas that are experiencing parking issues or require parking to be addressed in Land Use or other By-laws.

As part of the implementation of the 2008 Regional Parking Strategy staff in Planning and Infrastructure had three key deliverables identified in the 2013-14 Business Plan:

P&I 1.4 Implement Parking Strategy:

- Provide more parking opportunities to residents in high demand areas (Parking by Permit Pilot)
- Improve functionality of paid on street parking (Pay by Plate Parking Stations Pilot Program)
- Governance review of Parking Authorities

#### 2013 -14 Deliverable Update

Staff have implemented parking by permit in a number of areas and are continuing to engage residents in areas with high parking demands. One of the barriers to the initiative was an inability to accommodate resident needs and customer convenience in acquiring permits. Staff in Planning and Infrastructure are working with staff in ICT to develop a solution. However it is much more complicated than originally anticipated given the current software used in HRM.

Staff had proceeded with the development of a project charter for the pay by plate pilot project. Through the development of the project charter it became apparent that there were a number of questions that needed to be answered in order to move forward with the pilot project as directed by Regional Council. Answering these questions required decisions on parking governance in the municipality, what was the best use of technology and how broadly should it be applied (80-90 spaces or as a replacement for all on-street parking meters) what is the best mix of parking in the urban core and what is the pricing strategy for parking.

#### **DISCUSSION**

A number of the strategies and implementing actions identified in the 2008 Regional Parking Strategy are in the process of being carried out through other initiatives within HRM. It is not intended that the roadmap would address these initiatives. It is important that project leads of these initiatives are aware of the work that is being carried out in the roadmap. It is anticipated that a project team with representation from the majority of business units within HRM will be formed.

#### Strategies Underway

Parking zones standards are being developed through land use by laws and municipal planning strategies. Metro Transit is undertaking a service review that will look at the key requirements to make the transit system more efficient and to increase service delivery. The active transportation plan is currently going through its five year review. One of the key themes in this review is the development of a connected network of on-road cycling and off-road greenway facilities that will encourage more residents to walk and cycle. . The extent to which these strategies can facilitate a modal shift from single occupancy vehicle use will help to reduce commuter parking demand.

The municipality has adopted a number of programs to encourage ridesharing and transportation demand management. The SmartTrip program is in its third year and continues to enroll local businesses in the program. HRM is also working with the Cities of Ottawa and Calgary on the WORKshift program.

Roadmap

Using the 2008 Regional Parking Strategy as the foundation, staff determined the most effective approach would be to develop a roadmap to address the following recommendations in the Parking Strategy Project.

Under the category of Strategies that Increase Parking Capacity and Efficiency:

1. Improve user information – including but not limited to the establishment of a common look and fill for parking signage, way finding, use of HRM’s portal as a means to locate parking, as well as the use of technology to assist with finding parking.
2. Optimize On-Street Parking Management – work with business owners and residents in the development of new on street parking management tools. These initiatives may explore permit parking, variable pricing during key times, parking rationing (through pricing and exemptions as an example), and education.
3. Expand Municipally Owned Public Parking Supply – analyze the availability of parking within the five Regional Centre Business Improvement Districts and determine if HRM should be involved in owning and operating parking facilities and if so to what extent. The importance of this will be magnified as HRM considers reallocating on-street parking space for expanded use of lanes reserved for bicycles and transit.

Under the category of Strategies that Reduce Commuter Parking Demand:

1. Encourage ridesharing and transportation demand management – explore options for carpool parking and dedicated parking spaces for rideshare vehicles and vanpools.
2. Parking pricing – use pricing to achieve parking targets and capacity usage targets. Determine the cost recovery ratios and methodology, as an example full cost recovery, 50% cost recovery. What is the impact of offering free parking?

