
REPORT TITLE: Conclusion to the Downtown Bolton All-Day On-Street Parking Pilot on Regional Road 50 (Queen Street), Town of Caledon, Ward 5

FROM: Kealy Dedman, Commissioner of Public Works

RECOMMENDATION

That the Downtown Bolton All-day On-street Parking Pilot on Regional Road 50 (Queen Street) from Regional Road 9 (King Street) to 50 metres north of Mill Street be deemed successful and that the all-day on-street parking remain in place;

And further, that Community Safety Zones be established on Regional Road 50 (Queen Street) from 140 metres south of Ellwood Drive to 140 metres north of Columbia Way and on Regional Road 9 (King Street) from 120 metres east of Old King Road to Regional Road 150 (Coleraine Drive);

And further, that the speed limit reductions on Regional Road 50 (Queen Street) and on Regional Road 9 (King Street) as outlined in the report of the Commissioner of Public Works, listed on the March 24, 2022 Regional Council agenda titled “Conclusion to the Downtown Bolton All-Day On-Street Parking Pilot on Regional Road 50 (Queen Street)”, be implemented;

And further, that the necessary by-law be presented for enactment;

And further, that the Ontario Provincial Police – Caledon Detachment and the Town of Caledon be advised.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- The Downtown Bolton All-day On-street Parking Pilot (the Pilot) began on July 22, 2019, as per Council Resolution 2019-641, with the removal of time-of-day stopping prohibitions on Queen Street from King Street to Mill Street in downtown Bolton, reducing travel lanes from four to two and allowing on-street parking during rush hours.
- A six-month interim report was brought to Council on February 27, 2020, with recommendations for improvements to the Pilot based on initial data collection and performance monitoring.
- As a result, staff installed additional parking signage, new northbound and southbound exclusive left turn lanes, pavement marking enhancements, flexible hazard markers in the roadway, as well as the full signalization of the intersection of Queen Street at Sterne Street.
- The COVID-19 pandemic delayed further data collection by approximately 18 months until traffic volumes returned to pre-pandemic levels. In fall of 2021, staff proceeded to collect the balance of the Pilot data.

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- Analysis shows that the Pilot was successful. Performance indicators were positive, showing traffic diverting from downtown while also reducing collisions and cut-through traffic.
 - On that basis, staff recommend the Downtown Bolton All-day On-street Parking Pilot on Regional Road 50 (Queen Street) be concluded and parking remain in place.
 - Further, staff recommend the implementation of Community Safety Zones and speed limit reductions in downtown Bolton to support broader road safety Initiatives consistent with the Bolton Transportation Master Plan, Bolton Downtown Revitalization Plan and the Region's Vision Zero Strategy.
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DISCUSSION

1. Background

The implementation of all-day on-street parking was recommended in the 2015 Bolton Transportation Master Plan (BTMP) to reroute cars and trucks onto the Emil Kolb Parkway instead of through the downtown core, and to support a more pedestrian friendly environment in the core that encourages community gathering and economic growth. The Bolton Transportation Master Plan was developed in partnership with the Town of Caledon and approved by both Councils.

On June 27, 2019, Regional Council approved the commencement of the Bolton All-day On-street Parking Pilot (the Pilot), per Resolution 2019-641, which reduced the travel lanes through downtown Bolton from four to two lanes and permitted on-street parking during rush hours. The Pilot was implemented on July 22, 2019, by removing the time-of-day stopping prohibitions on Queen Street from King Street to 50 metres north of Mill Street.

2. Policy Direction and Strategic Considerations

The Bolton All-day On-street Parking Pilot supports other strategic planning activities and plans, which were taken into consideration when developing the recommendations of this report.

a) Bolton Downtown Revitalization Plan

In 2019, the Town of Caledon undertook a Queen Street Corridor Study and a 2020-2030 Economic Development Strategy (2020), which led to the development of the Bolton Downtown Revitalization Plan (2021). The goal of this Plan is to revitalize Bolton's downtown core. Key outcomes included recommendations to "make the parking pilot permanent" and "fast-track other traffic calming measures and public realm improvements".

The Town has formed a Task Force to support the Bolton Downtown Revitalization Plan. The mandate of the Task Force is to work with the Town, Region, businesses, and local community on revitalization efforts outlined in the Plan. A priority of the Town is a pilot project for patios in downtown Bolton. Regional staff will continue to support the Town and Task Force and will report back to Council if required.

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b) Queen Street Environmental Assessment

The Region of Peel will be initiating a Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (EA) in 2022 on Queen Street in Bolton between Queensgate Boulevard and Columbia Way for road resurfacing, repair or upgrades to stormwater infrastructure, improvements to pedestrian and cyclist facilities, and intersection improvements. The EA will use the findings of the Pilot as input to inform recommendations and improvements but will not reopen an analysis of the viability of on-street parking.

3. The Interim Report

On February 27, 2020, Regional staff provided a 6-month interim report to Council outlining that the performance indicators were showing favourable trends such as, traffic diversion to Emil Kolb Parkway and lower traffic volumes on Queen Street. The interim report also identified several additional improvements that were implemented as part of the Pilot which included:

- Implementation of exclusive northbound and southbound left turn lanes at the Queen Street and King Street intersection.
- Reconfiguration of pavement markings to provide exclusive northbound left and exclusive southbound right turn lanes at Queen Street and Hickman Street.
- Additional flexible hazard markers to narrow the road and delineate the on-street parking.
- Conversion of the Sterne Street intersection pedestrian signal to a full traffic signal.
- Installation of radar feedback signs down both hills on Queen Street into downtown Bolton.
- Additional signage to clarify the three-hour parking limit.

