Waterfront Parks Parking Review – May 2021

Objective
To review the parking lots associated with waterfront parks and determine options for parking management and control that may include time restrictions, permits, paid parking and enforcement for compliance.  The impact of any changes to surrounding area on-street parking will be considered.

Background
During COVID restrictions in 2020, there was a significant increase in visitors and use of the town's waterfront parks.  With the increased use there were many issues and complaints, many of which related to parking at and near the waterfront parks.

Locations
The following table provides a list of parks and parking areas under review.

| Area | Location/Park | Parking area |
|---|---|---|
| Bronte Harbour: | | |
| | Bronte Beach Park | gravel lot near West River Street |
| | Bronte Beach Park | Berta Point asphalt lot |
| | Bronte Beach Park | main asphalt parking lot |
| | Bronte Beach Park | Bronte Harbour Yacht Club parking |
| | Bronte Bluffs/Sovereign House | gravel lot |
| | Bronte Marina | paved and gravel lot |
| Oakville Harbour: | | |
| | Tannery Park | Walker Street parking lot |
| | Tannery Park | Walker Street on-street parking |
| | Tannery Park | parking along docks |
| | Waterworks park | asphalt lot |
| | Shipyard park | asphalt lot |
| | Parking under the bridge - west side | gravel lot |
| | Busby park | gravel lot |
| Bronte Outer Harbour: | | |
| | Bronte Heritage Waterfront park | lot in front of building |
| | Bronte Heritage Waterfront park | asphalt lots along Ontario Street |
| Coronation Park: | | |
| | Coronation Park | north lot |
| | Coronation Park | parking areas along ring road |
| South Shell Park: | | |
| | South Shell Park | asphalt lot |
| Gairloch Gardens: | | |
| | Gairloch Gardens | Lakeshore Road East parking lot |
| | Gairloch Studio | Gairloch Studio parking lot |
| | Gairloch Gallery | parking lot |

A description of these parking areas is provided in **Schedule 1** to this report.

<u>Options for improved parking management and control</u>

In reviewing the concerns, issues, complaints and enforcement of parking at the waterfront parks, there are a number of changes and updates that could assist in improving parking management and control. These include:

1. Updates to the Parks By-law
2. Updated signage
3. Updated parking permit terms and conditions
4. Delineation of parking areas
5. Adding bike racks
6. Adding gated to close parking lots
7. Implementing parking time limit restrictions
8. Implementing paid parking
9. Increasing education and enforcement

<u>Parks By-law</u>

The Parks By-law 2013-013 prescribes the rules and regulations for the operations of parks within the Town of Oakville.  The by-law provides a number of parking regulations including:

- PARK OTHER THAN ON A ROADWAY WITHIN A PARK
- PARK A BUS WITHIN A PARK WITHOUT AUTHORIZATION
- PARK WHERE PROHIBITED WITHIN A PARK
- PARK OBSTRUCTING TRAFFIC WITHIN A PARK
- PARK OVERNIGHT WITHIN A PARK

The Parks By-Law prohibits anyone from being present in any park between dusk and 6 am, unless for an approved function.  Since the time of dusk changes, it makes it less clear for parks patrons to know when the park closes.  Also the by-law does not identify specific times when overnight parking is prohibited.

The Parks By-law prohibits and regulates certain vehicles from parking in parks, but there is opportunity to clarify other parking regulations relating to commercial vehicles, trailers using boat launch ramps, and permit holder parking.

Options to refine the Parks By-law for improved parking control include:
- Updated definition when the park is closed
- Specified time when overnight parking is prohibited
- Prohibition of unauthorized commercial vehicles
- Prohibition of vehicles with trailers from parking without launch pass
- Prohibition of vehicles from parking without authorized permit, in specified areas
- Prohibitions of unlicensed or inoperable vehicles

Within the current by-law regulations, there is opportunity to define the violation PARK OTHER THAN DESIGNATED PARKING LOT WITHIN A PARK.  These changes to the by-law would help to enforce unauthorized vehicles parked in the parks.

Along with the updates to the parking violations in parks, the penalties for the violations should be set at a sufficient level to deter vehicle operators from contravening the rules.

