

Motion Memorandum

SUBJECT: Parking Supply Structure – Downtown East of Brant Street

TO: Committee of the Whole

From: Councillor Lisa Kearns

Date to Committee: May 11, 2026

Date to Council: May 26, 2026

Motion for Council to Consider:

Direct the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) to report back by Q3 2026 with a financial analysis and options for delivering additional structured parking supply east of Brant Street in Downtown Burlington, including:

- a) An assessment of the financial capacity of the downtown parking system;
- b) Order-of-magnitude capital cost estimates for structured parking options;
- c) Identification of potential sites east of Brant Street in Downtown Burlington, including options for location, land use, and scale of parking structure;
- d) A preliminary scan of partnership opportunities to offset capital or operating costs;
- e) Definition of the scope for a potential feasibility study to evaluate preferred options; and
- f) Recommendations to inform a potential Phase 2 business case as part of the 2027 Budget process; and

Direct the CAO, subject to Council consideration of the Q3 2026 report and approval through the 2027 budget process, to undertake a feasibility study to assess the viability of a structured parking facility east of Brant Street in Downtown Burlington.

Reason:

Background:

The City's Strategic Downtown Parking Framework identifies that peak parking utilization in key downtown areas regularly exceeds 85–90%, which is widely recognized in municipal planning as the threshold at which users begin to experience difficulty finding available parking. This condition is most acute east of Brant Street, where municipal structured supply is limited.

At the same time, the majority of Burlington's municipal parking inventory—over 60%—is located west of Brant Street, creating a geographic imbalance between supply and demand as growth shifts eastward.

The report also notes that downtown growth projections will continue to increase parking demand in the near- to medium-term, even as investments in transit and active transportation expand travel options.

***It is critical to understand that this is not a solution in isolation and that the recommendations in the Strategic Downtown Parking Framework as well as all mobility efforts and enhancements will continue to improve the mobility split and provide increased options to reduce reliance on single occupancy vehicles.

Outcome Sought:

This motion is intended to ensure that Council has a clear, evidence-based understanding of the need, cost, and feasibility of expanding structured parking supply in the downtown east area before any capital commitments are made.

It reflects a prudent and phased approach to infrastructure planning, grounded in financial accountability and strategic foresight.

Key considerations include:

1. Financial Sustainability

Structured parking facilities require significant upfront capital investment and ongoing operating costs. A comprehensive assessment of the downtown parking system's financial capacity will determine whether expansion can be supported through user fees and reserves, or whether additional funding mechanisms would be required.

2. Supporting Downtown Growth

The continued intensification of downtown Burlington—particularly east of Brant Street—necessitates proactive planning for supporting infrastructure. Evaluating

structured parking options now helps ensure that future growth is not constrained by insufficient access or unintended spillover impacts into surrounding neighbourhoods.

3. Economic Vitality and Accessibility

Accessible parking plays an important role in supporting local businesses, cultural venues, and tourism. Ensuring adequate supply in emerging areas of the downtown can enhance the overall visitor experience and support economic activity. Supporting economic vitality through parking infrastructure is an economic enabler, the report reinforces that:

High parking utilization correlates with strong demand for downtown businesses and destinations, however, when utilization exceeds 90%, customers may choose alternative destinations due to inconvenience.

Ensuring available parking supply east of Brant Street helps:

- Maintain business competitiveness

- Support events, tourism, and waterfront access

- Reduce spillover parking into residential neighbourhoods

4. Strategic Use of Land

Structured parking enables more efficient land use compared to surface parking, allowing for higher-value uses at grade and supporting broader city-building objectives. Exploring location, scale, and potential mixed-use opportunities will help align parking investments with urban design and planning goals.

5. Partnership Opportunities

There may be opportunities to collaborate with the private sector, institutions, or other stakeholders to deliver shared parking solutions. Identifying these opportunities early can help offset capital costs and improve project feasibility.

6. Informed Decision-Making

By defining the scope of a future feasibility study and identifying preferred options, Council will be well-positioned to consider a Phase 2 business case through the 2027 Budget process, ensuring decisions are timely, transparent, and well-supported.

