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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Study Background and Objectives

The City of Hamilton City-wide Transportation Master Plan will provide inputs to the Growth Related Integrated Development Strategy (GRIDS) and make recommendations to Council on the adoption of a City-wide Transportation Policy that is cognisant of Vision 2020 and other City of Hamilton long-term planning objectives. The project has been divided into three distinct phases. The first phase consisted of the technical calibration of the existing transportation model to reflect current transportation conditions in Hamilton. The second phase, which is the object of this and other policy papers, will focus on the development of 23 policy papers in the following areas: Travel Demand, Urban Development, System Performance, Infrastructure Planning and Infrastructure Financing. Following the completion of the Policy Papers, the City will proceed to develop transportation scenarios (Phase 3 of the project) based upon the results of the policy work performed in Phase 2 and the land use scenarios developed through the broader GRIDS study and will test the efficiency and viability of these scenarios by integrating them into the calibrated model.

This paper explores directions for Parking policy in the City of Hamilton and provides direction on parking policies for the Transportation Master Plan. This includes policy options for changing the type and amount of parking, managing parking more efficiently, and reducing the need for additional parking by improving alternatives to automobile travel. The remainder of this section describes the relationship between parking and community needs in Hamilton. Section 2 reviews current parking policies. Section 3 identifies important key issues and emerging trends. Section 4 outlines policy options. Section 5 provides succinct policy recommendations, and Section 6 evaluates the policy recommendations.

1.2 The Need for Parking Policies

Policies that affect parking can have a dramatic impact on auto use, economic development and urban growth. These policies can also be important tools for managing automobile use and guiding urban development toward sustainable goals. Parking affects travel behaviour, economic activity, and land-use by making car use convenient. At the same time, the negative side effects of parking can include congestion, inefficient auto use, damage to residential and pedestrian areas, and economic stagnation. Parking policies should seek to maximize the benefits of parking and minimize the negative side effects, while ensuring the costs and benefits are distributed evenly.

1.3 City-wide Parking and Loading Study

As a separate exercise, the City is presently conducting a City-wide Parking and Loading Study in order to:

- develop parking and loading regulations and standards;
- define the municipal role in providing parking; and,
- assess the opportunities for providing strategically located parking facilities in Downtown Hamilton.

This policy paper complements that companion study by outlining the broader context for parking policies.
2. EXISTING PARKING POLICIES AND PRACTICES

Current parking policies and related practices address three general categories of parking: i) private off-street parking, ii) municipal off-street parking and iii) on-street parking.

2.1 Private Off-street Parking

Private off-street parking is associated with a business or residence and may not be available to the general public. Such parking includes private lots for office buildings and driveways for homes, as well as customer parking lots for businesses. Although the total number of parking spaces and their distribution throughout the city is not known at this time, the number of parking spaces required for new developments is regulated by the municipal zoning by-laws of the former municipalities, which specify the minimum amount of parking that is required for various land-use activities at various sizes. These standards are under review in the *City-wide Parking and Loading Study*.

Private off-street parking also exists in private lots that are available to the general public but are now associated with a particular development. These generally exist in the downtown core as well as other commercial areas.

2.2 Municipal Parking Facilities

Municipal parking supplements existing private and on-street parking. Municipal parking can become very important in areas without sufficient private or on-street parking, or without alternatives means of access. Municipal parking also allows government to consolidate parking in strategically located facilities where it can serve a variety of local needs more efficiently. Municipal parking facilities in Hamilton are open to the general public with few restrictions.

The Hamilton Municipal Parking System, or HMPS, is the City agency responsible for municipal parking and operates as a division under the Planning and Development Department. The HMPS operates 65 public-access facilities in Hamilton, Flamborough, Dundas, Ancaster, and Stoney Creek. Only two lots are attended and all operate on a first-come, first-serve basis. All other lots operate with parking meters or pay and display.

