

To: Community and Operations Services Committee

From: Kevin Alexander, Commissioner,
Community and Operations Services Department

Report Number: CO-25-17

Date of Report: May 7, 2025

Date of Meeting: May 12, 2025

Subject: Parking Utilization Survey for the On-Street and Off-Street
Parking Components of the City's Municipal Parking System in
the Downtown Oshawa Urban Growth Centre ("D.O.U.G.C.")

Ward: Ward 4

File: 03-05

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this report is to respond to the following direction of City Council of December 16, 2024, concerning Item CO-24-60 regarding the Parking Utilization Survey for the On-Street and Off-Street Parking Components of the City's Municipal Parking System in the Downtown Oshawa Urban Growth Centre ("D.O.U.G.C."):

"That in consideration of Report CO-24-60, dated December 4, 2024, staff investigate and report back on options to modernize the existing Municipal Parking System serviceability and efficiency, including but not limited to:

- Alternative service delivery models within the existing parking system
- Downtown wayfinding
- Interactive and integrated parking technology
- Public communications
- Fee structures
- Financial summary of operations costs, revenues, and capital investment"

2.0 Recommendation

That the Community and Operations Services Committee provide direction concerning the implementation of one or more options as set out in Section 4.6 of Report CO-25-17 dated May 7, 2025, concerning the Parking Utilization Survey for the On-Street and Off-Street Parking Components in the Downtown Oshawa Urban Growth Centre ("D.O.U.G.C.").

3.0 Input From Other Sources

- Municipal Law Enforcement and Licensing Services
- Information Technology Services
- Operations Services
- Corporate Communications
- Planning Services
- Policy and Research
- Facilities Operations and Maintenance Services
- Facility Management Services
- Legislative Services
- Legal Services
- Business and Economic Development Services
- Finance Services
- Municipal comparators:
 - Town of Ajax
 - Municipality of Clarington
 - Town of Cobourg
 - City of Peterborough
 - City of Pickering
 - Town of Whitby
 - City of St. Catharines
 - City of Kingston
 - City of Guelph
 - City of Barrie
 - City of Burlington

4.0 Analysis

At its meeting of December 16, 2024, Council directed staff to investigate and report back on options to modernize the existing Municipal Parking System's serviceability and efficiency. The goal of this report is to provide Council with options for modernizing and expanding on alternative service delivery models within the existing parking system, downtown wayfinding, interactive and integrated parking technology, public communications, fee structures, and a financial summary of operations costs, revenues, and capital investments within the D.O.U.G.C.

4.1 Background

The City of Oshawa, the largest municipality in the Region of Durham, has a growing population of approximately 185,000 residents, with continued growth projected. The 2024 Community Profile indicated that the City's population would be 219,990 by 2031. Key factors influencing parking demand include redevelopment in the D.O.U.G.C., expansion of post-secondary institutions, and proposed rapid transit initiatives.

The City's Traffic and Parking By-law 79-99, as amended ("Traffic and Parking By-law 79-99) regulates both on-street and off-street parking, including parking garages. Within the

downtown core are 3,043 paid public parking spaces, consisting of 742 on-street spaces and 2,301 off-street spaces across six (6) City-owned parking lots and three (3) parking garages.

On December 9, 2024, staff presented Report CO-24-60, Parking Utilization Survey for the On-Street and Off-Street Parking Components of the City's Municipal Parking System in the Downtown Oshawa Urban Growth Centre ("D.O.U.G.C."). The study assessed the current state and future of the City's municipal parking system in the D.O.U.G.C. Through this assessment, it was determined that the City's off-street long-term utilization rate is projected to be 52%. The total parking system, including on-street and off-street long-term parking utilization rate, is 49%. The parking utilization rate threshold is set at 85%, designating anything at or above this level as critical capacity.

The City of Oshawa is upgrading the entry and exit gates at its parking garages and Parking Lot 19, located on the southwest corner of William Street East and Division Street, by installing a new Parking Access Revenue Control System ("P.A.R.C.S."), which is expected to be completed by Q4 2025. This new system will eliminate the need for transponders for permit holders by using Licence Plate Recognition ("LPR") technology, which will automatically read and identify permit holders' licence plates to grant access to the three (3) parking garages and Lot 19. Additionally, LED signs at the parking garage entrances will display the number of available spaces, allowing drivers to see availability before entering.

4.2 Alternative Service Delivery Models Within the Existing Parking System

The City is actively exploring and implementing alternative service delivery models to enhance the efficiency and flexibility of its parking infrastructure. A key example is the recent planning of transient parking in the McMillan Parking Garage, which allows for more dynamic use of available spaces based on real-time demand. Additionally, parking permits are now being issued within the City's Municipal Parking System instead of exclusively tied to specific garages. This change enables better utilization across facilities. Furthermore, the City has reduced parking requirements for new developments in the D.O.U.G.C, as encouraged by Provincial planning policy documents and Federal housing guidance. In unique situations where sites would have constraints that prevent the introduction of sufficient parking, more developers are seeking alternative parking options through shared parking agreements. Parking considerations will continue to be included in planning documents, secondary plans, and zoning updates to reinforce these objectives.

