

City of Belleville

Report No: DCC-TC-2025-06

Meeting Date: October 23, 2025



To: Transportation Committee
Department: Corporate Services
Staff Contact: Katy Macpherson, Deputy City Clerk

Subject: Comprehensive Parking Study- Follow up

Recommendation:

That the Transportation Committee receive Report DCC-TC- 2025-06 “Comprehensive Parking Study- Follow up” for information.

Strategic Plan Alignment:

Transportation and Mobility

Background:

At its meeting of September 25, 2025, the Transportation Committee heard a deputation from the Belleville Downtown BIA regarding the City’s Parking Study. The deputation requested that the City:

1. Introduce a 2-hour free parking window in downtown parking lots.
2. Continue offering free evening and weekend parking.
3. Avoid reinstalling traditional parking meters on Front Street.

Paradigm Transportation Solutions was asked to review the DBIA’s comments and provide a written response.

In addition, staff conducted a jurisdictional scan, focusing on on-street parking practices in comparable municipalities as well as research trends in Hotspot.

Financial/Analysis:

Consultant Response

Paradigm Transportation Solutions considered the three DBIA requests and provided the following analysis:

- **Two-Hour Free Parking in Lots:** While intended to encourage longer visits, this measure would reduce projected annual revenues by approximately \$165,318 compared to the Parking Study projections. Cornwall was cited by the DBIA, though its 2-hour free program ended in 2021 as a temporary COVID measure.
- **Free Evening and Weekend Parking:** The consultant noted that evening and weekend practices differ across municipalities. Making evening parking free could conflict with the recommended Overnight Permit Program, forecasted to generate \$30,800 annually, and would likely require additional enforcement.
- **Avoiding Traditional Parking Meters:** Reintroducing pay-and-display machines would have a capital cost of about \$240,000, but revenues could offset this within two years. Relying solely on app-based payments risks excluding some users and could increase non-compliance.

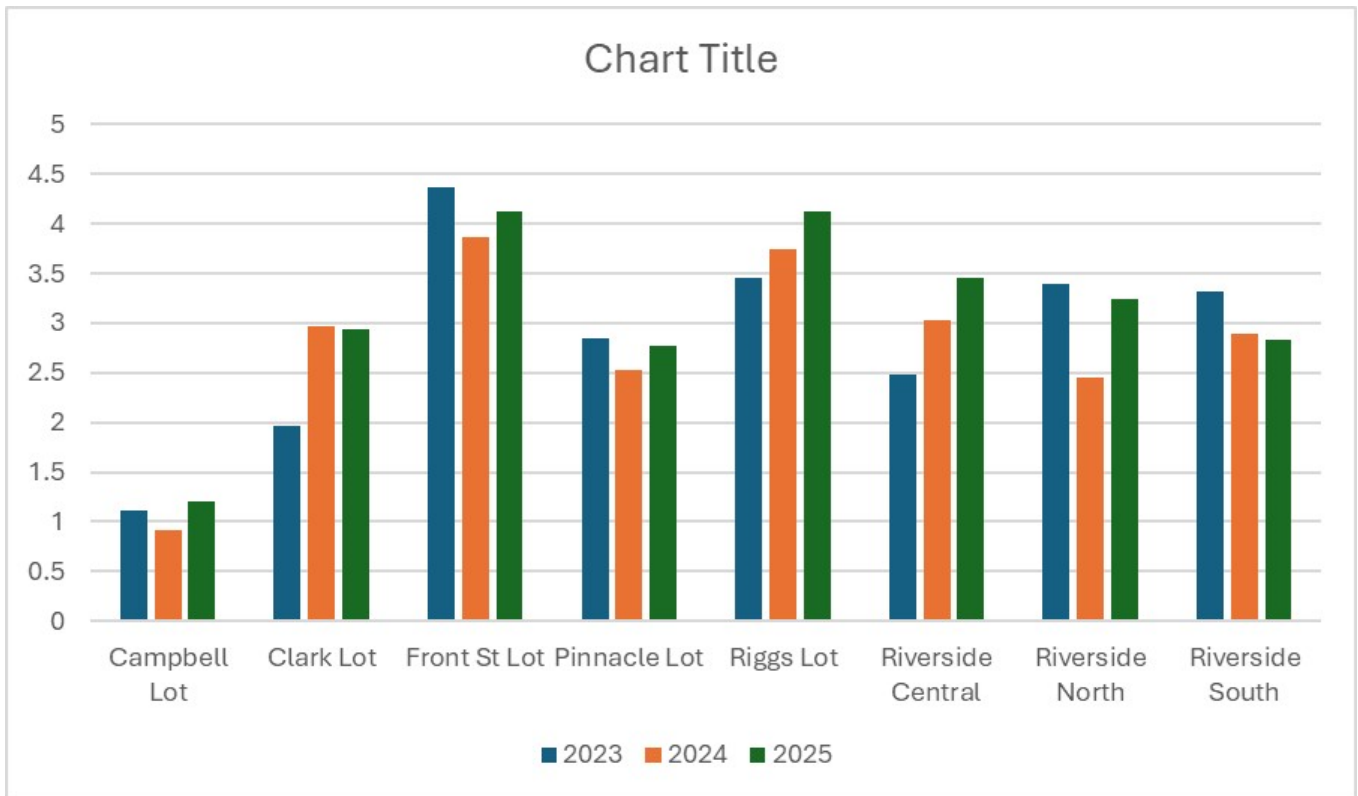
The Paradigm memo, which addresses the BIA recommendations in depth, is attached to this report.

