



**SUBJECT: Beachway Park parking operations update**

**TO: Community Planning, Regulation & Mobility Cttee.**

**FROM: Transportation Services Department**

Report Number: TS-01-23

Wards Affected: 2

File Numbers: 745-03

Date to Committee: January 10, 2023

Date to Council: January 24, 2023

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### **Recommendation:**

Direct the Director of Transportation Services to discontinue the Parking Ambassador program at Beachway Park, include holidays in the paid parking period, and cease the Halton Beach Exemption program.

### **PURPOSE:**

#### **Vision to Focus Alignment:**

- Increase economic prosperity and community responsive city growth
- Support sustainable infrastructure and a resilient environment
- Deliver customer centric services with a focus on efficiency and technology transformation

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### **Background and Discussion:**

Beachway Park is a recreational attraction for residents of Burlington, Halton Region as a whole, and other municipalities alike. The Beachway is a well-travelled destination in the summer months and as a result, the demand for vehicular access to the park has resulted in traffic flow challenges, particularly when coupled with limited parking supply. This combination of high demand and limited available parking has presented operational and safety concerns along the adjacent roadway and within the designated parking areas, all of which were exacerbated during the pandemic.



The popularity of the park continued to be prevalent in 2022 with weekend visitors from the Halton area utilizing the web-based exemption system, generating a total of **4,228 exemptions** between May & September. This marks a **44%** increase in use over the previous year, resulting in forgone revenue amounting to approximately **\$84,600**. Staff note that the exemption program is based on an honour system where the user self-reports their permanent address. As a result, there is potential for the program to be abused.

For the duration of the program, Parking Ambassadors and Enforcement Officers proactively monitored the parking lots and adjacent streets for compliance with the aid of additional signage and parking rules. A total of **1,860 tickets** were issued at the Beachway between May and September 2022. An additional **6 tickets** were issued on Willow Avenue, and **209 tickets** were issued Omaha Street.

The Beachway usage and transaction statistics are summarized below. Table 1 provides information on the Monthly Transactions processed through HonkMobile for both 2021 and 2022. Table 2 provides a comparison between the Total Transactions for 21/22 and the net change between the two. Lastly, Table 3 is a summary of the Halton Resident Beach pass usage between 21/22 as well as the net change between those two periods.

Table 1: Monthly Payment Transactions by Type

	MONTHLY TRANSACTIONS (2022)					TOTAL
	May	June	July	August	September	
Mobile App	149	353	726	566	241	<b>2,035</b>
Tap (QR code)	709	2,080	3,546	2,729	1,242	<b>10,306</b>
Total Transactions	<b>858</b>	<b>2,433</b>	<b>4,272</b>	<b>3,295</b>	<b>1,483</b>	<b>12,341</b>
	MONTHLY TRANSACTIONS (2021)					TOTAL
	May	June	July	August	September	
Mobile App	271	655	534	658	360	<b>2,478</b>
Tap (QR code)	1,255	2,834	2,457	3,024	1,564	<b>11,134</b>
Total Transactions	<b>1,526</b>	<b>3,489</b>	<b>2,991</b>	<b>3,682</b>	<b>1,924</b>	<b>13,612</b>



Table 2: Payment Transaction Volume in 2022

	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>% Change</b>
Mobile App	2,478	2,035	(17.88)
Tap (QR code)	11,134	10,306	(7.44)
Total Transactions	<b>13,612</b>	<b>12,341</b>	<b>(9.33)</b>

Table 3: Exemption Volume in 2022 compared to previous years

	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>% Change</b>
Exemptions Issued	2,945	4,228	43.56
Dollar Value*	<b>\$58,900</b>	<b>\$84,560</b>	<b>\$25,660</b>

\*Dollar value assumes full day value for an exemption (\$20/day)

### Strategy/process

Analysis of the park usage and transaction statistics has identified opportunities to modify parking operations for 2023 and beyond. Firstly, in order to remain consistent with other premium waterfront parking lots, the paid period at the Beachway should be extended to include Holidays within the designated timeframe for payment between May & September. While this will have a positive effect on annual revenues, it will also contribute to a better return on the asset, overall cost recovery, and help to regulate parking supply. Regulating parking supply is an important function contributing to customer experience that results in legal parking being available when required. Visitors who choose not to pay for beach parking will continue to have access to free parking in the downtown and a number of Burlington transit routes that drop off in the immediate area.

