

## **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (WORKING SESSION) – MAY 27, 2003**

### **PARKING POLICY REVIEW**

#### **Recommendation**

The Commissioner of Engineering and Public Works, in consultation with the Director of Legal Services, the Commissioner of Community Services and the Senior Manager, By Law Enforcement, recommends:

1. That a pilot project for parking at selected community centres be approved with the use of “pay and display” meters be considered should there continue to be sufficient demand;
2. That Council formally request that the York Region District School Board and the York Catholic District School Board consider allowing limited overnight parking at schools for Vaughan residents;
3. That the overnight visitor on-street parking permit pilot project initiated last year by the By-Law Enforcement Department be maintained in its current form;
4. That the designation of laneways not be changed, and that builders include a warning clause informing residents they are not allowed to park in laneways or in front of garages abutting laneways;
5. That Council provide direction regarding the three hour on-street parking limit; and
6. That Council provide direction on overnight on-street parking.

#### **Purpose**

To report on the feasibility of off-street parking for residents, and to review Consolidated Parking By-Law 1-96 in response to requests for overnight on-street permit parking and parking in laneways.

#### **Background - Analysis and Options**

This report is in response to several recent directives from Council regarding the parking of motor vehicles in the City of Vaughan. The directives are as follows:

*July 10, 2000: “That staff investigate alternate off-street parking locations including school sites and community centres, and that a report on this matter be brought back to a future Committee of the Whole (Working Session).”*

*January 28, 2002: That the matter of overnight visitor street parking permits be deferred for a full review of the by-law regulating the parking of motor vehicles in the City of Vaughan.*

*February 25, 2002: That the matter of parking in laneways be referred to the review of the by-law regulating the parking of motor vehicles in the City of Vaughan.*

Consolidated Parking By-Law 1-96, and its subsequent amendments, governs all aspects of parking in the City of Vaughan. The by-law includes regulations for where parking or stopping is prohibited, regulations for where parking signs are and are not required, regulations for disabled person parking, and regulations for obtaining on-street parking permits (for 3 streets only).

The Council directives are in response to requests from the public to allow temporary on-street overnight parking. Some residents claim they occasionally need to park overnight on City streets to accommodate visitors or when their own driveway is unavailable. Under the current by-law

they can be ticketed for doing so. By-Law 1-96 currently allows on-street parking for a maximum of three hours, and no overnight parking on most streets between the hours of 2:00 am and 6:00 am.

#### Parking Policies in Other Municipalities

The following table shows relevant parking policies in the Town of Markham, Town of Richmond Hill and City of Brampton.

	<u>Markham</u>	<u>Richmond Hill</u>	<u>Brampton</u>
<u>Parking at Schools and Community Centres</u>	Not allowed	Not allowed	Allowed under certain circumstances
<u>Overnight On-Street Parking Permits</u>	Specific streets only	Do not have	Allowed under certain circumstances
<u>Parking in Laneways</u>	Not allowed	Not allowed – designated as Fire Routes	Not allowed
<u>On-Street Parking Limits</u>	No three hour limit, overnight parking not allowed	Three hours (not enforced 7:00 pm to midnight), overnight parking not allowed	Three hour limit, overnight parking not allowed

#### Parking at Schools and Community Centres

Some City of Vaughan residents may benefit from being allowed to temporarily park overnight at institutional uses such as schools and community centres. However, these uses would have to be within a short walking distance of their home or most residents will take their chances on being ticketed for parking on-street.

Staff contacted the York Region District School Board and the York Catholic District School Board about the possibility of allowing overnight parking for residents on school sites. Both school boards allow certain approved vehicles, mainly school buses, to park overnight and on weekends. However, they do not allow overnight parking for the general public at their schools for liability, vandalism and snow clearing reasons. Both school boards indicated they would be unwilling to change their current policies.

The Buildings and Facilities Department has looked into the possibility of allowing overnight parking at community centres for the general public. Currently overnight parking is allowed for groups involved in events such as minor hockey tournaments as long as they have registered in advance of the event. Parking is not permitted for school buses and commercial vehicles larger than pick-up trucks.

Staff are reviewing a pilot project for use of community centres for overnight parking for the public provided that the number of vehicles in each community centre lot is kept low. Too many vehicles could lead to problems with vandalism and snow clearing, and be costly in terms of staff resources. The practice of not permitting parking for school buses and commercial vehicles larger than pick-up trucks should be continued.

