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Town of Aurora

## **General Committee Report**

No. PDS20-024

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**Subject:** **Downtown Parking Update – Library Square Precinct**

**Prepared by:** Michael Bat, Traffic/Transportation Analyst

**Department:** Planning and Development Services

**Date:** September 22, 2020

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### **Recommendation**

1. That Report No. PDS20-024 be received; and
2. That shared parking agreements with organizations in the area be considered as short-term parking solution and staff be directed to continue exploring the medium and long-term parking solutions; and
3. That the following intersection improvements be approved by Council subject to its final review as part of the Town's budget process which will enhance both vehicular and pedestrian flow:
  - a. Installing a new traffic signal at the intersection of Yonge Street and Church Street (to be funded in the 10-year Capital Plan); and
  - b. Converting the 2-way 'Stop' to an 'All-way Stop' at the intersection of Victoria Street and Church Street (to be funded by the Town's Operations Department Operating Budget).
4. That staff be directed to coordinate with Chandos to ensure the compliance of the parking and traffic management strategies recommended in the Parking Study; and
5. That the Downtown Parking Working Group continue to monitor and address parking related issues within the Library Square precinct during construction and report to Council as required.

## Executive Summary

This report presents to Council the findings and conclusions of the Library Square Parking Study (the Parking Study) prepared by BA Group. It seeks Council's approval to proceed with the implementation of the identified short-term options while continuing to explore medium and long-term parking solutions.

The Parking Study consists of the following key components and discussions:

- The Town retained BA Group to undertake a comprehensive parking analysis for the Library Square development and concluded there is sufficient parking supply to support future parking demand assuming all events within the Aurora Cultural Precinct are not run simultaneously;
- The future parking demand can be accommodated with the implementation of short, medium and long term options;
- As part of traffic management strategies, the Parking Study recommends signaling the intersection of Yonge Street and Church Street and installing an 'All-way Stop' control at the intersection of Victoria Street and Church Street;
- Parking and traffic management are both important aspects to minimize impacts resulting from Library Square construction activities to the adjacent neighbourhoods; and,
- A Downtown Parking Working Group has been created to discuss and manage parking related issues for the Downtown area including the Library Square project parking matters.

## Background

Since 2000, Council has directed staff to undertake various studies to address the parking supply in downtown Aurora. They are summarized below and details are provided in Attachment 1.

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|------|--|
| 2002 | Completed a Master Transportation Operations Study (MTOS) which included parking demand within the downtown core area; |
| 2007 | Retained Marshall Macklin Monaghan (MMM) to update the downtown parking component of the 2002 MTOS;                    |

- |      |   |
|------|---|
| 2010 | Approved the Aurora Promenade Urban Design Strategy to guide and manage growth;   |
| 2016 | Initiated a Downtown Traffic Management Plan for Library Square; and,   |
| 2016 | Engaged Fotenn to prepare a vision and concept plan for the Cultural Precinct as identified in the Aurora Promenade Plan. |

Staff report no. PDS19-018 was approved on March 21, 2019 including the following key elements:

- Provide additional on-site parking within the laneway located on the northern property limit of the Site;
- Provide additional on-street parking on Victoria Street; and,
- Provide additional on-street parking on Church Street subject to further public consultation.

A public consultation was held on May 23, 2019 to present the design options for Church Street. Council subsequently adopted staff report no. PDS19-063 and directed staff to proceed with the preferred option for the Church Street right-of-way.

In addition, the minimum AODA requirement for barrier free spaces for the Library Square development is 4 spaces (or 4% of the total parking supply), whereas the site plan proposes 8 barrier free spaces (or 10% of the total parking supply).

