Recommendation Report Summary

SUBJECT: Strategic parking framework for downtown Burlington

TO: Committee of the Whole

FROM: Public Works

Transportation

Report Number: PWS-05-26

Wards Affected: 2

Date to Committee: March 3, 2026

Date to Council: March 10, 2026

Recommendation

Approve the Downtown Parking Plan as attached as Appendix A to public works report PWS-05-26; and

Endorse a phased implementation approach, prioritizing short-term, staff-led policy and program initiatives; and

Endorse the advancement of targeted medium-term investments in parking technology and system improvements, subject to future budget approval; and

Direct the Commissioner of Public Works to continue planning and monitoring conditions for longer-term, capital-intensive parking initiatives, including potential parking expansion, in a manner that ensures responsible stewardship of the Downtown Parking Reserve and supports the needs of existing businesses, customers, residents, and visitors.

Executive Summary

Report PWS-05-26 presents the Downtown Parking Plan (DPP), a data-informed strategy to guide the management of municipal parking in Burlington's downtown. The DPP builds on the Integrated Mobility Plan (IMP) and aligns parking supply, pricing, and operations with broader mobility, land use, economic, and climate objectives.

Parking is a critical City asset and is an essential component of the downtown mobility system. When managed strategically, it supports business access, reduces congestion, influences travel behaviour, and reinforces long-term transportation and land use priorities. The DPP positions parking as an actively managed system rather than a static supply to by expanded by default.

Technical analysis and engagement confirmed that downtown parking challenges are driven by localized demand pressures, special events, circulation patterns, and user perception – particularly east of Brant Street – rather than an overall shortage of supply. Future demand modelling indicates that anticipated growth can be largely accommodated within the existing system, providing parking is managed more effectively and demand is better distributed across facilities.

The DPP proposes a phased implementation approach that delivers early, measurable improvements through staff-led policy and program changes, followed by targeted investments in technology and longer-term planning informed by performance data. All recommendations are intended to be funded through the Downtown Parking Reserve, without impacting the general tax base. Collectively, the DPP supports downtown vitality, fiscal stewardship, and the City’s broader mobility objectives.

Background

This report outlines the downtown parking context and recommends a strategic parking framework that builds on the mobility policies established in the City's Integrated Mobility Plan (IMP). The framework is intended to improve the effectiveness of parking management while better aligning parking supply and pricing with the City's broader mobility and land use objectives.

Municipal parking is a critical component of the City's mobility network and land use framework. It supports the movement of people and goods and represents a significant portion of the City's real estate portfolio. When managed proactively, parking can advance strategic mobility and land use goals, influence travel behaviour, and support mode-shift objectives. Strategic management of the downtown parking supply helps mitigate traffic congestion, promotes efficient use of valuable land, and reinforces the City's long-term transportation priorities.

Well-managed parking also contributes to downtown economic vitality and tourism by improving access, supporting appropriate turnover, and creating positive first impressions for customers and visitors. A coordinated and strategic approach to downtown parking management helps sustain a vibrant, accessible, and competitive downtown that supports businesses, residents, and visitors alike.

The resulting Downtown Parking Plan (DPP) enables the City to make data-informed strategic decisions that ensure parking is available where needed, responsive to the needs of diverse users, and managed in a manner that is efficient, effective, and fiscally responsible. The Final Report is contained in **Appendix A** for reference.

Development of the Strategic Parking Framework

Oversight

To support effective coordination, strategic direction, and informed decision-making throughout the preparation of the Downtown Parking Plan, a joint steering committee was established. The Committee included City staff, project consultants, members of the Downtown Parking Advisory Committee (DPAC), and representatives from the Burlington Downtown Business Association (BDBA), and served as the study's executive body.

The Committee's composition ensured that perspectives from community leaders, business owners, elected officials, and staff familiar with municipal parking operations were represented throughout the process. This governance structure helped ensure that stakeholder and

customer needs were considered at key milestones and directly informed the plan's recommendations.