4.3 Downtown Wayfinding

Downtown Wayfinding is a system of signage, design elements, and digital tools that help users navigate through a downtown area, locate destinations, and understand their surroundings efficiently.

Business and Economic Development Services staff are actively developing and implementing a wayfinding map for the D.O.U.G.C. that identifies key assets to residents and visitors in the downtown area. This map will be displayed on lamp posts throughout the area. In collaboration with Business and Economic Development Services, the

Municipal Parking System could be integrated into the wayfinding map to increase visibility and guide users to available parking options they may not otherwise be aware of.

These initiatives are planned in the Business and Economic Development Services workplans and as a result no additional financial impact is anticipated.

4.4 Fee structures

In accordance with the City’s Fees and Charges By-law 109-2024, as amended (“Fees and Charges By-law 109-2024”), monthly parking rates are set at \$73.00 plus HST for off-street surface lot permits and \$87.00 plus HST for parking garage permits. A 15% discount is available for organizations that purchase more than 35 permits. For larger agreements involving 200 or more permits with a two-year commitment, the monthly rate is further reduced to \$50.00 plus HST per permit.

Short-term hourly parking is available at a rate of \$1.25 per hour, which includes HST. This option is offered on-street, in all surface lots (with the exception of Lot 19 at the southwest corner of William Street East and Division Street), as well as in the Centre Street and Mary Street parking garages. The daily maximum charge for most surface lots is \$12.50, while Lot 16 located on Athol Street East, between Celina Street and Albert Street and Lot 50, located adjacent to the Robert McLaughlin Gallery, have a lower daily maximum of \$8.00. On-street parking is subject to a maximum time limit outlined at the on-street parking locations.

Table 1 shows a comparison of monthly permit parking, hourly rates, and daily maximum rates across neighbouring and comparable municipalities. The data shows that the City’s minimum permit rate is slightly above the average, while its maximum permit rate is significantly lower. Additionally, the City’s hourly, daily maximum, and special event parking rates are below the municipal average.

Table 1: Municipal Comparators of Permitted, Hourly Parking Rates, Daily Maximum Rates and Special Event Rates

Municipality	Monthly Permits		Daily Maximum	Average Hourly Rate	Special Event
	Minimum	Maximum			
Town of Whitby	\$88.00	\$110.00	\$8.00	\$1.10	N/A
City of Pickering	\$60.00	\$60.00	N/A	\$2.50	N/A
Town of Ajax (waterfront only)	N/A	N/A	\$20.00	N/A	N/A
City of St. Catharines	\$79.95	\$134.00	\$6.00	\$2.00	\$5.00
					\$10.00

Municipality	Monthly Permits		Daily Maximum	Average Hourly Rate	Special Event
	Minimum	Maximum			
City of Peterborough	\$53.00	\$105.00	\$14.00	\$2.00	N/A
City of Kingston	\$92.25	\$158.45	\$24.00	\$2.00	\$6.00
City of Guelph	\$85.73	\$192.91	\$30.00	\$3.00	\$5.50
City of Barrie	\$66.00	\$82.50	\$7.00	\$1.50	N/A
City of Burlington	\$91.00	\$151.00	\$18.00	\$2.00	N/A
Municipality of Clarington	\$35.00	\$35.00	\$5.00	\$1.00	N/A
Town of Cobourg	\$35.00	\$35.00	\$10.00	\$2.25	N/A
City of Oshawa	\$73.00	\$87.00	\$12.50	\$1.25	\$5.00
Average	\$68.99	\$104.62	\$14.05	\$1.87	\$6.30

4.5 Financial Summary

The City’s Municipal Parking System has consistently operated at a net financial loss, highlighting an ongoing imbalance between operating expenses and revenue generation. Implementing a structured fee increase can help narrow the gap between operating expenses and revenue while remaining at or below industry average fees. Table 2 provides an overview of both operating costs and revenue collected over the past three fiscal years.

Table 2: City of Oshawa 3 Year Municipal Parking Operating and Revenue

Year	Operating Expenses	Revenue	Net Total
2022	\$2,242,423	\$1,749,307	(\$493,116)
2023	\$2,397,646	\$2,174,693	(\$222,953)
2024	\$2,695,599	\$2,338,326	(\$357,273)

Between 2022 and 2025, a series of capital projects were undertaken, totaling \$5,779,943 in investments. These projects reflect a strategic commitment to infrastructure

improvement and long-term sustainability. The funding supported a variety of initiatives, including facility improvements, a utilization study, and equipment upgrades. Table 3 shows the 2022-2025 capital projects related to the municipal parking system.

