

# Staff Report



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| To           | Committee of the Whole                               |
| Service Area | Infrastructure, Development and Environment          |
| Date         | Tuesday, February 3, 2026                            |
| Subject      | <b>City-Wide Parking Strategy Terms of Reference</b> |

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## Recommendation

1. That the scope of work of City-Wide Parking Strategy Terms of Reference, included in the Infrastructure, Development and Environment Report 2026-03, dated February 3, 2026, be approved.
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## Executive Summary

### Purpose of Report

Staff will be issuing a Request for Proposals to carry out a City-Wide Parking Strategy (CWPS) for Guelph in Q2 2026. Throughout 2025, staff conducted background research and consulted with other Canadian municipalities to draft a Terms of Reference for the assignment. In October 2025, staff engaged with members of Council to gather feedback on the parking-related topics covered by the draft scope of work. This report summarizes the scope of work proposed for the CWPS and captures the feedback received during the Council engagement sessions.

### Key Findings

This will be the first comprehensive city-wide review and analysis of on-street and off-street parking of its kind for Guelph. The CWPS will deliver recommendations to Council and staff on future work, including: updates to regulations, bylaws, policies, and identifying where further studies may be necessary. The CWPS will also recommend a financial model that incorporates downtown parking operations with the recommended management and enforcement of on-street and off-street parking city-wide.

The scope of work has been crafted to address the management of supply and demand for on-street residential parking, reflect recent changes to Planning regulations in Ontario and their impact on parking, and recommend sustainable financial and operational models. The feedback received from members of Council helped confirm and refine the proposed scope of work. The recommended topics to address in the scope of the strategy include the following:

- Opportunities for modernizing parking approaches
- Permissive winter parking and partnerships for temporary off-street parking uses

- Assess a city-wide residential permit program with considerations for context-sensitive implementation, visitor passes, equity-based pricing, and reinvestment of revenues into local improvements
- Impacts on downtown parking demand due to provincial legislative changes (i.e., Bill 185)
- Exploration of paid on-street parking to manage demand Downtown
- Integration of equity and accessibility needs
- Consideration of parking challenges resulting from new developments and from accessory dwelling units (ADUs)
- Opportunities for new technology and innovation
- Consideration of the relationship between parking availability and use of other modes of transportation, particularly as it may support transit ridership
- Assessing short-term parking needs and improving curbside management tools as appropriate strategies in high-demand areas

The following items are out of scope for this study:

- Review of the Zoning Bylaw, including parking standards, minimum parking requirements or driveway widths: this study defers to the Zoning Bylaw and its update which is currently under appeal at the Ontario Land Tribunal
- Review of fire routes and accessible parking requirements: these are covered by other regulations
- Review of private off-street parking and enforcement
- Review of the Administrative Penalty System (APS)
- Approving new or revised bylaws related to on-street parking of trailers, RVs and heavy trucks: this study will propose changes to bylaws where recommended, but the approval of the revised bylaw(s) will come forward as separate Council decisions in future

## **Strategic Plan Alignment**

The CWPS supports the City Building objective to make it easier to get around by implementing the Transportation Master Plan (TMP). The CWPS also reviews the impacts of the recent provincial legislative change, Bill 185, which removed minimum vehicle parking requirements for any development within the boundaries of downtown, and provides strategies ensuring the parking system is sustainable and ready to support the TMP goals.

Future Guelph Theme

City Building

Future Guelph Objectives

City Building: Make it easier to get around

## **Financial Implications**

There are no direct financial impacts associated with the approval of this staff report. Capital investments related to the CWPS initiative have already been incorporated into the approved 2024 budget. The study outlined in this report will be undertaken with the support of an external consulting firm. This report presents the summary of the final draft Terms of Reference for the CWPS initiative, which can be achieved within the existing budget allocation. Should Council choose to expand the scope of work by adding additional tasks, this may result in increased consulting costs depending on the nature and complexity of the proposed additions.