The COVID-19 Pandemic had a significant effect on the traffic volumes, travel patterns, and modes of travel that impacted data collection. The duration of the Pilot was therefore extended by approximately 18 months until traffic patterns returned to pre-pandemic levels. This extension allowed sufficient data to be collected to support a fulsome analysis of traffic performance monitoring indicators, such as traffic volumes, speeds, travel times and collisions.

4. Pilot Results

Traffic performance monitoring indicators show that the Queen Street corridor through downtown Bolton continues to operate well, and no significant concerns have been identified. While most indicators have remained steady or have shown a small improvement, three performance indicators have shown significant improvement:

- a) Collisions through the downtown corridor have reduced significantly. The collision rate for the two years before the pilot was 0.43 collisions per 100,000 vehicles, the rate for the two years after the pilot implementation was 0.25 collisions per 100,000 vehicles, a decrease of 43 percent. Using a collision rate based on vehicle volumes allows the analysis to account for the fluctuating vehicle volumes occurring throughout the Pilot. Also noteworthy is the reduction in turning movement collisions with seven collisions noted before the implementation of the exclusive left turn lanes on Queen Street at King Street, and none following implementation.

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- b) Cut-through traffic using Willow and David Streets was reduced by 90 percent in the afternoon peak period, from approximately 200 vehicles per day before the lane reconfiguration to less than 20 vehicles per day after reconfiguration.
- c) Traffic in Bolton's downtown core has been diverted. Analysis shows that traffic volumes on Queen Street are down by roughly 18 percent whereas traffic volumes on the Emil Kolb Parkway (a preferred alternative) are up by approximately six percent.

A summary of the performance monitoring indicators is provided in Appendix I. Based on an analysis of these findings and the strategic considerations; staff recommend that the all-day on-street parking remain. Furthermore, staff recommend that the additional improvements implemented as part of the pilot and outlined in Section 3 of this report also remain in place.

5. Recommendations for Additional Safety Improvements

As a further outcome of the Pilot, and in keeping with the Region's commitment to Vision Zero, the following improvements have been identified for downtown Bolton:

a) Community Safety Zones

Staff recommend establishing new Community Safety Zones on Queen Street from 140 metres south of Ellwood Drive to 140 metres north of Columbia Way, and on King Street from 120 metres east of Old King Road to Coleraine Drive (as shown in Appendix II).

In a Community Safety Zone, all traffic offences are charged an increased fine. The increased fines help deter aggressive driving behaviors, such as careless driving and speeding, to improve public safety.

A Community Safety Zone review was conducted based on the criteria outlined in the Ontario Traffic Manual and concluded that the Bolton downtown core along Queen Street and King Street accommodates pedestrians, cyclists, cars, and local truck deliveries. The area has a community focus where safety considerations are of special concern with many public places near Queen Street and King Street and issues such as aggressive driving exist. The Ontario Provincial Police have also provided their support for the proposed Community Safety Zones.

b) Speed Limit Reductions

Staff evaluated the area using the Transportation Association of Canada Speed Zone Methodology and recommend that the posted speed limits on Queen Street and King Street be reduced as outlined below and as shown in Appendix II.

- i. On Regional Road 9 (King Street) reduced to 40 kilometers per hour from 10 metres east of James Street to 15 metres west of Jane Street.
- ii. On Regional Road 50 (Queen Street) reduced to 40 kilometers per hour from 10 metres south of Downey Drive/William Street to 50 metres north of Centennial Drive (south leg).
- iii. On Regional Road 9 (King Street) reduced to 50 kilometers per hour from the Peel/York Boundary to 400 metres west of Albion Vaughan Road.

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- iv. On Regional Road 9 (King Street) reduced to 50 kilometers per hour from 385 metres west of the Connaught Crescent (west leg) to Regional Road 150 (Coleraine Drive).
- v. On Regional Road 50 (Queen Street) reduced to 50 kilometers per hour from 50 metres north of Centennial Drive (south leg) to 100 metres north of Columbia Way.

RISK CONSIDERATIONS

Should Council choose not to keep the all-day on-street parking, the positive outcomes from the Pilot to support a more pedestrian friendly environment and economic growth in downtown Bolton would be impacted, as would the safety outcomes linked to the Pilot improvements. In addition, the Town of Caledon's revitalization efforts that presume all-day on-street parking would need to be adjusted.

There is a risk that some members of the community will not agree with the addition of Community Safety Zones and speed limit reductions and may incorrectly assume the Region is raising traffic fines and lowering speed limits as a tactic to generate revenue. This risk exists whenever Community Safety zones are added or speed limits are lowered, and is managed through a combination of proactive communication within the community and responses to specific inquiries.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

A communications plan together with signage will be required to implement the Community Safety Zones and posted speed limit changes. These costs can be accommodated within the existing approved operating budgets.

CONCLUSION

The Bolton All-day On-street Parking Pilot began on July 22, 2019. An interim report was brought to Council on February 27, 2020, recommending various safety improvements based on initial data collection. Subsequent data collection and analysis of performance measures indicates that the Pilot has performed well, diverting traffic from downtown Bolton while also improving performance and safety. Staff recommend that the all-day on-street parking remain in place and further recommend the implementation of Community Safety Zones and speed limit reductions in downtown Bolton which will support the Bolton Transportation Master Plan, the Region's Vision Zero commitment, as well as the Town of Caledon's Bolton Revitalization plan.

APPENDICES

Appendix I - Summary of On-street Parking Pilot Traffic Performance Monitoring Indicators
Appendix II - Proposed Community Safety Zones and Speed Limit Reductions

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