Signage

Signage is a primary way to inform park visitors of what is prohibited in the park.  From the enforcement of parks in 2020, ticket recipients often advised that they were unaware of the rules and regulations, specifically relating to parking outside of parking lots (e.g. grassed areas) and parking overnight.  The signage at the parking areas should list the general parking regulations for the park as well as any specific regulations for an area (e.g. permit parking areas).

There is opportunity to improve signage in the parks to show parking rules and regulations.  These rules and regulations should be also be provided on the town's website for anyone searching parks and parking information.

Consideration for temporary signage during busy boating/summer season to identify when parking lots are full could help limit excess vehicles from attending the park.  This type of signage would require staff to monitor use and update sign display when the lot is full.

Parking Permit Terms and Conditions

As part of the Harbour's Mooring Permits, permit holders are provided a parking pass to allow them to park their passenger vehicles when they are attending their boat.  The terms and conditions should document where, when and what permit holders can park and consequences if they don't comply.  The terms and conditions should also document how permit holders can request overnight parking.  To ensure permit holders use the parking according to the rules and regulations, there may be opportunity to review and update the parking permit terms and conditions.  Any updates should be communicated to the permit holders.

Delineation of Parking Areas

Ideally, parking spaces are delineated by line painting and parking areas are bordered by curbs, curb stops, fencing or other barriers.  There are a number of parking areas for the waterfront parks that are unlined gravel lots.  As previously noted, ticket recipients had advised they were unaware about parking outside of parking lots (e.g. grassed areas).  Until the lots can be paved and lined, curb stops could be installed to limit the parking areas.  Opportunities to delineate the parking areas would better control parking at the waterfront lots.

Bike Racks

Increasing opportunities for park visitors to attend by bicycle could reduce the number of vehicles at the parks. Current parks amenities list on oakville.ca does not show if there are bike racks at the parks. Improving cycling infrastructure such as installing bike racks, corrals, repair stations and water refill stations would help accommodate more bike visitors.  Improved cycling infrastructure also aligns with the town's Active Transportation programs.

Gated Parking Lots

Some parks have gates at the parking lot entry to close vehicle access to the area.  The closure may be seasonal for parking lots that are not maintained in the winter, or the closure may be nightly to prevent mischief in the park when it is closed.  A nightly gate closure requires security to close the gates every night and open them every morning.  As well, the security would need to deal with any vehicles left parked in the lot when the gates are closed.  Adding gates to other parks may assist in dealing with specific issues and locations, but would require further review.

Parking Time Limit Restrictions

Parking time limits provides another way to help manage and control vehicle parking.  Time limit restrictions are use to control parking on roadways (maximum 3-hour parking under the Traffic By-law) and parking in high use commercial parking areas (2-hour, 3-hour and 5-hour parking areas).  Time limits for parking provides turnover of the parking spaces thereby creating more opportunity for visitors and parking.

Under the Parks By-law there is no time limit restriction for parking, other than prohibiting overnight parking.  Introducing a maximum parking time limits would increase opportunity for visitors to find parking in the parks.  Implementing a time limit at the busy waterfront parking would provide visitors time to enjoy the park and increase turnovever of parking spaces.  Updates to the Parks By-law would define time limits and penalty for exceeding the time limits.  New signage and communications would inform visitors of the time limits.

Paid Parking at Waterfront Parks

Payment for parking is a common way to manage and control parking.  The payment encourages compliance with the regulations and time limits, promotes turnover of the parking spaces and helps support the cost of parking.  The town currently manages commercial parking in downtown Oakville, Kerr Village and Bronte Village through paid parking programs.  As well, paid parking is used to manage and control waterfront parks in other municipalities (e.g. Spencer Smith Park in Burlington). Paid parking programs could assist in controlling and managing the parking lots at the waterfront parks.

Under the town's Zoning By-law 2014-014 for lands south of Dundas Street, many of the town's parks are in a 01 Zone (defined as Park) or in a PB1 Zone (defined as Parkway Belt Public Use).  A Commercial Parking Area is not permitted in either the 01 Zone or the PB1 Zone.   In discussion with Planning staff there is an opportunity to update the Zoning By-law to allow for ancillary commercial parking areas within a park.  This zoning by-law amendment is necessary before paid parking in the parks could be implemented.