A clear and agreed-upon set of project goals and objectives was established at the outset of the Downtown Parking Plan through collaboration with the Committee. These goals and objectives were mutually endorsed and served as the guiding framework for the development of the Strategic Parking Framework and all resulting recommendations. The strategic parking framework reflects these collectively endorsed objectives and represents their translation into actionable, implementable recommendations.

Throughout the planning process, proposed strategies were evaluated and refined against these objectives to ensure alignment, consistency, and transparency in decision-making. The goals and objectives included:

- *Balance Parking Supply and Demand:* Manage parking effectively to accommodate increasing demands from new residential developments, economic growth, special events, and tourism.
- *Provide Diverse Parking Solutions:* Offer a safe and convenient mix of parking to serve the diverse needs of customers, visitors, residents, and employees.
- *Support Economic Development:* Respond to intensification pressures and support economic growth through strategic investment and management of parking assets.
- *Enhance the Visitor Experience:* Ensure that parking infrastructure supports increased visitor activity while preserving the character of the downtown.
- *Sustainability in Parking Management:* Strategically manage parking resources to align with broader planning and mobility goals, promote sustainable development while meeting current and future parking needs.
- *Adapt to Intensification:* Respond proactively to increasing residential density by ensuring the parking system remains functional and adaptable over time.
- *Maintenance and Management:* Strengthen the on-going upkeep, operation, and administration of municipal parking assets.

Foundation for the Framework

A comprehensive program of parking inventories, data analysis, policy review, and stakeholder and community engagement was undertaken to establish a strong evidence base for the Downtown Parking Plan. This foundational work informed the development of strategic recommendations that directly respond to the project's goals and objectives. The DPP is intentionally structured so that each chapter is built upon the analysis and findings of the previous section, ensuring that the resulting recommendations are cohesive, well-supported, and grounded in data, policy context, and community input. The DPP was structured as follows:

Phase 1 – Existing Conditions and Needs Assessment:

Analysis of existing conditions found that overall downtown parking demand does not exceed the functional capacity of the municipal parking system. However, demand is not evenly distributed across the downtown area, resulting in localized shortages during weekday and weekend peak periods within specific sub-areas, most notably east of Brant Street. Publicly accessible municipal parking lots east of Brant Street regularly experienced utilization rates exceeding 90 percent during peak periods, indicating localized capacity constraints. In contrast, the Waterfront Garage operated at approximately 30 percent utilization during the same periods, demonstrating available reserve capacity west of Brant Street.

Public consultation and the parking behaviour and preference survey conducted as part of Phase 1 identified several consistent themes:

- *Weekend Parking Access Challenges:* Respondents reported difficulty finding parking downtown on weekends, particularly during special events and festivals. Traffic congestion, limited transportation alternatives, and challenges navigating the downtown during peak event periods were frequently cited.
- *Perceived Parking Availability:* Regardless of day of week, respondents perceived parking availability to be limited, especially near the hospital, event venues, and east of Brant Street.
- *Cost:* Respondents identified the need for improved and more responsive parking pricing strategies.
- *Demographic-Specific Needs:* Survey results highlighted distinct parking needs across different demographic groups.

A comprehensive review of the downtown parking inventory, regulations, utilization patterns, and survey results informed the needs assessment and validated key issues and opportunities, including:

- *Event and Waterfront Parking Management:* Opportunities to improve the visitor experience and more evenly distribute parking demand across the study area, particularly during peak event periods.
- *Dynamic Wayfinding and Information:* Opportunities to provide real-time guidance to underutilized parking facilities both prior to arrival downtown and at over-capacity locations, leveraging emerging technologies and mobile applications to reduce circulation and congestion.
- *Performance-Based Pricing:* Consideration of a performance-based pricing approach that uses rate adjustments to balance demand, support turnover, and optimize use of existing parking assets.