Supporting strategies:

1. Updated parking governance structure – what is the correct governance for HRM. Should there be a separate parking authority and what are the benefits, if any, of this model? Which business unit is best positioned to be responsible for parking?
2. Parking payment technology – explore advances in technology in the management of parking and improvement in customer convenience. Parking technology should look at both hourly parking and monthly permit holders on HRM owned lots and On street parking in commercial and residential areas.

Planning and Infrastructure will work in concert with ICT to develop the parking strategy road map over a four to six month period, commencing in late April. The road map will be a phased, multi- year plan that identifies the necessary process, governance and technology related projects required to implement the objectives of the 2008 Regional Parking Strategy. Development of the road map will include all requisite stakeholders. It will provide details regarding the phasing of initiatives, breadth and depth of initiatives, project dependencies, and high level cost estimates for each project. This information will support Regional Council in determining how far and how fast to proceed with the identified initiatives necessary to realize the objectives of the Parking Strategy.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The parking strategy roadmap is a multi-year project, estimating \$100,000. The original budget that had been identified to carry out the pay by plate initiative and the permit parking pilot project will be used to advance the roadmap project along with funding from the ICT bundled account. These project accounts include CTX01233 – ecoMOBILITY Project, CTR00908 – Transportation Demand Management, and CI990004 – ICT Bundle Account.

Future budget requirements will be scoped out more fully and will be incorporated in the next project budget and submitted for Regional Council's approval at that time.

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

The original 2008 Regional Parking Strategy Functional Plan was led by a Committee Working Group comprised of HRM staff, community representatives, business associations, hospital and university representatives, the Waterfront Development Corporation and the Ecology Action Centre. In addition to the input from the Committee Working Group there were public consultation sessions in various areas of HRM.

Projects under the ecoMOBILITY fund also underwent significant public consultation. As part of the consultation focus groups and an online survey were used to generate public input.

It is anticipated that the Parking Strategy project will also engage the public through a number of mechanisms. The use of HRM's portal Shape Your City, social media, focus groups and direct conversations with key stakeholders such as at the: Business Improvement Districts, universities, Halifax Dartmouth Bridge Commission, community groups are some of the potential means to solicit input into the various projects housed under the Roadmap.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no direct environmental impacts from moving forward with the Parking Strategy Project. It is anticipated that there will be environmental benefits from a more holistic approach to parking; however it is not the intent of this project to quantify those benefits.

### **ALTERNATIVES**

Regional Council could direct staff to deliver the three original projects (governance review, pay by plate pilot program and residential permit) as standalone projects. This is not recommended as treating each project as a separate initiative could result in conflicting policy direction.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1 - Exhibit 6-1 HRM Regional Parking Strategy Functional Plan  
<https://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/documents/090203cow4.pdf>  
<http://www.halifax.ca/TDM/parkingstrategy>

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/commcoun/index.html> then choose the appropriate Community Council and meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

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Financial Approval by: Original signed  
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## 6. RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES

Traditional approaches to parking planning have focused on capacity issues (i.e., Is there enough? How do we provide more parking?). The strategies recommended in this functional plan reflect a new paradigm in the way parking is managed. The paradigm moves beyond the “predict and provide” approach and is based on a more holistic and nuanced approach to parking management. Key aspects of this approach include:

- A “parking problem” may be due to a variety of issues including inefficient management, lack of transportation options, inadequate user information, or inadequate supply;
- Too much parking is as harmful as too little;
- Parking requirements should reflect each particular situation and should be applied flexibly; and
- As much as possible, users should pay directly for parking facilities.

Existing parking management strategies in HRM deal with supply, demand, and supporting elements, such as payment technology and governance. Recommended strategies and related actions summarized in Exhibit 6-1 build on these and outline how parking can be managed in HRM to support business and tourism, encourage growth and efficient land use, and support a choice of integrated travel modes, move towards greater urban sustainability.

