



City to study parking needs

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As development begins to take off in the three core area, the city is attempting to address the common problems with parking in all downtown areas.

The City of Cambridge is now in the midst of creating a new Cores Areas Parking Master Plan, which aims to look at the current parking situation across the city and develop a plan to deal with it over the next 20 years.

A key component of the new parking strategy is a series of public consultation sessions and an online web survey to gather public input.

The master plan is slated to be completed by next spring.

"Technical work has already begun including collecting background data and setting up parking demand surveys that are scheduled for April and May 2008," says Ed Kovacs, Commissioner of Transportation and Public Works.

The city's consultant, IBI Group, is collecting data that will include parking supply and demand numbers for each lot in each core.

They will then use that information to provide a baseline of data to estimate future parking demands.

"It's about developing an overarching strategic plan for core area parking that enhances parking opportunities and plans for the future needs of our community," said Cathy Robertson, director of engineering services.

The Core Areas Parking Master Plan examines all aspects of parking in the cores.

It follows the environmental assessment process for master plans which will include a review of all policies like two-hour free parking, permit parking and parking rates.

The review will also look at how well the city's parking lots are being utilized both during the week and on the weekends. It will then develop parking demand projections for the next 20 years.

As part of the environmental assessment process, the city will be seeking input from the community which will happen in several different ways. There will be public information centres, online surveys, stakeholder group sessions with the core area business associations, libraries, and seniors' centres representatives, and meetings with outside agencies, like Waterloo Region, emergency services and Grand River Transit.

Following the first public information centre on June 18, the master plan steering committee will then develop a range of alternatives to meet today's demands and in five-year time increments over the next 20 years.

These alternatives, their evaluation and a suite of preferred alternatives will be presented at a second public information centre in the fall.

After hearing from the public, a final set of recommendations will be drafted and presented for council's consideration early next spring.

Updates on the master plan's progress will be posted on the city's website at www.cambridge.ca as will the online survey.

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