Phase 1 confirmed that downtown parking challenges are not driven by a system-wide shortage of supply, but by localized demand pressures, event conditions, circulation patterns, and user perception. This understanding is fundamental to the DPP, which priorities strategies

that improve distribution, visibility and management of existing parking resources before considering expansion of supply. This evidence-based foundation informed Phase 2, which examines the relationship between land use patterns and parking demand to forecast future needs and guide long-term planning.

Phase 2 – Analysis of Future Parking Demand:

Phase 2 evaluated future parking demand to assess the potential impacts of planned and in-stream development on the existing municipal parking system and to identify opportunities to manage demand efficiently as downtown redevelopment occurs. A parking demand model was developed and calibrated to observed conditions and subsequently applied to forecast future demand under a range of development scenarios.

Using development forecast data from the Pipeline to Permit dashboard, supplemented by staff input regarding viable future redevelopment opportunities within the study area, four development scenarios were established to represent varying growth horizons.

- *Scenario 1 - Ongoing and Expected Development:* Includes projects in the development pipeline that are currently being built, have planning approval, or reasonably anticipated to receive approval, representing a 0–10-year horizon. This scenario comprises approximately 1,850 new residential units and 43,000 square feet of gross commercial floor area (GFA).
- *Scenario 2 – Pending Site Plan Application or Appeal:* Builds upon Scenario 1 and includes known development projects further from approval, representing a 10–15-year horizon. This scenario includes approximately 600 additional residential units and 4,000 square feet of commercial GFA.
- *Scenario 3 – Initial Concept Review:* Combines Scenarios 1 and 2 with development projects currently at a conceptual review stage, with an anticipated 15+ year build out horizon. This scenario includes approximately 700 additional residential units and 24,000 additional square feet of commercial GFA.
- *Scenario 4 – Additional Potential Development & Modified Behaviour:* A long-term theoretical scenario that builds upon Scenario 3 and assumes significant transformative redevelopment not currently reflected in the development pipeline, including the redevelopment of a major shopping plaza and a heavily utilized municipal parking lot. This scenario includes approximately 1,200 additional residential units and 65,800 square feet of commercial GFA.

The Phase 2 modelling results indicate that future parking demand associated with the first three growth scenarios is expected to be accommodated within the existing parking system. In particular, the analysis demonstrates that anticipated residential growth does not result in a net increase in demand for municipal parking supply, as new residential developments are generally providing parking on-site for residents. In addition, non-residential land uses

displaced through redevelopment are largely replaced by commercial space within new mixed-use developments, resulting in minimal net change to non-residential parking demand.

The highly aggressive fourth scenario results in a measurable increase in parking demand; however, the modelling does not indicate system-wide failure or conditions under which overall demand would exceed theoretical supply. This scenario reinforces the importance of continued efforts to promote more distributed use of public parking facilities across the study area and to ensure that future residential development continues to accommodate parking on-site rather than relying on the municipal parking system to absorb demand.

Phase 3 – Strategic Plan for Parking Operations Management:

The development of a set of integrated strategic recommendations was informed by technical analysis and shaped through feedback received as part of the concurrent public consultation process. Together, these recommendations guide the evolution of the downtown municipal parking system in a manner that supports broader mobility, land use, economic, and community objectives. The recommendations are organized into the following focus areas:

- *System Regulation and Performance*: Introduces a performance-based framework to guide parking pricing, regulation, and permit strategies in response to changing demand conditions, with the objective of improving availability and turnover rather than uniformly increasing rates across the system. In some locations, this approach may result in lower prices where demand is underutilized.
- *Asset Management and Operations:* Emphasizes modernization of parking infrastructure, enhancement of the user experience, and improvements to safety and functionality.
- *Operational Programs and Policies*: Outlines indirect strategies to manage parking demand, improve access, and better align parking with the City's multimodal and accessibility objectives, consistent with the Integrated Mobility Plan.
- *Funding and Financials:* Examines the existing revenue model and identifies strategies to support the long-term financial sustainability of the municipal parking system.