**Exhibit 6-1: Summary of Strategies and Related Actions**

Strategy	ID	Implementing Actions
<b>Strategies that Increase Parking Capacity and Efficiency</b>		
A.1 Revise Parking Zoning Standards	A.1.1	In the short term, adopt proposed adjustment factors as guidelines to be implemented by staff on a case-by-case basis. They should be formalized into the new land use zoning by-law.
	A.1.2	Implement changes to parking standards in conjunction with on-going reviews of zoning standards and the development of the centres plans, consistent with the proposed framework.
	A.1.3	Modify parking space dimension requirements for standard and accessible parking spaces.
	A.1.4	Adopt consistent set of mobility disabled parking standards across HRM.
A.2 Improve User Information	A.2.1	Work in partnership with the private sector to develop common formats, colours and logos for collective parking signage including directional signage, location/identification signage and wayfinding signage. Signage can be tailored to local business areas (e.g. Spring Garden Road, Quinpool Road, Downtown Dartmouth, etc.).
	A.2.2	Develop pedestrian oriented-signage throughout existing and proposed Centres to direct pedestrians to/from parking areas.
	A.2.3	Develop a parking portal through HRM’s website to be a “one-stop-shop” for parking information. The portal should include information on publicly accessible parking, links to available monthly parking for commuters, parking maps, details on prices, regulations, and fine payment, and future expansion plans, among other relevant information.

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REGIONAL PARKING STRATEGY FUNCTIONAL PLAN

Strategy	ID	Implementing Actions
	A.2.4	Establish a database of all public and private parking that can be used in developing above materials.
	A.2.5	Develop improved signage for park and ride facilities that is clearly visible, and consistent with Metro Transit logos, particularly where such facilities are shared with other uses (e.g., Penhorn Mall).
A.3 Optimize On-Street Parking Management	A.3.1	Continue to price on-street parking in commercial areas according to demand while ensuring frequent turnover through enforcement and pricing.
	A.3.2	In consultation with businesses, introduce parking pricing in busy commercial areas on evenings and weekends to discourage long term parking and to ensure availability for visitors.
	A.3.3	Ensure priced on-street parking in HRM is patrolled several times daily to discourage violations, particularly in central Halifax.
	A.3.4	Provide enforcement officers with real-time wireless information and ticketing systems to automate enforcement and allow each officer to patrol a larger area.
	A.3.5	Offer "First Free Time" exemptions of parking infractions along with brochures explaining parking regulations.
	A.3.6	Improve signage to better explain on-street time restrictions and pricing.
	A.3.7	Develop promotional material to make employees in Downtown Halifax aware of the problems caused by "meter feeding" and available off-street parking options.
	A.3.8	Consider on-street parking should in all new developments and street design projects, particularly in the Centres.
	A.3.9	Modify the Residential Parking Exemption Program in line with the proposed changes detailed in the <b>Residential On-Street Parking Management Report</b> (based on the active management approach).
	A.3.10	Modify the Parking by Permit Only Program in line with the proposed changes detailed in the <b>Residential On-Street Parking Management Report</b> .
	A.3.11	Increase use of Parking by Permit Only program in residential areas that have a high occurrence of employees using on-street parking. Example areas include streets around Halifax Commons and the area near the Stadacona Barracks of Canadian Forces Base Halifax.
	A.3.12	Increase enforcement of residential parking programs.
	A.3.13	Increase options for applying for and renewing permits and for obtaining visitor parking permits, including provisions for on-line application.
A.4. Expand Municipally-Owned Public Parking Supply	A.4.1	Increase the role of HRM in providing public parking, particularly in Centres where parking facilities can serve multiple users and destinations, thereby lowering overall parking supply required.
	A.4.2	Locate and design public parking to establish transportation nodes, including transit and pedestrian connections.
	A.4.3	Seek opportunities for additional municipally owned public parking, particularly in Downtown Halifax.
	A.4.4	Consider the needs of tour bus parking in developing municipally owned public parking.
<b>Strategies that Reduce Commuter Parking Demand</b>		
B.1 Improve Transit Options	B.1.1	Increase the involvement of Metro Transit is site design decisions, particularly in the Centres.



