

**Impact of Changes to On-street Parking Regulations –
Dundas Street West, between Dovercourt Road and
Sterling Road**

Date:	November 9, 2007
To:	Toronto and East York Community Council
From:	Director, Economic Research and Business Information
Wards:	Ward 18 – Davenport
Reference Number:	

SUMMARY

It is expected that allowing additional on-street parking during peak periods (in the non-peak direction only) will contribute positively to the economic vitality of this section of Dundas Street West.

Financial Impact

This report has no financial impact.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting on September 26 and 27, 2007, City Council adopted a report from Toronto and East York Community Council, which amended parking restrictions on Dundas Street West to permit peak period parking (in the non-peak direction only). Peak period left turns from Dundas Street West were also restricted.

City Council also requested the Executive Director of Economic Development, Culture and Tourism to report on the impact that these changes in parking restrictions may have on the economic viability of the area.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

The Dundas West BIA was formed in 2006 and is driven by a very dedicated and active Board of Management consisting of retailers, artists, designers and a landscape architect. Representatives of the BIA approached the ward Councillor in 2006 about the feasibility of increasing parking availability in the area by permitting parking during peak periods in the non-peak direction on Dundas Street West.

The proposed changes in parking regulations appear to have broad-based community support. Over 750 signatures were collected in support of the proposal, and several business owners attended Community Council meetings to speak in favour of the changes.

In response to concerns raised by the TTC about the potential impact the proposed changes in parking restrictions would have on streetcar travel times along Dundas Street West, peak period left turns from Dundas Street West were also restricted, and the Director, Transportation Services and the General Manager of the TTC are requested to report in September 2008 on the impact of the changes to TTC service on Dundas Street West.

COMMENTS

Dundas West BIA – Retail Strip

A recent survey of businesses in this area identified a total of 192 active businesses and 37 vacant units in the BIA. The types of business found in the area include: financial and business services (10), travel (7), hair and beauty (15), clothing and accessories (12), art and design (9). Like many of the city's retail strips, this area also serves a significant hospitality/entertainment function. The area has 24 cafes, bars & restaurants.

Most of the businesses along this stretch of Dundas Street West are small, independent businesses. Area business owners represent a diverse range of cultural backgrounds, and many also live in the area.

The surrounding area contains the largest concentration Portuguese residents in the City, so it is no surprise that many of the businesses along this section of Dundas Street West also have a Portuguese flavour.

Impact of Parking on Retail Strips

In researching this report, staff undertook a survey of the recent academic literature about the impact of parking on the economic viability of central city retail strips. The main findings of this research are highlighted in the following quotes:

“...what evidence there is does indicate linkages between parking provision and urban economic vitality. However, there is considerable disagreement between methods concerning the strength of the relationships. Behavioural and attitudinal studies tend to conclude that strong influences exist. Aggregate statistical studies on the contrary find only a very weak relationship.” (Still and Simmonds, page 313).

“A significant difference from typical office activities is that shoppers are generally less constrained in where they shop; they can be more readily influenced by good or bad travel conditions than those who have business or employment in offices.” (Still and Simmonds, page 296).

“Drivers making leisure and shopping trips have a far greater range of options available to them to respond to parking restraint policies than commuters. These include reducing frequency of visits and changing destination as well as altering how and how long they visit a centre for if they still decide to go. The concerns that exist about the potential loss of trade to competing centres must have some foundation. People trade quality of offer against cost and convenience across many parts of their lives and large out of town centres have been observed to impact on city centre shopping in the period following their opening. Urban policy in developed countries is focusing on promoting town and city centre redevelopment so concerns about the impact of traffic restraint policies on competition between adjacent urban centres are at the forefront of political concern. It is surprising therefore to find that those studies conducted to date fail to demonstrate any clear effect of the impact of parking standards or prices on commercial vitality at an aggregate level. This suggests that parking policies may be of lower importance in determining the choice of centre to visit than other factors. The degree to which this statement is true will depend on the similarity of the quality and breadth of the retail offer between adjacent centres.” (Greg Marsden, page 17)

“On-street parking is a key factor in promoting businesses in cities, particularly within central business districts. As a type of shared parking, on-street parking is an efficient means for allowing multiple users to utilize the same space at different times to reach multiple destinations. On-street parking provides easy access to businesses located on city streets and occupies less land per space than off-street parking which requires access lanes in addition to parking spaces. For pedestrians, on-street parking creates a barrier between moving traffic and individuals walking on the sidewalks, providing a measure of safety and reducing the level of perceived noise. Further, depending upon how on-street parking is situated on a street, it can also serve as a traffic calming device, thereby reducing accidents or at least making them less severe.” (Allison de Cerreño, pages 1&2)

“However, on-street parking is not without trade-offs. The same barrier between moving traffic and individuals on the sidewalks can also create visual obstructions for both pedestrians trying to cross intersections and vehicles moving along a street, thus increasing accidents. On-street parking also competes with other uses of roadways, including additional lanes for traffic flow, bike lanes, and wider sidewalks. Further, as drivers search for open spaces, congestion on roadways is increased. Finally, onstreet parking, like all forms of parking, attracts vehicles, which generates more traffic. In fact,

for large cities trying to increase transit ridership, availability and pricing of on-street parking become critical tools.” (Allison L. C. de Cerreño, page 2)

Conclusion

The literature generally seems to support the conclusion that the availability of parking has a positive influence on the viability of a retail strip. For this reason, and given the fact that the parking regulation changes are widely supported by local businesses, it seems reasonable to allow for peak-period parking in the non-peak direction and to have the Director, Transportation Services and the General Manager of the TTC report in September 2008 on the impact of the changes to TTC service on Dundas Street West.

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SIGNATURE



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ATTACHMENTS

Staff Report

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2007/te/bgrd/backgroundfile-5675.pdf>

Letter from Gary Webster, Interim Chief General Manager, Toronto Transit Commission

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2007/te/bgrd/backgroundfile-6399.pdf>

Ben Still and David Simmonds, “Parking restraint policy and urban vitality” *Transport Review* (2000, vol 20, no 3)

Greg Marsden, “The Evidence Base for Parking Policies – A Review” (2006) *Transport Policy* (2006, vol 13, no6) <http://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/2023/>

Allison L. C. de Cerreño, “The Dynamics of On-Street Parking in Large Central Cities” (December 2002) Rudin Center for Transportation Policy and Management, New York University <http://wagner.nyu.edu/transportation/files/street.pdf>