Table 3: 2022-2025 Capital Projects

Capital Project	Year	Location	Estimated Cost
2206 PG1 Emergency Elevator Repairs	2022	Centre Street Parking Garage	\$149,310
72-0049 Parking Attendant Booth Replacement	2023	Centre Street Parking Garage	\$41,400
2305 Mary Street Parking Garage Repairs	2023	Mary Street Parking Garage	\$500,000
2410 Parking Utilization Study	2024	Municipal Parking System	\$87,838
2419 McMillan Parking Garage Elevator Repairs	2024	McMillan Parking Garage	\$885,000
11-0410 Structural Rehabilitation Program	2022-2025	Parking Garages	\$941,395
72-0025 Replacement of Transponder and Equipment	2024/2025	Parking Garages and Lot 19	\$1,175,000
11-0443 Asphalt Running Surface	2024/2025	McMillan Parking Garage	\$2,000,000
Total			\$5,779,943

Looking ahead, a total of \$20,474,000 has been allocated for future capital projects focused on critical infrastructure repairs and the development of a comprehensive Parking Master Plan. These investments are aimed at addressing aging infrastructure, improving safety, and enhancing the functionality and longevity of key assets across the D.O.U.G.C. A significant portion of the funding will be directed toward infrastructure. Additionally, the Parking Master Plan will guide long-term strategies to optimize parking capacity, improve accessibility, and support anticipated growth in both residential and commercial areas. Together, these projects represent a proactive approach to maintaining essential services

and planning for sustainable development. Table 4 shows the eight (8) year forecasted capital projects.

Table 4: Forecasted Capital Projects

Project	Year	Location	Expense
11-0443 Asphalt Running Surface	2026	McMillan Parking Garage	\$1,500,000
11-0443 Asphalt Running Surface	2027	McMillan Parking Garage	\$1,500,000
11-0483 Window Repair	2027	McMillan Parking Garage	\$260,000
11-0443 Asphalt Running Surface	2028	McMillan Parking Garage	\$1,500,000
11-0444 Asphalt Running Surface	2028	Centre Street Parking Garage	\$400,000
40-0046 Parking Master Plan	2028	Municipal Parking System	\$350,000
11-0443 Asphalt Running Surface	2029	McMillan Parking Garage	\$1,500,000
11-0444 Asphalt Running Surface	2029	Centre Street Parking Garage	\$1,800,000
72-0021 Replace On-Street Pay by Plate Machines	2029	On-Street Parking	\$664,000
11-0443 Asphalt Running Surface	2030	McMillan Parking Garage	\$700,000
11-0444 Asphalt Running Surface	2030	Centre Street Parking Garage	\$1,800,000
11-0481 Asphalt Running Surface	2030	Mary Street Parking Garage	\$800,000
11-0481 Asphalt Running Surface	2031	Mary Street Parking Garage	\$2,200,000

Project	Year	Location	Expense
11-0481 Asphalt Running Surface	2032	Mary Street Parking Garage	\$2,200,000
11-0481 Asphalt Running Surface	2033	Mary Street Parking Garage	\$2,200,000
11-0481 Asphalt Running Surface	2034	Mary Street Parking Garage	\$1,100,000
Total			\$20,474,000

4.6 Options for Consideration

In consideration of the above-projected forecasts and information regarding the On-Street and Off-Street parking components of the City’s Municipal Parking System within the Downtown Oshawa Urban Growth Centre, staff recommend that the Community and Operations Services Committee consider the following options:

4.6.1 Option 1 – Implementation of an Interactive Map

To advance Interactive & Integrated Parking Technology, the implementation of an interactive map presents a valuable opportunity to promote and enhance the visibility of the City’s municipal parking system. This digital tool can showcase all available parking options and their exact locations within the D.O.U.G.C., helping users make informed decisions about where to park.

With the expected completion of the Parking Access and Revenue Control System (“P.A.R.C.S.”) in Q4 of 2025, the map can be further enhanced to display real-time parking availability in municipal garages. This live inventory feature will allow drivers to check current space availability before arriving, improving convenience and reducing congestion. Other information, such as fees and time limits, can also be displayed on the interactive maps for added clarity. The interactive map will be hosted on the City’s website, ensuring easy access for all users. The current cost to implement this technology is approximately \$19,500, with a monthly licencing fee of approximately \$174 per month.

In collaboration with Economic and Development Services, QR codes can be installed on signage throughout the D.O.U.G.C. and advertised with special events, instantly directing users to the online map via their mobile devices. This approach not only improves wayfinding but also supports a smarter, more connected parking experience in downtown.