While individual recommendations may appear modest when considered in isolation, they are intentionally designed to function as a coordinated package. When implemented collectively, the recommendations reinforce one another and deliver a cumulative impact that advances the study's goals and objectives more efficiently than any single measure on its own. This integrated approach enables incremental, adaptable implementation that allows the city to phase investment over time, supporting fiscal stewardship and aligning actions with available resources, while maintaining operational feasibility and delivering meaningful system-wide outcomes. The resulting strategic recommendations are summarized in **Table 1**.

Table 1: Downtown Parking Plan – Strategic Recommendations

Focus Area	Strategic Recommendations
System Regulation and Performance	i. Adopt Performance Measures and Define Performance Targets ▪ Adopt parking availability as the primary performance measure for managing parking supply and define utilization targets of 15% availability for on-street parking and 10% availability for surface parking lots as the key performance target. ii. Reflect Performance Targets in Pricing ▪ Implement tiered pricing as a performance-based approach to better distribute parking demand across the system. ▪ Adjust pricing schedules to optimize the use of existing facilities and support greater turnover of premium spaces. ▪ Consider removing time limits and implement progressive rates for metered on-street spaces. ▪ Monitor performance data to guide fee and regulation adjustments. iii. Modify On-Street Parking Regulations ▪ Simplify on-street regulations in areas where parking is not priced. ▪ Review loading zone regulations to better manage curbside. iv. Review Permit Parking Options and Locations ▪ Review pricing structure of monthly permits and adjust in order to reduce waitlist and balance permit demand across the system. v. Redefine Electric Vehicle Charging and Occupancy Regulations ▪ Consider employing a pricing structure that ensures availability of EV charging stations and recovers operational costs. This recommendation is further explored in Report PWS-06-26.
Asset Management and Operations	i. Enhance Payment Systems ▪ Procure replacement pay stations and ensure that dynamic pricing strategies and new payment technologies can be accommodated. Refer to Capital Project RD-PK-1214. ii. Expand Coordinated Information Systems & Wayfinding ▪ Prepare and publish effective advance information to help visitors and customers plan for parking prior to departing for Downtown. ▪ Leverage technology to deploy dynamic wayfinding that provides clear instruction to access parking facilities with greater availability and enhance lot displays to provide information regarding nearby parking options. iii. Enhance Safety and Security in Public Parking Facilities ▪ Develop a comprehensive security plan tailored to each off-street parking location. Refer to Capital Project RD-PK-2074 iv. Identify Future Parking Expansion Opportunities ▪ Proactively identify potential sites and estimate costs to construct a future municipal parking garage. Refer to Capital Project RD-PK-87.

Operational Programs and Policies	i. Create a Special Event Parking Management Program ▪ Create a policy framework that permits special event pricing during major events occurring in the downtown. Collaboration with the Downtown Parking Advisory Committee is required to examine options for pricing structure. ▪ Explore opportunities to partner with private providers of shuttle and/or valet services during special events. ii. Formalize a Private-Public Access Agreement Policy ▪ Develop and formalize a policy related to the pursuit of public-private partnerships to deliver new parking supply as part of new high-density residential buildings. iii. Create a Temporary Displacement Policy ▪ Develop a formalized policy to manage parking impacts associated with construction activities downtown, outlining expectations for developers when public parking is temporarily displaced. Recommendations should be integrated into the permitting process and securities may be required prior to permit issuance. iv. Redefine Parking Requirements ▪ Monitor parking occupancy in private development and adjust parking minimums in the Zoning By-Law to reflect actual use patterns. ▪ Consider redefining residential parking requirements through implementation of an impact fee per parking space not provided, offering developers flexibility to meet parking requirements through a combination of on-site parking and financial contribution to long-term mobility strategies. v. Pursue Transportation Demand Management Reduction Opportunities ▪ Continued investment in micromobility and shared mobility solutions (i.e., SCOOTY E-Scooter Pilot Project) and establish a mobility hub within an existing municipal parking lot to bring together transportation options and shared mobility services and active transportation amenities. ▪ Continued efforts to enhance the pedestrian environment, particularly within parking lots and at street crossings, to establish the creation of a “park once” district where visitors feel comfortable parking once and walking between multiple destinations. ▪ Invest in green infrastructure within public parking lots and adjacent to curbside spaces to transform the public right-of-way into assets that support environmental goals, enhance the user experience, and contribute to a more resilient urban fabric. vi. Ensure Accessibility ▪ Continued collaboration with the City’s Accessibility Specialist and the Burlington Accessibility Advisory Committee to integrate regulatory solutions that advance accessible parking design standards.
Funding and Financials	i. Update the Defined Parking Area Boundary ▪ As commercial development has since occurred outside the current defined area, with more foreseen, the current boundary area should be expanded to include the lands encompassed by Ontario Street, Maple Avenue and Lakeshore Road. Expansion of the boundary area would support coordinated management of the entire municipal parking system.