The HMPS operates all municipal parking facilities, administers parking regulations, and manages parking throughout the city. The HMPS is also responsible for enforcing parking laws. The HMPS is part of the Planning and Development department and works closely with other city departments to plan, implement, and manage the supply of municipal parking. It is mandated by Council to operate as a self-sustaining business unit. As such, paid parking and appropriate parking rates are established in accordance with corporate policies.
Exhibit 2.1: Characteristics of HMPS Parking Facilities by Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Facilities</th>
<th>Operating Hours</th>
<th>24 Hour Lots</th>
<th>Time Limits</th>
<th>Hourly Rates</th>
<th>Daily Rates</th>
<th>Monthly Rates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Downtown Hamilton</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>7, 8 or 9am – 9,10,11pm and 2am</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>None, 3-5 hours</td>
<td>50 cents to $2.50</td>
<td>$3-$7.50</td>
<td>$31-$96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Hamilton</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>9am – 9,10,11pm</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>None, 2, 3, 5 hours</td>
<td>50 cents to $2</td>
<td>$2-$6</td>
<td>$18-$31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamilton Mountain</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9am – 9pm</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3 and 5 hours</td>
<td>50 cents N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>$31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dundas</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9am – 6pm</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2 hours</td>
<td>85 cents N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Yearly $260, all lots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stoney Creek</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9am – 6pm</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2 hours</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>$25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ancaster</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waterdown</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: City of Hamilton Website, Parking Operations

2.3 On-street Parking

While curbside parking is open to the public, it is managed by the City in order to ensure safety and traffic flow, serve local businesses and residents, provide equal opportunities for access, provide access for special needs, and minimize the negative impacts on surrounding areas. On-street parking is particularly critical in some of the older business areas where on-street parking is the only parking available for businesses. In these cases, there is a critical link between on-street parking policies and business viability.

The police and Hamilton Municipal Parking System officers enforce on-street and off-street parking regulations. Common regulations include:

- Limitations or prohibitions based on location, time of day, or length of stay – these vary depending on whether parking is sued for residential parking or business parking and the level of control that is necessary given the particular location to ensure parking by those who it is intended for. The parking operations division sets limitations and prohibitions taking into account local needs and historical practices, with input from other City departments and agencies.
- Special authorizations for disabled drivers, loading zones, and residential permits, and
- Fees for on-street parking with parking meter devices.
On-street parking can be controversial as it affects many other community interests such as traffic flow, safety, business activity, and neighbourhood character.

2.4 Downtown Parking

Because of Downtown Hamilton’s unique transportation opportunities and challenges, an additional set of policies exist to reinforce downtown parking goals.

The Hamilton Downtown Secondary Plan sets out redevelopment strategies and policies to capitalize on downtown’s unique economic position. It also calls for the reduction of surface parking and for those lots to be redeveloped as compact, mixed-use, and pedestrian oriented activities, with basic amounts of parking to be provided in strategically located lots. The plan emphasizes pedestrian and transit improvements in downtown, as well as new parking strategies to reinforce the redevelopment plans for downtown. It also calls for transportation improvements to support the development of office, government, institutional, and residential land uses in downtown and the surrounding areas.

The Downtown Transportation Master Plan for Hamilton provides specific recommendations for changes to land-use policies that guide parking in downtown. The parking strategy for downtown is to:

- Provide short-term business parking and discourage long-term parking,
- Provide public parking in strategic locations, and
- Reduce the number of off-street parking lots and replace them with new development.

The Plan also re-enforced the practice of not allowing buildings to be torn down and replaced with surface parking.

Since the Downtown Secondary Plan and Transportation Master Plan, significant residential development has occurred in the downtown and is on-going. Parking is an important component to marketing downtown housing and creating a viable downtown lifestyle and must be a part of the strategy and part of each project.

The Downtown Transportation Master Plan also recommends the elimination of Exemption Zones. Exemption Zones in downtown eliminated the requirement for parking in new residential, commercial and institutional developments. Residential parking requirements in areas surrounding downtown were relaxed as well. However, this incentive has not attracted residential development as expected. The zones also present a risk of creating overflow parking from residential developments, a situation that is now becoming evident with the construction of two major apartment buildings. On the other hand, one of the benefits of the exemption is that it eliminated unnecessary delay in the planning process as parking did not need to be addressed from a zoning conformity perspective.
3. KEY ISSUES AND EMERGING TRENDS

Parking needs change throughout the city and finding workable solutions for localized needs can be a challenge. It is important to approach parking challenges in an open manner, recognize the needs of various groups in the community and create flexible policies that can provide customized solutions. This section touches on the most significant issues that parking policies must take into account.