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Strategy	ID	Implementing Actions
	B.1.2	Expand and improve transit services, particularly with Metro Link extensions to suburban areas. (refer to Rural Transit and Park and Ride Study)
	B.1.3	Improve access to trunk transit service through strategic park and ride expansions, improved feeder service, walking and cycling connections, and transit-oriented development. (refer to Rural Transit and Park and Ride Study)
	B.1.4	Support expansion proposed downtown shuttle service.
B.2 Promote Active Transportation	B.2.1	Provide bicycle lockers and other amenities (e.g. showers at office buildings, benches, etc.) throughout the Centres.
	B.2.2	Install additional secure bike parking facilities in City-owned parking lots and in key areas.
	B.2.3	Consider active transportation corridor needs in on-street parking design and regulation.
	B.2.4	Continue to promote integration of cycling with transit services (e.g., bike boxes at park and ride stations).
	B.2.5	Implement active transportation infrastructure and improvements as specified in the Active Transportation Functional Plan
B.3 Encourage Ridesharing and TDM	B.3.1	Provide preferential parking for licensed vanpools on HRM surface lots.
	B.3.2	Foster the development of car-sharing
	B.3.3	Promote and encourage the use of the online ridematching system, HRMsmartrip.ca
	B.3.4	Expand, upgrade, and promote the network of carpool lots in HRM.
	B.3.5	Through the TDM functional plan, establish and support Transportation Management Associations (TMAs) to provide transportation and parking management services in specific areas.
B.4 Parking Pricing	B.4.1	Provide discounts to fuel-efficient vehicles and high-occupancy vehicles at public off-street lots.
	B.4.2	Require that parking costs be identified separately from occupancy costs in Centres for both commercial and multi-unit residential development.
	B.4.3	Develop a detailed parking plan for each Centre identifying strategic parking locations, outlining how parking will be used to support transportation objectives and the steps to establish a market for priced parking, where feasible.
<b>Supporting Strategies</b>		
C.1 Updated Parking Governance Structure	C.1.1	Create a Parking Manager position with appropriate support staff to oversee parking and coordinate activities between relevant municipal departments.
	C.1.2	Create a Parking Advisory Committee and appoint members from across HRM including members of the public and key stakeholders.
C.2 Funding Parking Management and Development	C.2.1	Develop an approach for determining the cash-in-lieu of parking rate.
	C.2.2	Implement a stormwater management fee based on the amount of impermeable surface on a site (pending HRM tax reform review).
	C.2.3	Establish a mechanism to direct surplus parking revenues into a dedicated capital fund to support the development of TDM related projects, including the downtown shuttle.

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**REGIONAL PARKING STRATEGY FUNCTIONAL PLAN**

Strategy	ID	Implementing Actions
	C.2.4	Develop a business plan for developing municipally owned parking in Downtown Halifax, developing Centres, and other commercial and transit corridors that incorporates parking planning, rate structure, funding with future development and transit/TDM investment, moving towards full cost-recovery for publicly owned parking.
C.3 Parking Payment Technology	C.3.1	Enhance existing single-space on-street meters with pay by cell phone technology.
	C.3.2	Adopt alternative revenue collection technologies for on-street parking in the future when existing equipment needs to be replaced and more innovative solutions are proven and more affordable.
	C.3.3	Move to pay-on-foot for all HRM-operated, access-controlled lots.
	C.3.4	Implement pay-and-display for HRM-operated surface lots without access control.
	C.3.5	Consider proximity cards for monthly parkers in HRM-operated lots.
C.4 Urban Design	C.4.1	Develop educational material regarding good parking design and require parking facilities to consider key urban design issues (e.g., location, architecture, pedestrian facilities) during site plan approval process. This material should be incorporated into the land use by-law.
	C.4.2	Provide direction regarding parking location and design in new form-based zoning for the Regional Centre.