

The Parking Management Toolbox

Strategies Used by Parking Services – City of Ottawa

In any city, parking tends to be a “hot-button” issue. Ottawa is no exception as many stakeholders with different interests compete for a limited public resource. The key challenge is to find an appropriate *balance* between supply and demand that aligns with our objectives.

Our [Municipal Parking Management Strategy](#) (MPMS) guides our overall approach, and we use the set of strategies below as our **Parking Management Toolbox** in approaching parking issues of different scales.

Supply of Parking Spaces

The number of publicly available parking spaces in an area defines how much ‘supply’ is available for those seeking parking. These tools can help us adjust this supply in order to respond to varying levels of demand.

- 1) Municipal “Parking Lot” Supply**
- 2) Curb-Side “Street” Parking Supply**
- 3) Agreements with Developers**
- 4) Zoning Provision Adjustments**

Availability of Parking on Demand

Where there is high demand for parking, we work to improve rates of *turn-over* – to ensure more spaces are free when needed. These tools can encourage turnover, or make available spaces more apparent.

- 5) Curb-Side Parking Regulations**
- 6) Enforcement Levels**
- 7) Parking Price Adjustments**
- 8) Off-Street Parking Visibility / Promotion**

Alternative Modes of Transportation

One important way to reduce parking pressure – and improve our City – is to reduce the number of cars competing for spaces. These tools help us promote walking, transit, and alternative modes of transportation.

- 9) Bicycle Parking**
- 10) Transit Service**
- 11) Measures to Reduce Employee Parking Demand**
- 12) Car-sharing / Car-pooling Promotion**

Supply of Parking Spaces

| | 1. Municipal “Parking Lot” Supply | 2. Curb-Side “Street” Parking Supply | 3. Agreements with Developers | 4. Zoning Provision Adjustments |
|-----------------------|--|--|--|--|
| Overview | Involves the provision of additional publicly accessible, off-street parking spaces through the construction of new public parking facilities, expansion of existing facilities, or reconfiguring existing lots to optimize the number spaces. | Involves examining different factors (location of transit stops, other regulations, type of parking, etc.) to identify ways in which the number of on-street spaces can be increased / optimized. | Where parking supply is scarce, there may be an opportunity to provide public parking within private developments either through the developer providing additional parking on their own or through an agreement with the City. | The Zoning By-law establishes minimum parking requirements associated with a given development. These have been set so the majority of parking demand is accommodated on-site, mitigating impacts on adjacent streets. |
| Pros | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Balances on-street demand. Provides more parking to the general public that is convenient and accessible. Accommodates longer-term users (employee, visitor, and volunteer), once short-term needs are met. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> May be possible to increase the number of on-street parking spaces. Provides more of the most convenient parking for the general public. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One means of increasing the supply of public parking where demand is high. Encourages developers to unbundle parking which can increase the amount of the parking supply. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parking minima ensures new developments provide appropriate levels of parking. Varied requirements allow strategic goals to be met, such as promoting transit near rapid transit stations. |
| Cons / Limitations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cost to build and maintain. Location is critical. May be ineffective if not convenient. If not required or misplaced, increases in parking supply could encourage auto use and discourage using alternate modes. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited locations where increasing the parking supply would be feasible. Where additional parking is found, gains are typically modest. Multiple pressures exist for curb space (loading zones, etc.). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited availability as an option. Requires an opportunity that specifically aligns with requirements for additional parking. May involve high costs to partner with a developer. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restricted ability to readily influence zoning provisions and parking minima requirements. Through applications, parking requirements can be reduced or waived which can lead to a shortage of parking within an area. |
| Examples | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Glebe: It was determined that the construction of a parking garage at 170 Second Avenue would benefit the community by increasing the supply of retail parking. The new parking garage will also alleviate pressure on adjacent streets. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ByWard Market: The City increased the supply of on-street parking by making curb adjustments. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Little Italy: Encouraged the establishment of short-term parking within new private sector developments to manage the high parking demand in the area, and to try to ensure a supply and demand balance in the future. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Little Italy: The Planning & Growth Management Department will consider opportunities to revise the current Zoning By-Law to enable the ‘unbundling’ of parking to allow for more flexibility in providing public parking as part of private developments. |