Staff Review

The DBIA requested 2-hour free parking in lots and the consultant reviewed regional comparators. For additional information, Staff reviewed on-street parking approaches in other Ontario municipalities. The scan found that while some municipalities do provide 2 hours of free parking, this is not widespread. Of the 15 examples identified, 7 offered 2-hour free parking in the downtown core. Of those 7, 3 were in communities where parking is always free. This suggests that a 2-hour free option is not a dominant practice but is also not without precedent. Belleville would not be alone in exploring such a model and financial implications are provided in the Paradigm memo.

Municipality	\$ per hour	Free Mid- Day Parking Downtown	If yes, how long
Cornwall	\$1.80	yes	15 minutes
St. Catherine	\$2.00	yes	15 minutes
Welland	\$2.00	yes	2 Hours
Brockville	\$1.50	yes	2 Hours
Brighton	\$0.00	yes	2 Hours
Quinte West	\$0.00	yes	2 hours
Greater Napanee	\$0.00	yes	2 Hours
Kingston	\$2.50	no	
Port Hope	\$1.00	no	
Cobourg	\$2.25	no	
Bowmanville	\$1.00	no	
Oshawa	\$1.25	no	
Whitby	\$1.65	no	
Gananoque	\$1.50	no	
Picton	\$1.50	no	

Staff also looked at trends for parking session amongst lots within the designated BIA area in 2023, 2024, and 2025. Trends showed that most parking sessions extended beyond 2 hours, the trends are visualized in the chart below.



It is of note that the Campbell Lot has a 2 hour maximum, and the BUC Lot and the Victoria Lot have been excluded as there is no hourly parking available in those, it is monthly permit parking only.

The DBIA deputation did not identify concerns with the Phase One recommendations of the Parking Study, which include:

- Increasing set fine rates for parking infractions.
- Increasing monthly permit fees (from \$65 to \$75).
- Raising the hourly parking rate (from \$1.00 to \$1.50).
- Adding a daytime enforcement officer shift.
- Restriping lots to add accessible spaces.
- Phased release of additional monthly permits.
- Implementation of an overnight parking permit program.
- Updating signage and the City website.

The City could continue with Phase One implementation of the parking study and consider the DBIA's recommendations as part of the 2026 review and prior to implementing Phase Two or Phase Three.

Conclusion:

As a guiding document, the Parking Study outlines principles, best practices, and recommendations.

Council may choose to implement only the recommendations that best support the City's objectives.

Proceeding with Phase One implementation of the Parking Study, with the DBIA's recommendations to be revisited during the 2026 review before advancing to Phase Two or Three is a viable option.

Attachments:

[\(230694\) Belleville Parking Study -Summary of Transportation Committee Meeting - Sept 25-2025](#)

Reviewed by:

Katy Macpherson, Deputy City Clerk

Status:

Approved - 20 Oct 2025

2025-10-03
Project: (230694)

Katy Macpherson, Dipl.M.A
Deputy City Clerk
City of Belleville
169 Front Street
Belleville ON K8N 2Y8

Dear Ms Macpherson:

**RE: (230694) BELLEVILLE PARKING STUDY
TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MEETING – SEPTEMBER 25, 2025**

At the Council meeting on September 8, 2025 City Council tabled the draft parking study report and directed staff to bring this item back to the Transportation Committee on September 25, 2025 where members of the BDIA would be invited to bring a delegation to the Committee to express their concerns with the study recommendations.