Demonstrated Capacity Constraints

- Industry best practice identifies **85% utilization** as the practical capacity limit before system strain occurs.
- The consultant report shows **downtown Burlington is already operating at or above this threshold during peak periods**, particularly in the east downtown area.

This means the system is not just busy, it is functionally constrained, with limited ability to absorb additional demand without intervention.

Cost Realities of Structured Parking

Structured parking represents a significant capital investment:

- **Above-grade structured parking:** approximately **\$45,000–\$65,000 per space**
- **Below-grade structured parking:** approximately **\$70,000–\$100,000+ per space**

A modest 300-space structure could therefore range from:

- **\$13.5 million to \$30 million+**, depending on design and site conditions

This underscores why a **phased, evidence-based approach** is essential before advancing AND why the addition of ancillary spaces must be independently funded and not hinder the advancement of the structured parking.

At this time there is no evidence of any funded additional uses or clear intentions for multipurpose structure.

Implications:

Financial:

This motion does not commit capital funding at this stage. Any future financial implications will be considered through the 2027 Budget process following the requested analysis and feasibility work.

Downtown Parking Levy Revenue Context

The City's downtown parking system is supported in part by a parking levy applied to properties within the delineated area which is intended to help fund municipal parking infrastructure over time. Recent reporting indicates that the levy generates \$273,000 directly from property owners with an additional funds directed to the Parking Reserve. While this represents a meaningful and growing revenue stream, it must be considered in the context of structured parking costs that can exceed \$50,000 per space meaning that even over the life of levy collection, it may only fund a limited portion of a single structured facility. This reinforces the importance of understanding the full financial capacity of the parking system, exploring partnerships, and carefully phasing any future investment.

RF800051 Parking District	(245,514.25)
RF800685 Parking Growth Reserve Fund	(7,807,949.48)
RF800686 Parking Renewal Reserve Fund	(4,458,166.94)

Legal/Planning:

Any future development would be subject to applicable planning approvals, zoning considerations, and alignment with the City’s Official Plan and downtown mobility strategies.

Operational:

A structured parking facility would require ongoing management, maintenance, and integration into the City’s broader parking system.

Engagement:

Burlington Downtown Business Association Approved Motion at the April 1, 2026 Board Meeting:

- 1) THAT Committee of the Whole approve the *Strategic Parking Framework for Downtown Burlington* report as presented.
- 2) THAT facility design and a construction schedule for a public off-street parking facility, east of Brant Street, be submitted by Transportation Services as a capital budget request (2027 budget) for the year 2028.
- 3) THAT City of Burlington Finance Department be directed to conduct a *detailed financial analysis* to confirm long-term affordability, reserve capacity and overall sustainability of the Downtown parking system, in order to support the expedited planning, design and construction of a new off-street parking facility east of Brant Street.
- 4) THAT this detailed financial analysis be presented for review by the Downtown Parking Advisory Committee (DPC) and Board of the Burlington Downtown Business Association (BDBA).

APPROVED

Burlington Downtown Business Association SURVEY Results:

- Results
 - 92% of respondents disagree that there is adequate parking to support growth of their business over the next 5 years

- 69% of respondents report insufficient parking for staff
- Respondents report inadequate parking which impacts customers negatively

Petition: “Make Parking a Priority in Downtown” to be submitted under separate petition process

“We, the undersigned, AGREE that public parking supply Downtown has not kept pace with development pressures.

New mobility initiatives designed to move patrons around our Downtown are welcomed, and in process, BUT parking is CRITICAL to the health of our business community, and it must be delivered now.

We support the BDBA’s demand to deliver NEW public parking by 2030. We STRONGLY encourage City Council to approve a plan that will deliver a new parking facility as a short-term priority.”

References:

PWS-05-26 – Strategic Parking Framework for Downtown Burlington

DGM-08-25 - Burlington Lands Partnership Update – Partnership Potential for City-Owned Lands

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

Approved as per form by the City Clerk