

Plenty of parking in King's villages, consultants say

By Mark Pavilons

Despite what motorists may think, there seems to be abundant parking available in all of King's villages.

Some low-cost methods to promote the fact may be all the Township needs to encourage drivers to find parking.

Nearly six months of work by IBI Group resulted in the King Township Core Areas Parking Study, presented to councillors recently. The study examined existing and future parking in the core areas of King City, Nobleton and Schomberg.

Peter Richards, of IBI Group, said at the busiest times, only 42 per cent of King's total parking spots are occupied. His conclusion is that contrary to popular belief, there's plenty of parking available for King residents.

He added many people have the mind set that they must park in front of their destination and are not prepared to walk even short distances. This attitude, he said, has to change. Through signage and education measures, the message has to get across to residents. Richards did point out that discussions with Metrolinx and York Region, as partners, are critical.

In the IBI report, it was noted that King City has 384 on-street parking spots, 560 off-street spaces and 626 GO Transit parking spots. At peak periods during the week, only 42% is being used in the village, while 100% of the GO spots are taken.

By 2028, the consultants predicted residents will use 71% of the total spots in the village. The GO spaces will have to increase, as demand will continue to rise in the coming years.

In Nobleton, 37% of the 127 on-street spots and 322 off-street spots are being used during the week. It rises to 38% on Saturdays and predictions indicate the parking is sufficient for years to come.

In Schomberg, only 24% of the spots are being used during peak hours. This is not expected to rise much in the coming years. There are currently 140 on-street spaces and 235 off-street spots.

While parking is largely adequate, IBI did make 52 strategic recommendations for the villages, mostly to improve accessible parking and parking management. They recommended shared-use agreements with other property owners; creating an online parking map; improved markings and better signage, including dynamic signage at the GO lots indicating the number of spots in use.

A significant number of these recommendations address ways to increase the awareness and education of core area parking users and stakeholders and influencing their behavior via providing better and more information on alternative and readily available parking options, staff said. For example, effective and increased signage and pavement markings should significantly reduce driver confusion, and should elevate the parking experience, while improving the safety and operational performance of the road network.

IBI recommends regular meetings with Metrolinx and York Region and shared-use agreements with landowners. They also suggested that King allows residential permit parking in municipal off-street lots if parking is not available on-street.

Councillor David Boyd said he believes some wayfinding signage would be helpful in his area.

Councillor Bill Cober is a fan of the "walk a block" idea. Parking is available, so drivers simply have to get out of their vehicles and walk.

Mayor Steve Pellegrini said he wants a clear indication of the peak period parking on Keele Street in King City. An understanding of the existing rules is necessary so council can make decisions regarding improving traffic flow during peak hours.

Richards said he recommends that Township staff become more proactive in their enforcement, and not base it on complaints.

Staff recommended the Township continue to monitor parking occupancy and any changes in the core areas. They recommend reviewing the CAPS every three years to ensure future parking needs are being addressed.