3.1 Balancing Community and Economic Development Needs

Many parts of Hamilton have competing goals for parking, especially areas where business and other community need come together. Community needs include safety, traffic flow, neighbourhood serenity, and sufficient parking for homes with multiple vehicles and/or without parking as well as for visitors. Businesses require sufficient customer access to remain competitive. This can put business needs in conflict with other community goals such as reducing congestion, improving safety or consolidating parking. On-street parking is important to residents, business, and community goals and is often the focus of controversy.

An appropriate amount of parking is also important. Insufficient parking can stifle business activity and create problems such as intrusion into neighbourhoods and blocked traffic in the streets. At the same time too much parking can make the community less attractive, take up land that could be used for buildings and homes, and make walking, cycling and transit more difficult and less attractive.

The goals for balancing community and business needs are:

- Providing the correct type and amount of parking for the right length of time, and
- Minimizing negative impacts on surrounding areas.

Fortunately, there are many non-traditional ways to maintain parking for business while improving the surrounding community. For example, on-street parking can be used as a traffic-calming measure in some residential areas. Allowing on-street parking on major streets during rush hour (or reducing the length of restricted periods) may make them more pedestrian friendly by reducing high traffic speeds while at the same time helping local businesses. Another option is to replace curbside parking with municipal parking lots. A flexible approach to parking and an understanding of business and community needs can help create workable solutions. It is noted that this is the generally current philosophy of HMPS.

Another issue related to balancing is parking pricing. While it is standard that most large cities charge for parking in their downtown cores, it is often argued that this makes large suburban malls that have free parking all the more attractive.

3.2 Urban Design

The appearance and function of parking facilities can have a profound effect on the surrounding area. Poor design can create unattractive areas that do not feel safe or discourage activity. Common problems include expansive parking lots with no landscaping, litter, and poor lighting that harm the appearance of the area. Excessive surface parking makes walking less attractive or impossible by creative long walking distances between activities and creating too many opportunities for dangerous conflicts between pedestrians and automobiles. In contrast, well-designed parking can make an area more attractive, encourage foot traffic and contribute urban vitality. Good parking design can include landscaped parking lots, good lighting, reduced potential...
for pedestrian/auto conflicts, and putting parking underground. It can also include parking garages that utilize architectural characteristics from the surrounding area such as ground floor retail shops. (See section 4.4 for further discussion and examples).

3.3 Parking in Downtown Areas

Downtown Hamilton is a large job centre with a mix of commercial activities that has seen some redevelopment in recent years. New commercial and office development in downtown Hamilton such as the Federal Building has put increasing pressure on the supply of available parking. There is a large amount of municipal and privately operated off-street public parking, and modest amounts of on-street parking. Yet concerns for adequate parking are being raised as issues by businesses and the development industry. In fact, private operators want the moratorium on new surface lots lifted as they want to expand their parking operations. The fact that the amount of excess surface parking is being reduced is arguably a positive change because, among other things, it will eventually increase the currently low cost of parking in the downtown and provide a greater incentive for transit use, or more efficient auto use such as carpooling.

Challenges and opportunities for parking exist throughout the city but pose special challenges in the downtown as well as traditional commercial strips in Dundas, Ancaster, the mountain and Stoney Creek. While too little parking is a common challenge, too much parking can dilute the unique character that these areas have over suburban areas, namely their walkable human-scale environment. On the other hand, because of the high propensity for auto use in Hamilton, if people can’t get to a store because of parking limitations they may be tempted to travel to newer big box type stores where parking is plentiful.

One of the challenges in finding a balance for parking supply in downtown areas is the need to maintain parking for local businesses (short term parking) while discouraging commuter parking (long term parking).
4. IDENTIFICATION OF POLICY OPTIONS

The City-wide Parking and Loading Study will provide direction on basic parking and loading standards by type of development. The purpose of this policy paper is to consider policies or guidelines that may be complementary or supplementary to the basic standards. These policies could be considered for adoption within a New Zoning By-law or as parking policies specific to the Transportation Master Plan.

4.1 Promoting Efficient Off-street Parking

These supplemental policies are designed to increase the flexibility of standard parking by-laws and allow for the creation of more efficient parking, or encourage efficient use of existing parking.