It is suggested that “pay and display” parking meters be installed at some selected community centre. The City has been approached by a private company about the possibility of using these meters in various locations. The company would supply the meters and enter into a revenue sharing agreement and the City would provide the concrete pad, hydro hook-up for the meters, and associated signage advising the public they have to pay to park overnight. There is potential for revenue from this option.

It should be noted that there are more schools in the City than community centres, and they are located within walking distance of most residents. Being able to park overnight at schools would be of great benefit in lessening overnight parking demand. Accordingly, it is also recommended that Council formally request that the York Region District School Board and the York Catholic District School Board consider allowing limited overnight parking at schools for Vaughan residents.

### Overnight On-Street Parking

Currently parking permits can be issued for Bruce Street, Helen Street and Wallace Street, where no off-street parking is available, as per Schedule “A” Part 4 of Consolidated Parking By-Law 1-96. Overnight parking is currently permitted on Wallace Street as per Schedule “A” Part 8 of the by-law.

At its meeting of January 8, 2002, Council directed that the matter of overnight visitor street parking permits be reviewed. An extensive review of a possible City-wide permit parking program was last conducted in 1995. At that time staff recommended the City not expand its on-street permit parking program for the following reasons:

- It encourages on-street parking, even when parking is available off-street.
- On-street parking can impede emergency vehicle access and access to fire hydrants if vehicles are parked on both sides of the street.
- On-street parking can hamper street maintenance, particularly snow clearing and street sweeping, leading to increased costs.
- There is not enough street frontage to give everyone a permit. A priority system would have to be created and monitored.
- It would be difficult to prevent residents from parking in front of other homes, particularly if they could not park in front of their own homes due to the presence of fire hydrants or other appurtenances. This could lead to disputes between residents.
- If parking is allowed on one street it would be difficult to not allow parking on adjacent streets. On-street parking would have to be allowed on an area-wide basis.

Staff also previously recommended that should the possibility of on-street parking be considered, it be through a survey of the residents, with the majority of residents on a subject street being in support.

In January 2002 the Department of Legal Services recommended that By-Law 1-96 be amended to provide for the issuance of overnight visitor on-street parking permits on a limited basis in response to public demand. The pilot project allows each household to obtain a maximum of three such permits per month. It is up to residents to contact the By-Law Enforcement office during business hours and obtain the permit. The cost is \$15 per night. Records are kept by By-Law Enforcement staff to track the number of permits issued. Residents are asked to provide an emergency contact number in the event snow removal operations require that the vehicle be moved.

The overnight visitor on-street parking permit pilot project has been working well so far. By-Law Enforcement staff have been receiving a small number of requests each month, and have been able to keep records of the permits issued. Those residents contacting the City to inquire about

parking on the street have been told they can obtain a parking permit. Accordingly, it is recommended that this project be maintained in its current form.

A significant proportion of parking tickets are issued for parking between 2:00 am and 6:00 am both by practice and complaints driven enforcement. Revenue from these tickets in 2002 was \$540,000.00.

Should Council wish to pursue overnight on-street parking by permit, approximately 90% of this revenue would be lost.

While a fee would be charged for parking permits, no cost analysis has been done regarding administration of the permit system and signage.

No public consultation or ratepayer group consultation has been done. Notice of this item was sent to individuals who requested it.

### Parking in Laneways

All laneways in the City of Vaughan are posted as fire routes under Consolidated Parking By-Law 1-96. This is consistent with laneways in other municipalities. The fire route designation means that no vehicles can be parked on the road or within the right-of-way.

At its meeting of February 25, 2002, Council directed that the matter of parking in laneways be reviewed in response to a deputation from a resident requesting that she be allowed to park a vehicle on the apron between the travelled portion of a laneway and her garage door. However, the apron is partly on the right-of-way, and thus within the fire route.

Accordingly, it is recommended that no vehicles be allowed to park on any portion of a laneway, and that builders include a warning clause informing residents they are not allowed to park in laneways or in front of garages abutting laneways.

### On-Street Parking Limits - Three Hours

Consolidated Parking By-Law 1-96 allows on-street parking for a maximum of three hours, and no overnight parking on all except four streets between the hours of 2:00 am and 6:00 am. This restriction is typical of many suburban municipalities where off-street parking is provided for in most residential and commercial areas.