## Analysis

**The Town retained BA Group to undertake a comprehensive parking analysis for the Library Square development and concluded there is sufficient parking supply to support future parking demand assuming all events within the Aurora Cultural Precinct are not run simultaneously**

BA Group completed parking demand surveys for two consecutive weeks on Fridays (December 7 and 14, 2018) and Saturdays (December 8 and 15, 2018) during the periods of 10 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. The survey area is generally bounded by Wellington Street East to the north, Harrison Avenue to the south, Larmont Street to the east and Yonge Street to the west. It is strategically selected to avoid the needs of crossing major streets (i.e. Yonge Street and/or Wellington Street East).

The Parking Study considered two areas: 1) wider area (i.e. within 500 metres walking distance) and 2) focus area (i.e. within 250 metres walking distance). The study concluded that the total parking demand for the focus area was noticeably greater than the wider area as a result of the land uses within the smaller area.

Future parking demand were estimated based on two scenarios: 1) day-to-day activity and 2) event activity. The day-to-day activity is anticipated to follow a consistent daily pattern while the event activity may or may not occur at a regular schedule. The parking activity for both the Library Square development and the surrounding area is categorized below:

- Day-to-day activity: existing Library, School House and proposed Community Centre uses; and,
- Event activity: proposed Library multi-purpose rooms, proposed Theatre, Town Park, existing Farmer's Market and new Armoury uses.

Based on the analysis, the Parking Study concluded the following:

- All of the event capacity scenarios will put a strain on the on-street parking supply when the events are run simultaneously and,
- On a weekend mid-day if all events are run simultaneously at 100% capacity, the study area parking supply cannot satisfy parking demand and the on-street parking supply will be at capacity. However, this is considered as the ultimate worst case scenario, the Town will coordinate events to ensure sufficient parking capacity is available.

Details of the parking surveys and analysis are provided in Attachment 2.

**The future parking demand can be accommodated with the implementation of short, medium and long term options**

To address future parking demand for the Library Square development, the Parking Study provided short, medium and long term alternative options. They are described below and details are provided in Attachment 3.

**Short-term Options:**

- Option 1 – Use existing area parking supply & proposed 78 Site parking spaces and proposed 36 on-street parking spaces via the redesigned Church Street and Victoria Street; and,

- Option 1B – Enhance and encourage use of the existing parking supply (quick wins).

Medium-term Option:

- Option 2 – Build additional parking on-site through acquiring additional property.

Long-term Option:

- Option 3A: Consolidated Surface Parking Lot; and,
- Option 3B: Below-Grade Parking Structure with Development Above (Off-site).

The Parking Study recommends Option 1B by entering into a shared parking agreement with either the United Church or Trinity Church, or both, to address short-term parking. The staff parking demand for the Site would be accommodated by the existing area parking supply, making more efficient use of available parking and reducing the need to build excess parking. The reduction in staff parking demand will free up site parking spaces for visitors.

**As part of traffic management strategies, the Parking Study recommends signaling the intersection of Yonge Street and Church Street and installing an ‘All-way Stop’ control at the intersection of Victoria Street and Church Street**

To enhance vehicular and pedestrian movements with the Library Square development, the following traffic control amendments were recommended by the Parking Study:

- a) Installing a new traffic signal at the intersection of Yonge Street and Church Street; and,
- b) Converting the 2-way ‘Stop’ to an ‘All-way Stop’ at the intersection of Victoria Street and Church Street.

The potential benefits and drawbacks of the recommended traffic control amendments are provided in Attachment 4.

Staff recommends to monitor the future vehicular and pedestrian demand when the Library Square development is constructed and undertake the necessary warrant analysis prior to considering the above noted traffic control amendments.

Should Council decide to install the proposed traffic signal at the intersection of Yonge Street and Church Street and implement ‘All-way Stop’ at the intersection of Victoria

Street and Church Street, appropriate funding should be allocated through the budget process.

**Parking and traffic management are both important aspects to minimize impacts resulting from the construction activities to the surrounding neighbourhoods**

The Parking Study provided a list of possible mitigation strategies to reduce the impact for all road users on local streets as a result of the construction.

A construction management plan for Library Square will be provided so the public is aware of the construction activity taking place on-site and the proposed traffic operations.