4.1.1 OFF-STREET PARKING SUPPLY MANAGEMENT

Shared Parking: Different activities require parking at different times of the day and week. When complementary activities are close together, there is the potential to share non-reserved parking facilities, resulting in more intense use of fewer total parking spaces. For example, entertainment and restaurants need parking in the evening and on weekends, while offices need parking during the weekday. As a result a restaurant and an office building can share parking because their customers use the parking at different times. Making shared parking work requires careful planning and coordination. Exhibit 4.1 illustrates some complementary activities where shared parking might be possible.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weekday Peaks</th>
<th>Evening Peaks</th>
<th>Weekend Peaks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Offices</td>
<td>Sports arenas</td>
<td>Places of worship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banks</td>
<td>Entertainment facilities</td>
<td>Parks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools</td>
<td>Meeting halls</td>
<td>Shops and malls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factories</td>
<td>Bars and restaurants</td>
<td>Multiplex cinemas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical clinics</td>
<td>Theatres</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The former City of Hamilton (By-Law 83-66) already has some allowances for shared parking as follows:

"Where office space is provided in conjunction with retail commercial uses and the total floor area of such uses exceeds 9300m², parking for the office use shall be provided and maintained only for that portion of the office floor area that exceeds 20% of the total floor area of the retail commercial uses. 2. mixed use developments - the aggregate of the required parking may be reduced not more than 20% of the residential or commercial requirement, whichever is lesser."

Shared parking can be administered through the zoning by-law (preferred), or through interaction with developers at the site plan stage. It is noted that HMPS already encourages shared parking where appropriate. While it is beyond the scope of this policy paper to make specific

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1 Adapted from ITE Parking Management Report, prepared by Todd Litman for the ITE Parking Council and Planners Press, Draft Report, August 2003 (Unpublished)
recommendations as to the mechanisms for shared parking, there is a general recognition that shared parking should be encouraged.

Parking Maximums: Parking maximums limit the total number of parking spaces that can be provided in new developments. This is usually done to prevent the creation of excessive parking, reduce traffic congestion and improve the pedestrian environment. Parking maximums must be accompanied by minimum requirements to guarantee a reasonable supply of parking, and adequate transit service to provide alternative means for people to access the area. Although minimum parking standards are found in all former municipalities, parking maximums are not currently used in Hamilton. Parking maximums are only appropriate where there are viable alternatives to the automobile such as high frequency transit. This would include the downtown and other areas the King-Main corridor. It could be argued, however, that areas such as the downtown do not require parking maximums because land is at a premium and developers will provide as little parking as possible. However, experience in other cities suggests that this is not always the case. The appropriateness of parking maximums is an issue that will be considered as part of the larger City-wide and Downtown Parking study.

Site-Specific Parking Allowances: The City can choose to create unique exemptions from parking requirements for developments that meet certain qualifications. This can free developers from providing excessive parking, increase the utilization of nearby parking facilities, and improve the pedestrian environment. For example, some communities lower the minimum number of parking spaces for new developments near transit stations or public parking facilities.

Cash in Lieu for Centralized Parking: Where permitted, cash-in-lieu policies allow (or require) developers to contribute money toward the development of municipal parking facilities in exchange for exemptions from mandated parking requirements. This gives developers more flexibility and helps the municipality to site municipal parking facilities at optimum locations. Hamilton’s existing cash-in-lieu program allows (but does not require) developers to make financial contributions toward consolidated parking in exchange for exemptions from minimum parking requirements. To date, the cash-in-lieu option has not been used extensively and funds generated have been very low. One of the main barriers is that developers see the large up-front costs as barriers and opt to request a minor variance for reduced parking rather than pay the fees.

Off-site Parking: Most zoning by-laws require parking on-site. Under some situations where on-site parking is difficult, such as historic business districts, it can be advantageous to provide off-site parking either within walking distance or serviced by shuttle. Off-site parking can also include park-and-ride lots for commuters who use transit. This can be especially beneficial for downtowns. While there is some parking near the GO station in Hamilton, there are no park-and-ride lots for the Hamilton Street Railway system.

Contingency Parking Plans: Some large parking facilities are idle frequently as peak demand happens only intermittently. Instead of supplying under used parking, contingency plans can be developed for period of peak demand. Such plans can include arranging for the use of underused parking nearby, or shuttle service to off-site parking. The latter is generally not economically viable unless used for a large generator or for a temporary event (i.e. during construction, major sporting event, etc.)