Community Engagement

Feedback from residents, visitors, business owners, and their employees was foundational to the development of a parking strategy that reflects local needs and responds to real-world operating conditions, both today and in the future. The engagement program was intentionally designed to solicit meaningful, actionable input at key milestones throughout the study process, allowing emerging ideas and assumptions to be tested, refined, and validated as the work progressed.

Engagement activities were structured to both inform the technical analysis and to assess the practicality and community acceptance of potential strategies. Input received through public consultation was used to confirm priority issues, identify unintended impacts, and shape the direction and sequencing of recommendations. Technical input from internal staff teams complemented this process by providing operational insight and ensuring alignment with broader City policies, service delivery considerations, and implementation realities. A detailed engagement report is contained in **Appendix B** for further reference.

The second and final round of formal engagement focused on testing the draft strategic recommendation themes and demonstrated strong overall support among survey respondents. The highest levels of support were expressed for simplifying parking regulations, implementing a special event parking management strategy, and leveraging technology to provide dynamic information to assist users in locating available parking. Continued support was indicated for expanded multimodal and micromobility options, enhanced payment functionality at pay machines, and the use of dynamic pricing strategies. Collectively, this feedback confirmed both the relevance of the proposed strategies and the readiness for phased implementation.

Lived Experience of the Business Community

Recognizing that publicly accessible municipal parking supply east of Brant Street regularly experiences utilization rates exceeding 90 percent during peak periods, it was prudent to capture the lived experience of the business community within this sub-area. The Burlington Downtown Business Association (BDBA) administered a survey targeted at businesses located east of Brant Street. Survey results indicated a strong consensus among respondents that the current parking supply is insufficient to support existing business operations or accommodate anticipated growth over the next five years. Respondents also noted that limited availability of nearby low-cost parking indirectly affects their ability to attract and retain employees.

When asked to identify their primary “pain points,” respondents ranked ease of finding a parking space as the top priority for their customers, followed by the convenience of parking location. These findings reinforce the underlying philosophy of the proposed parking strategy by emphasizing the importance of parking availability and turnover in supporting customer access and business vitality. This experience-based feedback aligns with the broader objective of implementing strategies that encourage turnover, thereby improving availability and access to better serve community needs. Findings from the BDBA-administered survey are contained in **Appendix C** for further reference.

Recommendation Details

Prioritization of Recommended Strategies

The prioritization of recommended strategies is guided by the needs and experiences of those who interact with the downtown parking system every day, including local business owners and their employees, customers, visitors, and residents. Input gathered through engagement activities and surveys provided valuable insight into day-to-day challenges, user expectations, and operational considerations within the system.

This qualitative data - lived experience - was considered alongside technical analysis, data modelling, and operational feasibility assessments to ensure that recommended strategies are both responsive to community needs and supported by evidence-based planning. Together, these inputs informed the identification and sequencing of priority actions that are practical, achievable, and appropriate for early implementation, while also recognizing the importance of longer-term planning to address future parking demand, including consideration of additional parking supply through a new parking structure if warranted.