In addition, the Town can consider temporarily removing the existing hourly and “No Parking” restrictions on the east side of Yonge Street in the vicinity of the Site during construction to increase the parking supply for Library users.

**A Downtown Parking Working Group has been created to discuss and manage parking related issues for the Downtown area including the Library Square project parking matters**

To effectively manage parking related issues within the Downtown area, a working group has been created including staff from the following departments: Planning and Development Services, Corporate Services, Community Services and Operation Services. The initial meeting of the working group was held on September 15, 2020. Staff will continue to manage, coordinate and communicate any parking matters within the Downtown area and any construction related concerns from the Library Square development.

**Advisory Committee Review**

Not Applicable.

**Legal Considerations**

None.

**Financial Implications**

There are no direct financial implications associated with this report.

However, should Council decide to proceed with the installation of traffic signal at the intersection of Yonge Street and Church Street and implementation of 'All-way Stop' at the intersection of Victoria Street and Church Street, the estimated costs are provided below:

1. Installation of traffic signal at the Yonge Street and Church Street intersection: Approximately \$206,040. This is included in the 10-year Capital Plan (project no. 34516) and it will be funded by "Development Charges" and "Growth and New Reserve"; and,
2. Implementation of 'All-way Stop' at the Victoria Street and Church Street intersection: Approximately \$800 and the necessary funds are available from the Town's Operations Department Operating Budget.

These improvements represent the incremental Library Square costs which will be brought to Council for its final review and approval upon further studies.

## **Communications Considerations**

Prior to the construction, Chandos will provide a detailed construction management plan listing the construction stages, estimated duration for each stage and the expected impact (i.e. parking restrictions, lane closure, etc.) and this information will be circulated to the nearby residents and businesses.

In addition, the Town of Aurora will 'inform' the public of the study recommendations by posting this report to the Town's website on the Library Square page.

There are five different levels of community engagement to consider, with each level providing the community more involvement in the decision making process. These levels are: Inform, Consult, Involve, Collaborate and Empower. Examples of each can be found in the Community Engagement Policy. These options are based on the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) Spectrum and assist in establishing guidelines for clearly communicating with our public and managing community engagement.

## **Link to Strategic Plan**

This report supports the Strategic Plan goal of Support an Exceptional Quality of Life for All by examining traffic patterns and identify potential solutions to improve movement and safety at key intersections in the community.

## **Alternative(s) to the Recommendation**

1. That Council to provide direction.

## **Conclusions**

This report presents to Council the findings and conclusions of the Library Square Parking Study. The Parking Study provides short-term, medium-term and long-term recommendations to address the future parking demand and traffic management strategies.

The following key recommendations are provided:

- It is recommended the Town to consider Option 1B by entering into a shared parking agreement with either the United Church or Trinity Church, or both, as short-term parking strategy;
- As part of the traffic management strategies, the Parking Study recommends to signalize the intersection of Yonge Street and Church Street and install 'All-way Stop' control at the intersection of Victoria Street and Church Street; and,
- The Parking Study provided a list of mitigation strategies to reduce the impact for all road users (including pedestrians) as a result of construction.

In addition, a staff working group has been created to discuss, manage and communicate parking related matters during construction of the Library Square development. The working group will provide updates to Council during the various stages of construction.

## **Attachments**

Attachment 1:	List of Background Studies
Attachment 2:	Detailed Parking Survey and Analysis Results
Attachment 3:	Parking Study Short, Medium and Long Term Options
Attachment 4:	Benefits and Drawbacks for the Proposed Traffic Control Amendment

## **Previous Reports**

Staff Report No. PDS19-018, dated March 21, 2019; and,



Staff Report No. PDS19-063, dated July 16, 2019

## **Pre-submission Review**

Agenda Management Team review on September 3, 2020

## **Approvals**

**Approved by David Waters, Director, Planning and Development Services**

**Approved by Doug Nadorozny, Chief Administrative Officer**