Exhibit 4.2 summaries the various potential approaches to maximizing parking discussed above.
4.1.2 OFF-STREET PARKING PRICING

The cost of parking can affect people’s decisions of how to travel. By reducing financial incentives to drive, the demand for parking can be reduced. By structuring parking pricing to discourage all-day parking, commuters will be encouraged to find less expensive ways to travel, such as carpooling, walking, bicycling and using transit. This could be accomplished with policies that limit the number of hours a car can park, or increasing the cost of parking. Pricing structures that facilitate parking for business-oriented customers can be achieved with low cost short-term parking (or free parking as is the case in some of the older downtown areas such as Waterdown and Ancaster). The challenge is to find pricing options that encourage sustainable travel behaviour, while allowing customers easy access to local businesses. The following are strategies that have some potential to positively influence travel behaviour.

HMPS Parking Rates: The City has the authority to change parking fees at municipal lots. To encourage commuters in particular to use modes of travel the city could raise the daily and monthly parking charges at municipal lots. This is difficult though in areas where a large amount of parking is controlled by private operators.

Parking Cash Outs: Commuting employees who receive a free or discounted parking space are indirectly encouraged to drive. Cash Outs give employees the choice to take the parking space or the cash equivalent. This removes the built-in incentive to drive, reduces the demand for parking, and encourages employees and employers to make more efficient travel decisions. The City presently has a policy whereby staff can receive a reduced transit pass in exchange for free parking privileges. However, due to the fact that the cost of transit passes is funded through individual department budgets, the uptake of this program has been limited. Many municipal employees also require their vehicles while at work or live in areas where transit services are limited or non-existent.

Parking Tax: A tax on all private parking spaces could be a strong tool for controlling the amount of parking while providing revenue for the City. However, at the present time, Ontario municipalities do not have the authority to levy such a tax under the provincial Municipal Act (Section 220.1). There are also administrative difficulties with implementing such a tax and it is not clear if a reasonable rate would generate significant revenue in Hamilton. Despite these problems, increasing
the price of parking holds significant potential for reducing the demand for parking and promoting alternative means of travel and may be an option for the longer term. It is noted that some several other municipalities in Ontario are starting to investigate this as a potential policy option and are looking to change the current legal restrictions.

Exhibit 4.3: Summary of Parking Pricing Policies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy</th>
<th>Cost to City</th>
<th>Positive Impact</th>
<th>Ease of Implementation</th>
<th>Current used in Hamilton</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Restructure HMPS rates</td>
<td>Uncertain</td>
<td>Low (because most off-street parking is privately operated)</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Somewhat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking Cash Out</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Available to City of Hamilton staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking Tax</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Requires provincial legislative changes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2 On-street Parking Supply and Pricing in Commercial Areas

As discussed previously, on-street parking is provided in most commercial areas. Within the downtown, parking on major arterials is generally metered parking and restricted during the peak periods. On many minor streets surrounding the downtown, on-street parking may or may not be free and may or may not have time restrictions.

In commercial areas outside of the downtown, but within the former City of Hamilton, including Ottawa Street, Concession Street, Main Street West, Wesdale, on-street parking is generally metered and restricted during one or both peak periods.

In commercial business districts outside of the former City of Hamilton, such as Ancaster, Stoney Creek and Waterdown, on-street parking is generally available in all periods and is typically free. For example, in the Waterdown Business area, there is no charge for on-street parking.

It is generally accepted that commercial business areas will be more successful if people have easy access to on-street parking and the cost of parking is reasonable. Options to achieve this include the following:

- Providing free parking;
- Eliminating or reducing peak period restrictions

The benefits of providing free parking were discussed during meetings with BIA representatives. While free parking may be attractive for potential customers, experience shows that it is often
simply used up by employees or retail establishments and does not encourage turnover (because it is difficult to enforce time restrictions without a payment mechanism). However, in special cases, such as during Christmas and for major events, free parking programs have been successful.

In the past, some BIAs such as International Village have attempted to attract customers by providing them with a token for the parking meter. While deemed a success by some business owners, participation is reported to have been fairly low. Pay and display meters (where there is no coin or token involved) may also make this program more difficult to implement.