The implementation of a paid parking program within parks, subject to the zoning by-law update, would help control and manage the parking.  Approvals of rates, fees, penalties, policies and procedures would define where and how the program is implemented as well as the specific restrictions, rules and regulations.

Introducing paid parking at all the waterfront parking areas would require time and resources to implement.  Starting a paid parking at a few of the busiest waterfront parks as a pilot program in 2021 would provide time to implement and evaluate the program, before considering expanding to other areas.

While we are reviewing a number of parking locations related to waterfront parks, the areas of greatest concern, based on 2020 issues were Bronte Beach Park (including Bronte Bluffs/Sovereign House parking lot) and Tannery Park.  In these locations, there were issues of parking outside of designated areas, parking after park closure and overflow parking.  Introducing time restrictions and paid parking at the parks, along with responding to the overflow parking, could assist with the parking concerns in these areas.  Implementing a paid parking program at these busy waterfront parks as a pilot program in 2021 would provide time to implement and evaluate the program.

Through the town's commercial parking programs, Enforcement Services is replacing multi-space meters in Downtown Oakville.  Staff have been in contact with the equipment vendor and have determined that the equipment planned for replacement can be refurbished to current pay by plate standards. This will allow reuse of equipment for the paid parking pilot program at the waterfront parks at a reduced cost.

Alternatively if paid parking is limited to only weekends throughout the spring/summer season, utilizing the HONK mobile payment app would reduce the cost to implement a paid parking program.


Enforcement and Education

To promote and gain compliance of parking regulations in parks, it is necessary for regular patrols and enforcement.  It is not enough to make improvements and changes to the parking areas to improve compliance, issuing penalties for violations and active enforcement must also be implemented.

For enforcement to be effective the penalty needs to be at a sufficient level to act as a deterrent.  From the 2020 parking enforcement in parks, we understood some vehicle operators considered the penalty to be their "cost of parking for the day".   The level of these penalties did not deter the vehicle operators from contravening the rules.  The current penalties should be increased to deter these violations.

With a new parking program or change in program, an education and information program is needed to inform and advise vehicle operators. Any updates to the parks parking programs will need to be communicated including updates to the town's website and social media.  As well, officers generally undertake a period of education and information before tickets are issued. Communication and enforcement is needed for any new parking programs to be successful.

For 2021 additional resources will be added to the Enforcement Services to help in enforcing COVID restrictions and parks patrols.  The addition of Parks Ambassadors and Parks Patrol Officers may provide the enforcement resources during COVID restrictions, but consideration is needed to determine the ongoing resources needed for future patrols and enforcement.

<u>Overflow Parking</u>

Experience has shown that some vehicle operators will drive a distance to avoid paying for parking.  If paid parking is implemented in any of the parks, we can expect an increase in vehicles looking to park on the street in areas near the park.  In 2020, there was a significant increase in visitors and use of the town's waterfront parks.  When the parking lots were full visitors looked to on-street parking so they could attend the parks.

In response to numerous complaints and requests for enforcement in 2020, the town introduced Special Provision Areas ("SPA") where vehicles observed to be parked in signed "No Parking" area were subject to higher penalties.  The SPAs were introduced in areas near Bronte Beach Park and Coronation Park, along with increased areas of "No Parking" on the street. SPA was also approved for an area near Tannery Park, however the residents in the area did not support the increased areas of "No Parking" on the street.

Increased on-street parking to avoid paid parking is common around the town's commercial districts.  In these areas, the town has implemented a 2-hour time limit during the day to reduce extensive or all day parking.  Along with the 2-hour limit, streets in these areas are subject to proactive patrol and enforcement to promote compliance. These restrictions and enforcement don't eliminate vehicles from parking on the street, but do provide limits and constraints for all day parking.