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## Report

The CWPS is intended to provide a holistic long-term parking strategy for all areas in the city. This work also includes a review and update to the components of the Downtown Parking Master Plan (DPMP) that are no longer valid due to the legislative changes introduced with Bill 185. The City-Wide Parking Strategy will provide an integrated, equitable, and financially sustainable approach to parking management

### Alignment with Housing Initiatives

The CWPS is a recommended action in the 2022 Transportation Master Plan to accommodate growth and manage an efficient and sustainable transportation system to 2051. The study will ensure alignment with City's housing initiatives such as the Housing Affordability Strategy (HAS). As various local and provincial housing policies have indirect influences on the demand for on-street parking, the CWPS will ensure that the parking system can sustainably support ongoing growth and Transit requirements.

### Alignment with Other City Policies and Strategies

The Official Plan parking policies direct the City to ensure adequate parking supply, primarily through policies that govern off-street parking requirements, including zoning bylaws. The CWPS will have consideration for the Official Plan policies, and for effects of the zoning bylaw and land uses on on-street parking demand when preparing recommendations.

The 2022 Transportation Master Plan (TMP) specifically recommends an update to the Downtown Parking Master Plan, as well as reviewing parking policies and operations to ensure alignment with mode share and emissions targets and considering EV charging needs.

The CWPS scope of work supports the City's Race to Zero by exploring opportunities to support more uptake of electric vehicles through enhancing our public EV charging network, and by ensuring our parking ecosystem complements our mode share targets and efforts to encourage sustainable transportation.

The CWPS will also have regard for the new Complete Street Design Guidelines where other priority networks are identified – such as transit or cycling – to ensure a balanced use of public space for meeting the mobility needs of the community.

Accessibility policies will be upheld and efforts made to ensure any changes to how the community parks personal vehicles is compliant and consistent with the AODA and Facility Accessibility Design Manual.

### What We Heard

Staff conducted five virtual drop-in sessions of up to four members of Council at a time in October 2025. Council members also had the opportunity to provide their feedback through an online survey. In total, six Council members attended the virtual drop-in sessions and staff received one response through the online survey.

During these sessions, staff shared the summary of the draft CWPS terms of reference scope of work and invited input from members of Council on:

- Gaps or omissions in the CWPS draft scope of work;

- Any topics or tasks that members of Council wish to keep entirely out of the scope of the strategy;
- Key outcomes members of Council want to achieve through the CWPS;
- General input regarding parking challenges and opportunities in Wards; and
- Identification of specific streets, neighbourhoods, or user groups that members of Council feel require special considerations.

Key insights from the Council's feedback are summarized below:

#### Residential Parking

- Interest in evaluating a city-wide permit system with potential for zone-based or ward-based customization.
- Exploration of parking revenue reinvestment programs where parking revenue surplus is reinvested in community infrastructure, beautification projects and public realm improvements.
- Input highlighted interest in visitor pass systems for high-demand areas, as well as equity-based pricing structures for low-income residents.
- Suggestions to explore solutions for permit holders who experience difficulty finding available spaces on streets with high levels of on-street parking utilization.
- Suggestions to explore permissive boulevard parking in areas with narrow lots or townhouses.
- Recognition that older neighbourhoods lack boulevard space and require tailored solutions.

#### Downtown Parking

- Options for managing high demand from residents, employees, and visitors, that creates competition for limited on-street spaces, including on nearby residential streets.
- Re-evaluation of paid on-street parking models to manage demand and incentivize turnover.
- Concerns about parking supply and availability for densification due to the removal of parking minimums for new developments in the downtown as a result of the provincial Bill 185.

#### Winter Parking Strategy

- Support for review and recommendations related to updating the winter parking approach and related communication strategies for plow notices.
- Suggestions received to explore partnerships with schools or other institutions to make local off-street parking lots available during snow events.
- Concerns about snow storage and emergency access on narrow streets with parked cars.

#### Parking in New Developments and Additional Dwelling Units (ADUs)

- Managing overflow of on-street parking in new developments that require less parking spaces.
- Acknowledging that ADUs and multi-unit dwellings increase demand without corresponding parking supply.
- Interest in exploring a registry system to track on-street parking availability and inform residents.

## Equity and Accessibility Considerations

- Need for accessible on-street parking near infill developments and older homes without driveways.
- Requests for engagement with equity-deserving groups, accessibility groups, and neighbourhood associations.
- Suggestions for non-profit pricing models, including incentivizing parking for volunteers working in areas with limited on-street parking availability.
- Recognition that complaint-based enforcement practices may disproportionately affect renters and low-income residents.
- Emphasis on inclusive outreach and tailored consultation approaches.