4.6.2 Option 2 – Installing Digital Advertising Signs on the Mary Street Garage to Improve Public Communications

Installing digital advertising signage at the Mary Street Parking Garage will enhance communication and engagement with commuters. One digital advertising sign will be

positioned at the southwest corner of the garage, facing King Street East, while another will be located on the northeast side, targeting Bond Street East commuters. These signs will provide paid advertising opportunities for local businesses, promote the D.O.U.G.C. parking system, and highlight special events within the downtown and at the Tribute Communities Centre. This initiative aims to support local businesses, improve public awareness of downtown parking options, and enhance the visibility of community events.

Each digital advertising sign would measure approximately 10.5 feet by 6.3 feet and cost approximately \$55,200, including installation. One sign would be installed on the southwest corner of the Mary Street Parking Garage, facing west toward the intersection of King Street East and Mary Street North. This sign would be visible to roughly 10,900 daily vehicle commuters. The second sign would be placed on the northeast corner of the same garage, about 50 metres east of the Bond Street East and Mary Street North intersection. It would be visible to approximately 9,315 daily vehicle commuters.

The digital advertising signage is estimated to generate approximately \$9,000 to \$15,000 in annual advertising revenue, while also increasing the visibility of the Municipal Parking System. This enhanced visibility may contribute to greater system usage, supporting both overall revenue growth and improved service efficiency.

4.6.3 Option 3 – Implementing a Fee Increasing Structure

Implementing a structured fee increase will ensure the continued growth and sustainability of the parking program. As indicated in the Parking Utilization Study conducted by Arcadis Professional Services Inc. in 2024, it is recommended that the monthly parking permit rates be increased by 15% every three years. Additionally, the study suggests that hourly parking rates should be increased by \$0.50 on the same three-year cycle. The \$0.50 increase will also be implemented for Special Event Parking to better align with comparable municipalities' Special Event Parking Fees.

Using the three (3) year average from 2022-2024, increasing monthly permits by 15% will generate an estimated \$179,500 in annual revenues. Increasing hourly parking rates and special events fees by \$0.50 will generate an estimated \$353,900 in additional revenue. These increases have the potential to cover operating costs and may also contribute to funding capital projects. The fees would be amended in the 2026 Fees and Charges By-law submission.

These incremental adjustments aim to keep parking fees in line with operational costs, infrastructure needs, and market trends, while also supporting the long-term financial viability of the system.

4.6.4 Option 4 – Implement Options 1, 2, and 3

The implementation of Options 1, 2, and 3 is designed to modernize and ensure the long-term sustainability of the City's municipal parking system by enhancing technology, communication, and financial strategy. The anticipated advertising revenue from Option 2, along with the estimated revenue from the Fee Increase Structure in Option 3, is expected to offset the capital costs required to implement both Options 1 and 2 in the first year.

Based on current operational expenses and annual revenue, the combined implementation of Options 1 and 2 has the potential to achieve a self-sustainable and cost neutral Municipal Parking operation.

5.0 Financial Implications

The total financial implication will be dependent on the option(s) selected. The estimated financial implications for each option are summarized below:

- Option 1: To implement Option 1, Implementation of an Interactive Map, an approximate capital budget of \$19,500 would be required for the interface. A recurring licence of approximately \$174 per month is also required and would be funded from the operating budget.
- Option 2: To implement Option 2, Installing Digital Advertising Signs on the Mary Street Garage, and an approximate capital budget of \$110,400 would be required for the purchase and installation of two (2) digital advertising signs. Once installed, the digital advertising signs are estimated to generate \$9,000 to \$15,000 in annual revenue.
- Option 3: The adoption of Option 3, Implementing a Fee Increase Structure, could generate approximately \$533,400 in total annual revenue by increasing the parking permit fees by 15% and hourly parking fees by \$0.50, resulting in the possibility of the parking system achieving full coverage of its operating costs.
- Option 4: The adoption of Option 4, implementing Options 1, 2, and 3, is estimated to generate approximately \$542,400 to \$548,400 in annual revenue. This revenue would offset the estimated \$129,900 in capital costs and \$2,088 in operating expenses required to implement the Interactive Map (Option 1) and install Digital Advertising Signs at the Mary Street Garage (Option 2). In the year of implementation, Option 4 is expected to result in net revenue of approximately \$410,412 to \$416,412, with the possibility of achieving a self-sustainable and cost neutral Municipal Parking operation in future years.

6.0 Relationship to the Oshawa Strategic Plan

This report responds to the Oshawa Strategic Plan Priority Area “Lead: Governance and Service Excellence” with the goal to provide transparent, efficient, and responsible fiscal stewardship and use of resources.

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Beth Mullen, Director,
Community and Environmental Services

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "K. Alexander". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Kevin Alexander, Commissioner,
Community and Operations Services Department