The following provides a brief summary of the key issues raised by the BDIA and Committee members and provides some summary comments related to the points raised during the meeting.

Summary of BDIA Deputation

The Downtown Belleville BIA representatives provided a presentation to the Transportation Committee members which outlined three key recommendations for consideration, with the stated goal of making downtown inviting and convenient, in order to strengthen small businesses. The key recommendations include:

1. Introduce 2-Hour Free Parking window downtown.
2. Continue to offer Free Evening and Weekend parking.
3. Avoid Reinstalling Traditional Parking Meters on Front Street.

Item 1. Introduce 2-Hour Free Parking Window Downtown

The BDIA acknowledged the recommendation to increase the hourly rate for downtown parking from \$1.00 to \$1.50, but wanted this change paired with the implementation of a 2-hour free parking period in all downtown surface lots. When asked, they confirmed that this recommendation was only directed to the surface parking lots and not to on street parking.

They felt that this change would encourage more people to visit downtown and stay longer. They noted that the current average length of stay (noted in our report) was under 1 hour and they felt that this was influenced by the 1 hour Front Street parking limit. They also noted that the City of Cornwall implemented 2 hour free parking in 2020 and downtown businesses reported that the 2 hour free parking increased customer traffic and sales.

Comments on Item 1:

As part of the Parking Study increasing the hourly rate to \$1.50 per hour for all lots and on street paid parking was recommended as part of the Phase 1 recommendations.

A one hour free parking limit for downtown surface lots was recommended to be implemented in Phase 2, in conjunction with the implementation of paid parking on Front Street (and the installation of new pay and display machines). This recommendation was intended to soften the impact of implementing the paid parking on Front Street, in part in response to concerns noted by the BDIA. It was also in alignment with the strategy to encourage more use of the surface lots for longer parking durations.

In the parking study report the recommended increase to \$1.50 per hour was estimated to generate approximately \$82,300 in annual revenue and would increase the total annual revenue from hourly parking in lots to \$291,018. Implementing the 2 hour free parking in downtown lots is estimated to reduce total annual revenues for hourly parking in lots to approximately \$125,700 – representing \$83,018 in lost revenue compared to today, and \$165,318 in lost revenue compared to the projections prepared as part of the parking study.

Based on parking data collected as part of the study we estimated the number of hourly parkers in surface lots for a typical weekday (paid) and typical Saturday (free). On a typical weekday 713 vehicles were estimated to be hourly parkers (after those with weekday permits were excluded). The average length of stay for the hourly parkers was 1.2 hours. On a typical Saturday approximately 433 total vehicles used the surface lots when all parking is free. The average length of stay was 1.7 hours.

Based on the data collected, the free parking on weekends appears to generate a longer length of stay for those who park. There is not sufficient data to determine if the free parking on Saturdays increases visitation. The total demand is lower on weekends, but some of the establishments that generate weekday demand are also not open on weekends.

Based on the public survey results approximately 27% of respondents who visited downtown came for shopping or dining, 24% were obtaining a service (bank, government, library, etc),

7% were attending an event, 14% either work or live downtown, 2% came to just walk along the river, and 27% came for multiple purposes.

The City of Cornwall was cited as example, however the City ended their 2 hour free parking program in October of 2021, citing it as a temporary measure put in place during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Item 2. Continue to offer free Evening and Weekend Parking

The BDIA presentation noted that free parking on evenings and weekends is a standard practice in many municipalities and is linked to supporting downtown restaurants and events, tourism and visitor visits during off peak hours.

Assessment of Item 2:

Our report recommendations did not suggest any change to the current free parking offered on weekends in the City.

The City currently does not charge for parking after 5:00 pm on weekdays, but a strict reading of the parking by-law actually prohibits parking in lots after 5:00pm, except for those lots with designated overnight parking (Riggs and Riverside Lots) which is permitted between 6:00 pm and 8:00 am.

As part of the Parking report two recommendations were presented related to evening parking.