Due to the unique characteristics of each business area in Hamilton, it would be difficult to come up with a standard policy on on-street parking pricing. Some of these areas are struggling to maintain and attract businesses and introducing a major change to pricing may be detrimental. As a general policy, however, it is recommended that on-street parking in all business areas be priced to some degree to avoid problems of abuse and turnover discussed above. This will ensure fairness and equity for all business areas—something that is often advocated by BIAs. However, it is appropriate that some discretion be used to tailor parking prices to the individual characteristics of area businesses. The City should work with BIAs in this regard.

Increasing the amount of time that on-street parking is available is another potential policy to assist businesses. This could include eliminating peak period restrictions all together, or reducing the duration of the restriction, for example reducing a three hour restriction to a two hour restriction. In general, the City attempts to establish parking durations in accordance with the needs of a majority of the abutting merchants. As with pricing policies, there are trade-offs to be considered when eliminating time restrictions. Most restrictions are in place to ensure that traffic flow is maintained and eliminating restrictions may introduce congestion. On the other hand, there are some areas where there appears to be excess capacity during restricted periods. An over-riding goal of this Transportation Master Plan is to ensure a balance between modes, and this same concept applies to balancing business needs with those of traffic flow. However, it is not possible to come up with a “one-size-fits-all” standard and close coordination with BIAs is required.

4.3 Parking Strategies to Improve Mode Choice

The need for parking is defined by a community’s dependence on the automobile and the presence of alternative modes of travel. The presence of reasonable transportation alternatives such as quality transit, and bicycling and walking infrastructure, can reduce the demand for parking while making an area more accessible. Opportunities for policy actions are:

- **Walking:** By providing an environment that encourages walking through good urban design, and compact, mixed-use development, the need for driving and parking can be reduced. This includes reducing the amount of space which is dedicated to surface parking.

- **Cycling:** By promoting secure and convenient bicycle parking, on-street bike racks, and showers for bicyclists.

- **Transit:** In dense urban areas, timely and cost-efficient public transportation can attract drivers from their cars and reduce the demand for parking spaces. The level of transit service is the most important factor in attracting riders. By improving service, especially into downtown, the City can enhance the vitality of the community while reducing the pressure of available parking.

- **Car-pooling:** Strategically located car-pool lots as well as preferential parking for carpools or vanpools can encourage ridesharing and reduce single occupant vehicle use.
Specific recommendations to improve each of these areas are contained in policy papers on Walking and Bicycling, Transit, and Travel Demand Management.

4.4 Improving the Design of Parking Facilities

The Land Use Plan for Downtown Hamilton provides an excellent overview of how parking facilities can be designed to support and enhance the urban fabric, rather than harming it. Many of the recommendations can be applied to other parts of the city. The Secondary Plan calls for parking to be designed to reinforce economic development initiatives by improving safety for pedestrians and the appearance of the overall area. Exhibit 4.4 from the Downtown Secondary Plan illustrates comparative site plans that illustrate ways to improve parking design. The parking designs on the left interfere with the pedestrian environment and discourage walking, while the designs on the right provide adequate parking and a better setting for shopping and other urban activities. The policy paper on Urban Design provides additional recommendations for improving Hamilton’s appearance and pedestrian environment.
Exhibit 4.4: Conventional and Pedestrian Friendly Parking Designs

5. RECOMMENDED POLICIES

Based on the review of current parking issues and trends and consultations with City Staff, business representatives and other stakeholders, the following policies are recommended for consideration in the Transportation Master Plan.

**Recommended Policy**  
Adopt off-street parking policies, including required parking ratios established through zoning, that attempt to balance the need to supply sufficient parking to support residential and business while avoiding excess parking supply that can discourage transit use.

**Implementation**

- Ensure that parking standards in the New Zoning By-law accurately represent needs by specific use and do not result in excess parking supply.
- Consider adopting lower minimum parking standards for the downtown.
- Extend provisions for shared parking in former City of Hamilton Zoning By-law to the new zoning by-law.
- Consider reducing the amount of required parking along major transit routes by creating parking maximums or reducing parking minimums.
- Having sensitivity to economic development considerations and the fact that HMPS is a separate business entity, where possible gradually increase charges for long-term parking in HMPS facilities and on-street parking, including monthly and yearly parking rates at HMPS facilities.

**Recommended Policy**  
In consultation with Business Improvement Associations, implement minimum charges and time restrictions for on-street parking in all downtown areas to encourage parking turn-over.