Availability of Parking on Demand

| | 5. Curb-Side Parking Regulations | 6. Enforcement Levels | 7. Parking Price Adjustments | 8. Off-Street Parking Visibility / Promotion |
|--------------------|---|---|--|--|
| Overview | Where parking is permitted on-street, there are often restrictions in place which govern how long and during what times parking is permitted. These can be adjusted in order to optimize the curbside space and optimize turnover. | Enforcement is a key component to support regulations and ultimately to make them effective. A balance is required and enforcement levels may need to be increased or decreased in order to suit stakeholders or ensure turnover. | The amount that is charged has an influence over parking choices (e.g. where to park and for how long). Parking rates can be adjusted / introduced in order to manage turnover and ensure there is appropriate available parking. | Where the off-street parking supply is underutilized, it may be appropriate to implement signage or other marketing measures to increase the viability of the off-street parking space supply (public and private). |
| Pros | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low-cost option • Max. time limits can have a significant impact on turnover, especially where no paid parking. • Increasing time limits can have a positive effect on local businesses (if turnover optimized) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enforcement can be effective in influencing parking turnover and managing demand. • Enforcement can deter habitual or repeat offenders. • Can be used to address safety issues. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changing pricing can influence choices and shift demand. • Off-street, there are various types of rates to affect demand • Ensuring available parking is positive for businesses and the community. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps drivers locate lots, thereby potentially reducing the number of circulating vehicles. • Helps balance parking demand between on-street and off-street . • Opportunities to work with local businesses in promoting facilities. |
| Cons / Limitations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to account for heavy influence of pricing and strike a balance in terms of ensuring appropriate turnover. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If enforcement perceived to be too aggressive, it can create negative experiences. • Resource availability to expand enforcement (if required) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited to where there is paid parking or it can be introduced. • Variations in rates need to be known to public and relevant enough. • May create a spill-over effect onto side streets. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional signs in the right-of-way can be a distraction to drivers / result in visual clutter. • Policy required prior to allowing private parking lots to promote on private property which will need to include criteria / conditions. |
| Examples | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rideau Street East: In response to low occupancy levels, the time limits were extended from 1-hour to 2-hours in order to make it more attractive to park on the main street. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little Italy: Residents expressed concern that enforcement officers were too lax (e.g. blocking driveways, parking on sidewalks). Feedback was shared with By-Law Services towards generating possible solutions. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Studies have lead to on-street parking rates being lowered in Upper Rideau, near Little Italy and in Vanier (where paid parking has been removed in a large area). • Regular rate changes in off-street lots to account for demand. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking Guidance Systems being developed which include signage. • In Little Italy and at other City-managed facilities, old signage has been updated. • Wayfinding pilot conducted in Westboro using a private lot. |

Alternative Modes of Transportation

| | 9. Bicycle Parking | 10. Transit Service | 11. Measures to Reduce Employee Parking Demand | 12. Car-sharing / Car-pooling Promotion |
|--------------------|---|---|--|--|
| Overview | Bicycle parking represents a parking need in its own right and it is important to accommodate demand in order to encourage cycling. | As more people use transit, the demand for parking is reduced. Options to encourage transit ridership include increasing the number/frequency of routes and promoting transit in the community. | Travel demand management (TDM) programs targeted at employees can help reduce parking demand by promoting the use of transit, carpooling, and telework. This may also involve seeking parking alternatives for employees. | Car-sharing services are becoming more and more widely available through companies such as Vrtucar, and encouraging car pooling is another means of influencing parking demand through a reduction in the number of vehicle trips. |
| Pros | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased bike parking may help to encourage cycling which in turn reduces the demand for auto parking. Environmental benefits (less pollution / emissions). Less traffic congestion. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduction in parking demand Less traffic congestion and environmental (pollution / emissions). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Less overall demand for parking in an area which can result in greater availability for patrons. Less traffic congestion and environmental benefits (pollution / emissions). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can reduce parking demand. Helps reduce the number of cars per household. Additional environmental benefits (e.g. pollution / emissions). |
| Cons / Limitations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resources to install / maintain bike parking facilities are limited. Bike parking facilities may be seen as pedestrian obstacles, particularly in busy areas. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transit is not a viable option for everyone. Service improvements can be costly and may not be feasible. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires commitment and follow through on the part of the employer to have success. Dependent in part on the location of the workplace (i.e. viability of using transit, biking, etc.). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of people with access to car-sharing or for whom carpooling is an option can be limited and can require lifestyle changes in order to make this a viable option. |
| Examples | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Studies have lead to additional bike parking facilities being recommended in Little Italy and the Glebe. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Little Italy, Vanier, Chinatown, Glebe: Any improvements to transit service could be expected to decrease parking demand. Specific transit-related comments are sent to OC Transpo for their consideration. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Telework has been recommended for specific areas within Vanier and Little Italy, which have employment hubs consisting of large government buildings. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Little Italy: The Planning & Growth Management Department will consider introducing a requirement for car sharing as part of a review of the Zoning By-Law. |