1. The report recommended the expansion of the Overnight Permit Parking program and identified the potential to offer up to 180 overnight parking permits for various downtown lots, with an initial release of 90 overnight permits during the first phase of implementation. This was identified as an item to be implemented in Phase 1 and was estimated to generate up to \$30,800 in new permit revenue.

Controlling the use of overnight parking permits is important to ensure that maintenance of the parking lots (to allow for snow clearing) is not impeded by randomly parked vehicles which can reduce efficiency, reduce the quality of service and increase costs.

The Overnight Permit Parking program was recommended, in part, in response to requests from the BDIA during our initial consultations on the project in order to support downtown residents with no parking and to support building owners wishing to convert upper floor units to Short Term Rental Accommodation.

A decision to approve free evening parking in municipal lots in a formal manner could conflict with this recommendation and likely result in the associated revenue loss unless there were strict time limits put in place for the free evening parking (for example - between 5 pm and 11 pm). This would allow the city to continue to restrict overnight parking, except for overnight permits which could be managed and controlled more

effectively. Additional enforcement costs could be required to monitor and enforce the new free evening parking time limits, as the primary downtown enforcement staff end their shift at 5:00 pm.

2. The parking report also recommended implementing a flat rate for weekday evening parking in downtown lots, with a rate of \$3.00 for the period between 6 pm and 8 am. This measure was recommended for consideration in Phase 3 of the implementation program and was tied to the implementation of a new parking management system recommended to control access to the downtown lots. Without the parking management system, the cost to enforce the flat rate parking would be higher than the potential revenues and therefore makes no economic sense. Potential revenues associated with the flat rate evening parking program were up to \$81,300 annually.

This measure was put in place to address the issue of users who wanted an easy way to park after 5 pm (without the risk that their vehicles could be ticketed or towed) but did not necessarily need overnight parking.

A number of comparisons with other municipalities that offer free two hour and free evening parking were made by the BDIA as part of their presentation. A brief overview of some of these municipalities, and others, is provided below.

As part of our review we noted that the **City of Kingston** charges a flat rate for evening parking in some of their downtown lots after 5:00 pm. They also charge for parking on Saturdays and Sundays in various lots in the downtown. The BDIA presentation also referenced Kingston as a regional comparison.

Cobourg provides 2 hours of free parking in many of their downtown lots, except for lots around the waterfront area, which charge \$5.00 per hour. In the downtown lots, those wishing to park beyond the 2 hour free period must purchase a daily parking permit at a cost of \$10.00.

St. Thomas was noted as an example of similar sized city that provides 2 hours of free parking in downtown lots, which is accurate. In St. Thomas, users wishing to park longer than the 2 hours must purchase a daily parking permit through their online parking app, at a cost of \$4.00 for the daytime period (8 am to 12 noon) and for the evening period (12 noon to 8 am). Parking charges are in place 7 days per week, including weekends and holidays.

Port Hope has one lot in the downtown and two in the waterfront area that charge for hourly parking, up to a maximum of 4 hours. There is also free parking in other downtown area lots for those wishing to park longer than 4 hours.

Brockville offers paid parking in municipal lots in the downtown with parking charged Monday to Friday between 9:30 and 6:00 pm, at the rate of \$1.50 per hour. Some of the lots are designated permit parking only and some have various time limits restricting the length of stay. The BIA offers 2 hour complimentary parking on designated streets in the downtown, which is funded through a parking levy paid by member businesses. The levy collects approximately \$52,000 per year, and according to the City it has not been reviewed in years and may not be

sufficient to cover the cost of the lost revenue. The remaining on street metered parking is charged at \$1.00 per hour and paid parking is in force, Monday to Friday between 9:00 am and 5:00 pm.

The **Town of Tillsonburg** provides free parking in their downtown for on street and surface parking lots with 2 hour time limits for on street spaces to control the length of stay. There is an annual parking levy applied to all Residential, Multi-Residential and Commercial properties in the town as part of their property taxes to recover the costs of the free parking program, which is used to support the annual costs for maintenance and enforcement of the parking by-law. The tax levy generates approximately \$147,000 in annual revenue (based on the 2023 tax year).