**Implementation**

- Consult with businesses and Business Improvement Associations in identifying business needs in local areas and developing parking solutions that provide the proper type, cost and amount of on-street and municipal off-street parking.
- Review, on a case by case basis, options for reducing or eliminating peak period parking restrictions in areas where parking is in high demand due to adjacent retail activities.
- Investigate alternative payment methods for on-street parking, such as pay-and-display, which can optimize parking supply and improve sidewalk appearance.
- Consider options for Business Improvement Associations to participate in providing parking; including methods for businesses to subsidize the costs parking for regular customers, irrespective of parking payment technologies.
**Recommended Policy**  
**Improve parking options and related incentives for transit and active transportation modes.**

**Implementation**

- Install bike parking in strategic high activity public locations, including municipal parking facilities.
- Adopt zoning regulations to require secure bike parking in all new commercial developments with more than 50 employees and multi-family residential developments with more than 10 units.
- Identify locations near major transit hubs (e.g. Lime Ridge Mall, East Gate Mall) to provide park-and-ride lots for commuters switching to transit and travelling downtown or to other transit nodes. Commuter parking supply would over and above existing area parking supply requirements.
- Increase funding and promote the current policy of providing discounted transit passes to employees in exchange for free parking, and ensure all new municipal buildings are on transit routes and have bicycle parking.
- Monitor actions by other municipalities and the Province regarding possible changes to Municipal Act to allow charging a levy on private parking spaces.

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**Recommended Policy**  
**Minimize any negative impacts of parking on urban design and pedestrian activity.**

**Implementation**

- Discourage surface lots and encourage well-designed structures in downtown where feasible and self-sustaining based on revenues.
- Establish urban design guidelines for parking lots and structures that enhance the public/pedestrian realm and balance aesthetics and pedestrian/auto accessibility.
- Follow additional recommendations in *Downtown Secondary Plan* and the *Urban Design policy paper*  
- Adopt urban design standards for municipal parking facilities.
6. EVALUATION OF POLICY OPTIONS

6.1 Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation of policy options is based on criteria for achieving sustainable growth and development across all of the policy papers developed in this project. They fall under the three major categories of social, economic and environmental impacts, and they are described briefly below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact</th>
<th>Acts on</th>
<th>Description (or examples)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>Residential communities</td>
<td>Improves quality of life in neighbourhoods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Safety and security</td>
<td>Reduces collisions; improves personal safety and security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ease of implementation &amp; governance</td>
<td>Provides clarity, measurability, accountability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>Development</td>
<td>Attracts employment, capital, optimal use of transportation infrastructure capacity, and future land use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Land value</td>
<td>Increases land value, or does not decrease land values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Operating and capital costs</td>
<td>Reduces or defers public and private costs of transportation capital (construction or acquisition of fixed infrastructure and rolling stock) and operations (maintenance, enforcement, delay, fuel, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Congestion</td>
<td>Maintains traffic flow at acceptable level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental</td>
<td>Air quality</td>
<td>Reduction of Criteria Air Contaminants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Noise and vibration</td>
<td>Minimizes noise impacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Natural environment</td>
<td>Improves water quality, green spaces, flora and fauna etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The rating system that will be used to apply these criteria is a visual five-point scale, to reflect a range from strong positive impact to strong negative impact. (+, ++, o, --, --)

+ Represents the strong positive impact, o represents absence of significant impact either way, and -- represents strong negative impact.

6.2 Summary of Evaluation

The factors described in Section 6.1 are applied to the policy recommendation described in Section 5. The results of the preliminary qualitative assessment using the rating scheme described previously are provided in Exhibit 6.1.
### Exhibit 6.1: Impacts of Policy Options

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy Option</th>
<th>Social</th>
<th>Economic</th>
<th>Environmental</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Residential Communities</td>
<td>Safety and Security</td>
<td>Ease of Implementation and Governance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adopt off-street parking policies, including required parking ratios established through zoning, that attempt to balance the need to supply sufficient parking to support residential and business while avoiding excess parking supply that can discourage transit use.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In consultation with Business Improvement Associations, implement minimum charges and time restrictions for on-street parking in all downtown areas to encourage parking turn-over.</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve parking options and related incentives for transit and active transportation modes.</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimize any negative impacts of parking on urban design and pedestrian activity.</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>