Establishing clear priorities is particularly important as the downtown continues to evolve and accommodate growth over time. A phased and prioritized approach allows the City to make thoughtful use of available resources, advance strategies that deliver meaningful benefits in the near term and position the municipal parking system to support ongoing economic activity, development, and broader mobility objectives.

Based on this approach, the recommended strategies have been organized into short-, medium- and longer-term priorities (reference **Tables 2** through **4**) to reflect differences in timing, complexity, and resource requirements. This sequencing is intended to deliver early improvements while establishing a clear pathway for longer-term planning and investment.

Table 2: Short-Term Prioritization of Strategic Recommendations

Focus Area	Strategic Recommendation	Cost	Community Priority
System Regulation and Performance	Adopt Performance Measures and Define Performance Targets ▪ Staff-led initiative that establishes a consistent framework for monitoring and managing parking system performance	$	✓
	Reassess Permit Program Options and Locations ▪ Staff-led initiative to improve alignment between permit supply, user needs, and observed demand patterns	$	
	Redefine EV Charging and Occupancy Regulations ▪ Staff-led initiative currently underway to improve utilization and turnover of EV charging spaces	$	
Operational Programs and Policies	Formalize Public-Private Access Agreement Policy ▪ Staff-led initiative that may require targeted consultant support to develop standardized agreements and implementation tools	$	✓
	Create a Temporary Displacement Policy ▪ Staff-led initiative to provide a clear and consistent approach for managing parking impacts during construction	$	
	Ensure Accessibility ▪ Ongoing staff-led initiative supported through continued collaboration with the Burlington Accessibility Advisory Committee (BAAC)	$	
Funding and Financials	Update Defined Parking Area Boundary ▪ Staff-led initiative to ensure the defined parking area reflects current conditions, operational realities, and policy objectives	$	✓

These short-term strategies (0–2-year horizon) represent an appropriate starting point for implementation as they can be advanced largely through staff-led policy, program, and regulatory updates, with limited capital investment. Collectively, they respond directly to issues raised through public engagement, improve clarity and consistency within the parking system, and establish the performance measures, policies, and frameworks needed to support future operational and capital initiatives. Early advancement allows the city to deliver tangible improvements in the short-term, build momentum and public confidence, and ensure that more complex or capital-intensive initiatives are implemented on a strong, data-informed foundation.

Table 3: Medium-Term Prioritization of Strategic Recommendations

Focus Area	Strategic Recommendation	Cost	Community Priority
System Regulation and Performance	Reflect Performance Targets in Pricing ▪ Staff-led initiative enabled by enhancing parking technology and data systems	$	
	Modify On-Street Regulations ▪ Informed by findings of future Curbside Management Study and supported by improved data and enforcement tools	$$	
Asset Management and Operations	Enhance Payment Systems ▪ Foundational capital investment that enables multiple priority initiatives, including dynamic pricing, special event management, and improved customer experience	$$$	
	Expand Coordinated Information Systems and Wayfinding ▪ High-priority capital initiative that builds on enhanced payment system and supports real-time user information, event management, and system performance management	$$$	✔
Operational Programs and Policies	Create a Special Event Parking Management Program ▪ Staff-led program supported by enhanced payment technology, replacement pay stations and coordinated information systems	$	✔
	Redefine Parking Requirements ▪ Policy update informed by updated utilization data and aligned with broader mobility and land-use objectives ▪ Update to the 2017 City-Wide Parking Standards Report	$$	✔

Many of the medium-term strategies (3-5-year horizon) are more complex, multi-year projects that require coordination across technology, operations, policy, and customer-facing systems. Certain initiatives, particularly investments in technology and payment systems, serve as foundational enablers, allowing multiple operational, policy and regulatory strategies to be implemented efficiently and in a coordinated manner over time.