## Technology and Innovation

- Interest in using license plate recognition (LPR) for enforcement and data collection.
- Suggestions to integrate mobile payment systems and streamline permit applications.
- Exploring innovative sharing economy solutions such as e.g., Rover, Parking Panda to alleviate demand.
- Desire for use of consistent technology across the city (e.g., a consistent parking app for all paid parking).

## Transit Integration

- Suggestions to coordinate parking strategy with transit planning and service expansion in recognition of the role of improved transit in reducing parking demand.
- Emphasis on demand management principles to guide policy decisions.

## Visitor, Delivery, Drop-off Parking

- Support for consideration of delivery and drop-off needs related to downtown and school drop-off zones.
- Interest in visitor pass systems and flexible short-term parking options.

## EV Charging Infrastructure

- Mixed feedback on EV parking; limited public concern but growing interest.
- Suggestions to scope to public on-street EV parking to residents without access to a driveway.

## Parking Enforcement

- Suggestions for improved enforcement of parking infractions near schools, sightlines, and fire hydrants.
- Interest in easier reporting tools (e.g., text-based systems or interactive maps).
- Suggestions to ensure enforcement is equitable and consistent across neighbourhoods.

## **Scope of Work for the CWPS**

This study will include standard tasks related to data collection and analysis, community engagement, research, best practice review, and will provide recommended policies, regulatory amendments and an implementation plan.

This project also includes the preparation of a financial model that integrates downtown parking economics with the recommended scenario for city-wide on-street and off-street parking management. The full Terms of Reference is not shared in this public document in accordance with the requirements of the City's Purchasing Bylaw.

The proposed topics to be addressed within the scope of work were determined from staff's professional expertise, engagement with other municipalities, and research of best practices. The topics also reflect the feedback received from members of Council that is summarized above. Following the consultations with members of Council, the recommended topics for the scope of work to be included in the Terms of References as part of the Request for Proposals includes:

- Residential parking management to reflect recent housing policies
- Downtown parking revisions to align with Bill 185 and other significant changes to the funding model assumptions
- Winter parking regulations, and any other relevant traffic bylaw updates recommended through the study
- Equity and accessibility considerations
- Technology and innovation in on-street parking supply and demand
- Transit integration
- Visitor, delivery, and drop-off parking
- EV charging infrastructure
- Parking enforcement

Based on the above, the CWPS will deliver recommendations to Council and staff on future work, including: updates to regulations, bylaws, policies, and identifying where further studies may be necessary. The CWPS will also recommend a financial model that incorporates downtown parking operations with the recommended management and enforcement of on-street and off-street parking city-wide.

Due to the comprehensive nature of this study, it is important to clarify what is *not* in scope. The following list of items will not be reviewed as part of the CWPS:

- Review of the Zoning Bylaw, including parking standards, minimum parking requirements or driveway widths: this study defers to the Zoning Bylaw and its update which is currently under appeal at the Ontario Land Tribunal
- Review of fire routes and accessible parking requirements: these are covered by other regulations
- Review of private off-street parking and enforcement
- Review of the Administrative Penalty System (APS)
- Approving new or revised bylaws related to on-street parking of trailers, RVs and heavy trucks: this study will propose changes to bylaws where recommended, but the approval of the revised bylaw(s) will come forward as separate Council decisions in future.

## **Financial Implications**

There are no direct financial impacts associated with the approval of this staff report. Capital investments related to the CWPS initiative have already been incorporated into the approved 2024 budget. The study outlined in this report will be undertaken with the support of an external consulting firm. Should Council choose to expand the scope of work by adding additional tasks, this may result in

increased consulting costs depending on the nature and complexity of the proposed additions.

## **Consultations and Engagement**

As noted above, staff held a series of drop-in sessions for up to four members of Council at a time to learn about the proposed scope of work for the CWPS and discuss their feedback. A survey link was also shared with all members of Council with the same discussion questions from the drop-in sessions for their feedback. A "Miro Board" interactive document to capture other thoughts and feedback related to specific locations on a map of the City of Guelph.

## **Attachments**

Attachment-1 Staff Presentation

## **Departmental Approval**

Jennifer Juste, Manager, Transportation Planning

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Krista Walkey, General Manager, Planning and Building Services

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