With Parking Services firmly committed to cost-recovery, it is essential to maintain the core principals of service delivery while making necessary operational changes to ensure sustainability. The introduction of Parking Ambassadors was intended to serve as a short-term solution to assist with customer service issues and mitigate operational difficulties as the park transitioned to a fee-for-service model, coupled with increased demand during pandemic lockdowns. The goal of the program was to educate the public on the parking rules and regulations, while providing customer support for digital payment using the Honk Mobile App. As the parking program continues to evolve, the move to digital pay parking generally operates autonomously with a high degree of success. The need for in-person support has greatly reduced and moving forward, the focus is on achieving compliance with signed parking rules and providing enforcement when required.



## **Options Considered**

- 1. Cost-Recovery Focused - Discontinuation of the Parking Ambassador program at Beachway Park, include holidays in the paid period, and cease the Halton Beach Exemption program.**

This option is considered to be the most beneficial in order to balance the parking supply needs of the community relative to the cost-recovery goals of Parking Services. The Parking Ambassador program will be discontinued, and paid parking will be modified in order to align with other premium waterfront parking lots. While the program currently permits 10 exemptions per resident of Halton Region annually, this option proposes the cessation of the exemption program as the intent was to support local residents during the long-standing pandemic lockdowns and resulting travel restrictions. Given the return to pre-pandemic travel permissions, combined with the potential to abuse the program, staff recommend that the exemption program be discontinued for the 2023 season.

- 2. Customer-Service Focused - Extend the Parking Ambassador program at Beachway Park for the 2023 season, include holidays in the paid period, and cease the Halton Beach Exemption program.**

This option maintains the Parking Ambassador program in a more sustainable manner. By recovering a portion of the estimated forgone revenue as a result of the Halton Beach Exemption Program and realizing revenue increases through charging for parking on holidays, the program would increase the financial sustainability of the service and aim to better meet the service goal of cost-recovery, while continuing to provide the Parking Ambassador program for park visitors.

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## **Financial Matters:**

Analysis of parking revenue generated through paid parking at Beachway Park, compared to the overall cost to deliver the program is summarized in Tables 4 through 6. Referring back to Report TS-04-21, staff projected Beachway revenue of approximately \$170,000 which could have been achieved if paid parking was required for all users.



Table 4: Monthly Transactions by Dollar Value (Gross \$)

	MONTHLY TRANSACTIONS (2022)					TOTAL
	May	June	July	August	September	
Mobile App	\$798	\$1,950	\$5,273	\$3,625	\$1,413	<b>\$13,059</b>
Tap (QR code)	\$3,873	\$14,608	\$29,775	\$21,120	\$8,178	<b>\$77,554</b>
<b>Gross Total</b>	<b>\$4,671*</b>	<b>\$16,558*</b>	<b>\$35,048*</b>	<b>\$24,745*</b>	<b>\$9,591*</b>	<b><u>\$90,613*</u></b>
Total Deposit						<b><u>\$86,920</u></b>

\*Minor variances due to rounding

The total value of Credit Card Processing fees and User Paid Transaction fees for the period amounted to **\$3,691** & **\$4,292** respectively.