There are a number of options to reduce overflow parking on the residential streets near the parks.  The following table provides changes that could be considered:

| Change | Parking |
|---|---|
| Implement daytime 2 hour parking limit | • Allows vehicles to park up to 2 hours during the restricted time<br>• Allows residents and their visitors to park up to 2 hours during the restricted time |
| Implement daytime 2 hour parking limit, with no re-parking | • Allows vehicles to park up to 2 hours during the restricted time, and cannot re-park during the restricted time<br>• Allows residents and their visitors to park up to 2 hours during the restricted time, and cannot re-park during the restricted time |
| Implement parking prohibitions | • Prohibits vehicles from parking<br>• Residents could not park on the street, unless a permit program is provided |
| Implement Special Provision Areas | • Higher penalties for vehicles parking in prohibited parking areas<br>• Residents could not park on the street, unless a permit program is provided |
| Provide designated overflow parking lot or area | • Provides a locations for additional parking |

With the recommendations to implement time limits and paid parking at Bronte Beach and Tannery Park areas, overflow parking in the nearby areas will likely increase.  If nothing is done to limit the overflow parking, residents concerns will increase and revenues to support the paid parking program in the park may not be realized.

Implementing 2-hour parking limits is a standard approach used to limit overflow parking in areas near commercial parking district.  This restriction does not eliminate parking but reduces the likelihood of continuous parking.  For this restriction to be have a positive impact, frequent proactive patrols and enforcement are required.

If the standard 2-hour parking limit does not get the expected results, the time limit could be made more restrictive by implementing a "no re-parking" rule.  The "no re-parking" rule limits vehicles to park only once for time period in a day and can be effective to stop vehicle operators from moving there cars every few hours to circumvent the time limit. This type of restriction requires significant communication and education as it is not commonly used.  There is currently no location in Oakville with a "no re-parking rule".

Introducing a permit only parking area would limit overflow parking and allow for temporary on street parking for residents and their guests.  This option would address residents concerns of overflow parking while still providing residents with an option for temporary on street parking.

Similar to 2020, staff have implemented SPAs in areas near Bronte Beach Park, Coronation Park, and Tannery Park areas for 2021.  Along with the increased restrictions and penalties, courtesy parking permits have been issued to residents within the SPA.  These permits allow the resident or their guest to park in designated areas with the permit on display.   This program may address overflow parking concerns during COVID restrictions. Further consideration for ongoing programs should take into account the cost of implementing, managing and enforcing, as SPAs provide a temporary program.

In 2018, in response to overflow parking requirements in Bronte village, the town implemented a temporary parking area within the winter boat storage area on the Bronte Marina property.  This parking area was delineated and signed for public parking during the summer.  This may provide some relief to overflow parking issues at Bronte Beach Park.

Summary Recommendations

The following provides a summary of recommendations to help improve the management and control of parking at waterfront parks:
1. Update Parks By-law to clarify parking restrictions
2. Review and update signage with clear conditions, timelines and restrictions of parking
3. Review and update parking permit terms and conditions
4. Review and add delineation of parking spaces and areas, subject to budget and funding
5. Review and install cycling infrastructure, subject to budget and funding
6. Review options and locations for gating or closing parking lots, subject to budget and funding
7. Review and implement options to reduce impact of overflow parking, including cost impacts
8. Review and implement options for overflow parking areas, including cost impacts
9. Implement time limit restrictions at waterfront parks
10. Implement a paid parking pilot program

11. Increase patrols and enforcement to promote compliance of parking regulations in and near waterfront parks
12. Update the town's website to provide information on the parking programs at the waterfront parks
13. Develop a communication plan to provide to provide information and education on the parking programs at the waterfront parks

**Schedule 1 – Waterfront Parks Parking Areas**

Bronte Beach Park
45 West River Street

There are four parking areas in Bronte Beach Park:
1. Gravel lot near West River Street
2. Berta Point asphalt lot
3. Main asphalt parking lot
4. Bronte Harbour Yacht Club parking