It has been suggested that a review be conducted as to whether the three hour on-street parking limit could be increased to four or more hours, or perhaps eliminated altogether. Adopting such a practice will have the following impacts:

- It would result in significantly decreased revenue from fewer parking tickets being issued.
- A longer on-street parking limit such as four hours, or no on-street parking limit, could lead to more on-street parking and its associated problems (i.e. emergency vehicle access, snow clearing and street sweeping, neighbourhood disputes, liability, etc.).
- It could lead to an increase in parking on residential streets for commercial purposes. For example, employees at businesses close to residential areas could park their vehicles on-street all day, simply by moving them at noon. Also, residents can park all day, by moving their cars at noon.

Currently parking is permitted for more than three hours only on Drumlin Circle as per Schedule "A" Part 7 of By-Law 1-96. Drumlin Circle is in an industrial area off of Steeles Avenue where many of the employees work in shifts, and cannot move their vehicles off-street until their break after regular working hours when other employees have left.

In light of the apparent demand for more on-street parking, in the newer developed areas (Block 17, Block 33E, Block 32W and WEA) the three hour on-street parking limit could be eliminated for certain streets. This would require an amendment to By-Law 1-96.

If this were to occur it is recommended that the limit be eliminated only between the hours of 6:00 pm and 2:00 am. This would result in the City allowing on-street parking between 6:00 pm and 2:00 am, when the overnight parking restriction takes effect. On-street parking between 6:00 am and 6:00 pm would still be subject to a three hour limit. Should the elimination of the three hour on-street parking limit between the hours of 6:00 pm and 2:00 am be pursued, it is further recommended that it be subject to a one year trial period to determine its impacts on snow clearing, street maintenance, neighbourhood disputes, revenue generation, etc.

Parking enforcement is a combination of complaint response and proactive enforcement. The three hour limit is complaint driven, as is boulevard parking. Overnight is proactive as is handicapped, Fire route and blocking the sidewalk.

Generally, the complaint volume for parking between 6:00 pm and 2:00 pm is low. The three hour limit complaint volume is high during the day. Elimination of the three hour limit between 6:00 pm and 2:00 am would result in decreased revenue of approximately \$20,000.00 per year.

Elimination of the three hour limit should not include streets designated as Snow Routes by the Public Works Department. A list of these streets will be brought forward to a future Committee of the Whole meeting for consideration. Snow Route signs would be posted on these streets, and they would be subject to a higher standard of snow clearing and removal.

Should elimination of the three hour on-street parking limit be pursued between the hours of 6:00 pm and 2:00 am through an amendment to By-Law 1-96, then the following issues will need to be considered:

1. The City would experience a loss in revenue from not being able to issue parking fines over this time period.
2. It may be necessary to allow longer parking only on one side of the street at a time if elimination of the three hour on-street parking limit leads to greater numbers of vehicles parked on the City's streets. Decisions would have to be made as to whether to allow the longer parking on one side of a street at all times, or to alternate sides of a street. These decisions would require considerable staff resources, as most streets would have to be evaluated individually.
3. The public would have to be notified of a by-law amendment. This would require the posting of a considerable number of parking signs, particularly if parking alternated from one side of the street to the other.
4. It is possible that some problems may be encountered with emergency vehicle access, snow clearing, street sweeping and garbage pick up, and that more neighbourhood disputes over parking will occur.

## **Conclusion**

It is recommended that a pilot project for "pay and display" machines at some community centres be approved and that the overnight visitor on-street parking permit pilot project be maintained in its current form. It is recommended that Council formally request that the school boards consider allowing limited overnight parking at schools for Vaughan residents. It is recommended that the designation of laneways as fire routes not be changed, and that builders include a warning clause informing residents they are not allowed to park in laneways or in front of garages abutting

laneways. Finally, it is recommended that Council provide direction regarding the three hour on-street parking limit, and on overnight on-street parking.

**Attachments**

N/A

**Report prepared by**

Philip Weber, Transportation Engineer, ext. 8264  
Tony Thompson, Senior Manager, By Law Enforcement, ext. 8735

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Robinson, P. Eng.  
Commissioner of Engineering and Public Works