Table 4: Long-Term Prioritization of Strategic Recommendations

Focus Area	Strategic Recommendation	Cost	Community Priority
Asset Management and Operations	Enhance Safety and Security in Public Parking Facilities ▪ Multi-year initiative that may require phased capital investment, enhanced technology, and additional operating resources to improve lighting, surveillance, access control, and user safety across the parking system	$$$	
	Future Parking Expansion ▪ Long-term initiative requiring detailed planning, technical analysis, land acquisition, and significant capital investment to address future parking demand, including potential development of a new parking structure, subject to Council direction, budget, and further demand analysis	$$$	✓
Operational Programs and Policies	Pursue Transportation Demand Management Reduction Opportunities ▪ Ongoing, staff-led initiative aligned with the Integrated Mobility Plan, supported through broader Transportation Demand Management programs and complementary investments in technology, pricing and information systems	$$$	✓

These long-term recommendations (5-year horizon and beyond) focus on more complex and higher-cost system improvements that require additional planning, coordination, and investment. Advancing the foundational short- and medium-term recommendations first helps ensure that future decisions are informed by updated data, operational experience, and broader mobility objectives, while allowing Municipal Parking Operations to plan thoughtfully and responsibly for these longer-term initiatives.

Implementation

The prioritized implementation of the strategic recommendations provides a coordinated and phased roadmap for improving the municipal parking system over time and is aligned with the outcomes-based approach of the Integrated Mobility Plan (IMP). Implementation is structure to support incremental delivery, continuous learning, and evidence-based decision-making as parking plays a key role within the downtown mobility system.

Short-term actions focus on staff-led policy, and regulatory improvements that can be delivered efficiently and at relatively low cost. These initiatives address immediate operational needs while establishing the performance measures, data, collection practices, and governance frameworks required to support ongoing monitoring and alignment with IMP objectives.

Consistent with the IMP's monitoring framework, early success will be evaluated using indicators such as parking utilization, turnover in higher-demand areas, customer feedback, and overall system performance. These metrics will support ongoing assessment of outcomes, allow for course correction where required, and inform data-driven decision regarding the prioritization of medium- and longer-term initiatives.

Medium term initiatives build on this foundation through targeted investments in technology, systems, and operational enhancements that improve customer experience and enable more effective management of parking resources. Performance data from earlier phases will be used to refine implementation sequencing and confirm that investments continue to support broader mobility, access and mode-shift objectives.

Longer-term initiatives address more complex and capital-intensive needs, including the potential development of a new parking structure and broader transportation demand management objectives. These objectives will require careful planning, coordination, and budget consideration, informed by observed system performance and financial capacity, to ensure fiscally responsible use of the Downtown Parking Reserve while continuing to support the businesses, residents and visitors that rely on the municipal parking system today.

Recommendation

That Council endorse the phased implementation of the Downtown Parking Plan, beginning with short-term, staff-led policy and program initiatives, followed by targeted medium-term investments in technology and system improvements, while directing staff to continue planning for longer-term, capital-intensive initiatives. This approach supports timely improvements to the downtown parking system, ensures responsible stewardship of the Downtown Parking Reserve, and positions Municipal Parking Operations to make informed future decisions that support the needs of existing businesses, customers, residents, and visitors.

Key Dates & Milestones

- June 2024 – Project Awarded to Stantec Consulting Ltd.
- Summer 2024 – Background Review / Parking Utilization Surveys undertaken
- September 2024 – DPAC / BDBA Joint Steering Committee Meeting & Walkabout
- Fall 2024 – Public Engagement (Food for Feedback, Survey #1, Public Open House #1)
- November 2024 – DPAC / BDBA Joint Steering Committee Meeting
- January 2025 – Phase 1 Report Published (Existing Conditions & Needs Assessment)
- Winter 2025 – Model Development and Growth Scenario Analysis
- June 2025 – Phase 2 Report Published (Analysis of Future Parking Demand)
- July 2025 – Public Engagement (Survey #2)
- September 2025 – Phase 3 Report Published (Strategic Plan for Parking Operations and Management)

- September 2025 – DPAC / BDBA Joint Steering Committee Meeting
- October 2025 – Public Engagement (Public Open House #2 – Virtual)
- Fall 2025 – Development of Implementation Plan
- January 2026 – Final Report Published (Downtown Parking Plan)
- February 2026 – DPAC / BDBA Joint Steering Committee Meeting
- March 2026 – Presentation of Committee of the Whole

Implications

Financial

The recommendations of the Downtown Parking Plan are structured to be funded through the Downtown Parking Reserve and are not anticipated to put pressure on the City's broader tax base. Downtown parking is intended to function as a financially self-sustaining system, with user revenues reinvested directly into the operation, maintenance, and improvement of parking assets and services.