Bronte Beach Park – Gravel lot near West River Street



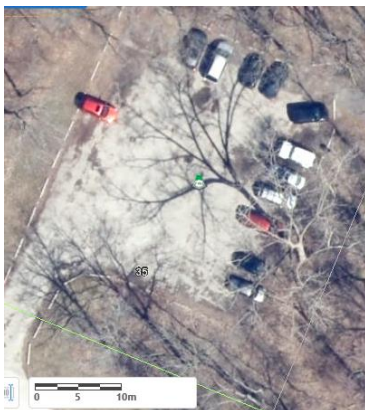Bronte Beach Park – Berta Point asphalt lot

Bronte Beach Park – Main Parking Lot



Bronte Beach Park – Bronte Harbour Yacht Club parking



Bronte Bluffs/Sovereign House - Gravel lot

This lot is scheduled for capital improvements including paving, curbs and line parking in September 2021

Bronte Marina



Bronte Heritage Waterfront Park – parking lot in front of 2340 Ontario Street



Bronte Heritage Waterfront Park – parking lots along Ontario Street

Tannery Park
10-22 Walker Street

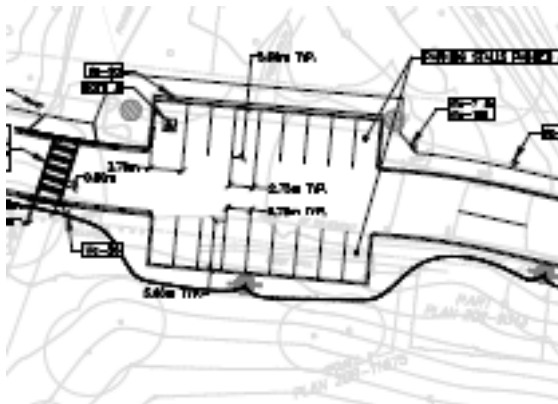There are three parking areas for Tannery Park:

1. Walker Street parking lot
2. Walker Street on-street parking
3. Parking along docks

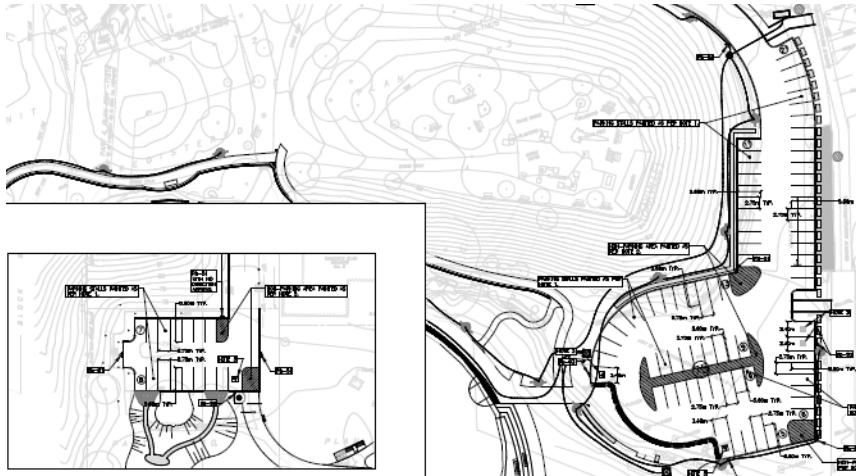Tannery Park – Walker Street parking lot



This lot is scheduled for capital improvements including paving, curbs and line parking in September 2021

Tannery Park – Walker Street on-street parking

Tannery Park – parking along docks



Waterworks Park
5 Kerr Street

Shipyard Park
100 Francis Street



Oakville Harbour Parking under the bridge - west side



Busby Park - Parking under the bridge - east side
128 Water Street

Coronation Park
1426 Lakeshore Road West


There are two parking areas in Coronation Park:

1. North parking lot
2. Parking area along ring road

Coronation Park – North Parking lot



Coronation Park – Parking area along ring road

South Shell Park
3412 Lakeshore Road West



Gairloch Gardens
1288 Lakeshore Road East

There are three parking areas in Gairloch Gardens
1. Lakeshore Road East parking lot
2. Gairloch Studio parking lot
3. Gairloch Gallery parking lot

Gairloch Gardens – Lakeshore Road East parking lot

Gairloch Studio parking lot



Gairloch Gallery parking lot