Item 3. Avoid Reinstalling Traditional Parking Meters of Front Street

The BDIA presentation noted that the old style parking meters on Front Street were removed during the Build Belleville Project and reinstalling them to allow for introduction of paid parking would be counter-productive and result in a negative impact on the streetscape and visitor experience. They note that modern alternatives, like HotSpot are already in use in Belleville and should be the primary method of payment if paid parking on Front Street is to be reinstated.

Assessment of Item 3:

The Parking Study noted that reinstalling parking meters on Front Street would cost an estimated \$240,000 assuming installation of approximately 14 pay and display machines to cover all of the on street parking spaces. The final cost of the new meters will depend on the type of product purchased, the features and payment options included, and the need for providing electrical power to the machines versus solar powered machines. A budget of just over \$17,000 per machine was used for the purpose of the cost estimate, however it is noted that Clarington recently purchased 30 pay and display machines to replace traditional coin meters in Bowmanville at an estimated cost of \$5,000 per machine.

The revenue forecasts for this scenario, assuming the City also implements the recommended increase to a 2 hour maximum limit on Front Street – which was requested by the BDIA as part of our consultations during the project – was estimated to generate approximately \$166,000 in new annual revenue. The cost of the pay and display machines could be recovered within a 2 year period.

With a distance of 900 m for the portion of Front Street where meters would be installed, and assuming 7 meters are installed on each side of Front Street, there would be an average distance of about 130 m between meters, although the actual spacing may vary based on the location of the various parking bays. With thoughtful placement of the machines adjacent to other street furniture and hardware the visual impact of the machines would be minimal. Most municipalities that charge for on-street parking use some form of on-street pay and display machines.

Attempting to force users to only use HotSpot to pay for on-street parking is not recommended from a user convenience perspective. While HotSpot offers a very convenient alternative method of payment for some users, in 2023 use of HotSpot to pay for on street parking only represented approximately 3% of total on street parking revenues. While this is expected to increase as comfort with the new technology increases and users get used to using online digital payment systems, it is unlikely that 100% adoption rates would be achieved in the next few years.

There is also an increased risk associated with forcing users to use an online payment method as the only way to pay for parking on Front Street:

- Some users do not want to pay the convenience fee or annual membership to use the HotSpot App
- Some users do not use cell phones, or may not use Wi-Fi / data enabled devices to allow for online payment transactions to be processed – these residents would effectively be excluded from using the downtown on street parking
- Some users are unfamiliar with new technology and hesitant to change – in Cornwall they converted their on street meters to pay-by-plate technology and faced significant issues and backlash from users experiencing difficulty adopting to the new technology. Even though they also have an online payment service as an alternative payment method, they recently converted their machines back to pay and display to improve the customer experience.
- This would introduce different payment methods for different streets in the downtown, increasing the potential for user confusion about the rules.
- With no option for other forms of payment (i.e. cash or credit/debit card) some users will avoid paying and payment avoidance could be expected to increase. In response, increased enforcement may be required to allow for more frequent monitoring of payment compliance at additional operational cost.
- Users who receive a ticket for non-payment will be especially frustrated if they have no other option to pay for their parking - which is likely to have a larger impact on the user experience than seeing a few pay and display machines.

Summary

In summary, our assessment of the three requests presented by the BDIA found that:

- Implementing the 2 hour free parking in downtown lots would represent \$165,318 in annual lost revenue compared to the projections prepared as part of the parking study.
- Adopting a policy of free evening parking could undermine the ability to implement the overnight parking permit program, which was estimated to generate revenues of \$30,800 in Phase 1 of the implementation program. Additional enforcement costs for

evening enforcement may be required if the overnight permit parking program is retained.

- The introduction of a flat rate evening parking rate for surface lots was recommended for consideration **only** if the City implements a parking management system for the downtown lots. Estimated annual revenues of \$81,300 were forecast for this program, which were recommended for consideration in Phase 3 of the implementation program (2028+).
- Eliminating the need for new pay and display machines on Front Street would generate capital cost savings of approximately \$240,000 (although new revenues would cover this expense within 2 years). Relying solely on online payment for this on street parking is likely to increase payment avoidance, require increased enforcement costs, and has the potential to exclude a number of users from being able to use the on street spaces on Front Street and could result in significant impacts to the user experience.

Yours very truly,

PARADIGM TRANSPORTATION SOLUTIONS LIMITED



Kevin Jones
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Public Sector Practice Lead