Table 5: Total Estimated Program Operating Costs

	2022	2021
Parking Ambassadors	\$47,547	\$48,900
FT Staff Overtime	\$7,645	\$1,544
Towing	\$1,442	\$12,543
Paid Duty Police	\$0	\$21,000
Processing Fees	\$3,691	\$4,011
Total	<b>\$60,325</b>	<b>\$87,998</b>

### Total Financial Impact

Table 6: Total Financial Impact 2022

	2022
Parking Revenue	\$86,920
Program Cost	\$60,325
Net Program Revenue	\$26,595

### Source of Funding

In 2022, the Parking Ambassador program was funded entirely from the Parking Services Operating Budget through part-time salaries and wages. Funds for the ambassador program have not been added to the 2023 Operating Budget and as a result, funding will be required to continue the program into 2023.



## **Other Resource Impacts**

### **Staffing**

Staffing the part-time Parking Ambassador position continued to present challenges through the 2022 season. Some candidates were trained and deployed to the park in early May, only to leave the corporation shortly after commencement of employment. Limited retention of returning staff, with high levels of turnover, presented operational difficulties throughout the duration of the program which resulted in the need to approve significant over-time expenses and deploy full-time Parking Services staff to the Beachway to fulfill the duties of Parking Ambassadors. Additionally, support that was previously offered from other departments has since ceased with return to near-normal corporate operations, thereby reducing access to staff resources in order to sustain the program.

### **Paid-Duty Police**

Report TS-12-21 estimated that paid-duty police costs for 2022 would be in the range of **\$25,400** based on expected usage and an hourly rate increase of 1.55% for officers. However, the return of special events both in Burlington as well as neighbouring municipalities resulted in a shortfall of available HRPS officers. Limited policing resources resulted in cessation of the regularly scheduled paid-duty officers at Beachway Park. Instead, special operations were scheduled throughout the summer by HRPS at no cost to the city. This included regular foot patrols of the beach as well as a tactical operation to deter the mass beach party promoted through social media in June. There were no expenses related to paid-duty police officers this season.

### **Towing**

Over the course of the summer, increased parking demand from visitors frequently resulted in a shortage of available parking supply. In anticipation of an increase in illegally parked vehicles on exceptionally busy weekends, tow trucks were placed on standby to act quickly in the case of vehicle removal and to aid as a visual deterrent to illegal parking. Standby tow operators for the season amounted to **\$1,442**. No change to the practice of towing illegally parked vehicles within the Trans-northern pipeline is recommended through this report.

### **Fine Revenue:**

Fine revenue is difficult to estimate given the varying costs of each offence. Additional administrative fees are applied when tickets lapse and it often takes months to recover costs as a result of the ticket screening, hearing or plate denial processes. For the



purpose of this report and considering the goal of Parking Services to achieve cost-recovery and compliance, potential to generate increased fine revenue has not been a contributing factor in determining staff's recommendation.

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## **Climate Implications**

Paid parking provides an incentive for visitors to consider the use of active and sustainable modes of transportation (walking, cycling, transit, etc.) when planning their visit to Beachway Park. Paid parking is a lever used through Transportation Demand Management (TDM) to manage parking demand, regulate parking supply and contributes to the reduction of auto trips.

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## **Engagement Matters:**

Community outreach for the 2023 season would consist of an online education campaign that will generate a series of beach visit scenarios whereby visitors could align themselves. Working with communications, these scenarios would provide clearer alternatives for those who do not want to pay the premium for parking at the beach and provide information on the various parking alternatives available as well as provide answers to commonly asked questions. Enhanced engagement would be rolled out in parallel with existing community notifications about paid parking.

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## **Conclusion:**

Based on the experiences of the 2022 season and in consideration of future operational changes, staff recommend the cessation of the Parking Ambassador program at Beachway Park, inclusion of holidays in the paid period and termination of the Halton Beach Exemption Program.

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Respectfully submitted,

Stephen Camm  
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**Report Approval:**

All reports are reviewed and/or approved by Department Director, the Chief Financial Officer and the Executive Director of Legal Services & Corporation Counsel.