Many of the Plan's capital-related recommendations are already reflected in the City's approved 10-year capital program. Higher-cost and more complex investments, such as future parking expansion through the development of a new parking structure, will be subject to further detailed financial analysis in collaboration with Finance to confirm long-term affordability, reserve capacity and overall sustainability.

Implementation of the DPP recommendations will be phased based on available funding, financial performance, and Council approval. Revenue-generating initiatives identified in the DPP, including the proposed Special Event Parking Management Program, are intended to strengthen the Downtown Parking Reserve and support reinvestment in parking infrastructure while preserving the self-sustaining nature of the downtown parking system.

Communications & Engagement

Proactive, clear and consistent communication will be essential as parking policies, pricing, and technologies evolve. A comprehensive communications and engagement approach will be used to ensure businesses, residents and visitors are informed, understand the rationale for changes, and are supported though the transition.

Any changes to parking management practices, fee structures, or the introduction of new paid periods will be accompanied by a targeted communication campaign focused on transparency, timing and ease of understanding. The rollout of new parking technologies will be supported through robust customer education, frontline staff training, and ongoing engagement to minimize disruption, address concerns early, and support a positive user experience.

Climate

Parking plays an important supporting role in advancing the City's climate and mobility objectives by influencing travel behaviour, vehicle circulation, and the efficiency of the transportation system. While the Downtown Parking Plan is not a standalone climate strategy, its recommendations are aligned with the Integrated Mobility Plan and support broader greenhouse gas reduction goals through improved parking management and transportation demand management.

Short- and medium-term recommendations focus on operational and policy-based measures that can reduce unnecessary vehicle circulation and idling in the downtown. Improvements to wayfinding, pricing alignment, and the use of data and technology to manage supply and demand more effectively are intended to reduce cruising for parking, improve turnover in high-demand areas, and support more efficient use of existing parking assets.

The DPP also supports climate objectives by reinforcing mode-shift goals through parking policies that prioritize access, encourage short stays in core areas, and complement investments in walking, cycling, and transit. By managing parking as a finite and valuable resource, the DPP helps align parking supply with broader land use and mobility goals, rather than inducing additional vehicle demand.

Longer-term initiatives, including any future consideration of parking expansion, will be informed by observed system performance, transportation demand management outcomes, and evolving climate targets. This approach ensures that capital-intensive investments are carefully evaluated to avoid overbuilding parking supply and to support the City's long-term sustainability and emissions-reduction objectives.

In this way, the Downtown Parking Plan supports the City's Climate Action Plan by complementing broader efforts to manage travel demand, reduce vehicle-related emissions, and make more efficient use of existing transportation infrastructure.

References

Integrated Mobility Plan
Downtown Parking Plan
Phase 1 - Existing Conditions and Needs Assessment
Phase 2 - Analysis of Future Parking Demand
Phase 3 - Strategic Plan for Parking Operations and Management
PWS-06-26 EV Charging Policy and Pricing Options

Strategic Alignment

- ☑ Designing and delivering complete communities
- ☑ Providing the best services and experiences

☑ Protecting and improving the natural environment and taking action on climate change
☐ Driving organizational performance

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Appendices:

A. Downtown Burlington Parking Plan – Final Report and Implementation Plan
B. What we heard: Community Engagement Report
C. Burlington Downtown Business Association: Downtown Parking Survey Results

Report Approval:

All reports are reviewed and approved by the Commissioner, Head of Corporate Affairs, Chief Financial Officer, and Commissioner of Legal and Legislative Services/City Solicitor.