PURPOSE

This report presents information to Council regarding proposed downtown parking configurations on the day of the Kinsmen Santa Claus Parade. These parking configurations are being proposed to ensure the smooth operation of parade activities and to address safety concerns in the downtown core identified by the BIA Board and members of the community. A resolution from the BIA supporting these changes is attached to this report.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT PW 60-2017 Downtown Santa Claus Parade Parking be received for information; and,

THAT Council approve parking configuration Option 3 for the 2017 Santa Claus Parade.

BACKGROUND

The St. Marys Kinsmen Club hosts an annual evening Santa Claus parade with a route that begins at the Pyramid Recreation Centre, heads North on James Street to Queen Street, turning west onto Queen Street, turning South on Water Street, and ending at the municipal parking lot on Elgin Street. The Ontario Provincial Police close all traffic lanes along the parade route. Historically, on-street parking in areas with designated parking stalls has been permitted for the duration of the parade. The majority of parade spectators are concentrated on Queen Street, between Church Street and Water Street, and on Water Street South between Queen Street and Jones Street. As a result, some spectators will use their cars parked in on-street parking stalls as a sheltered viewing location for the parade.

Safety concerns have been vocalized by local businesses along with other members of the public. This year, the BIA has formally communicated those concerns to the Town. There are two main concerns associated with the parked vehicles along the parade route. First, the Santa Claus Parade has a high attendance rate among children. As the cars block their view, the children often move between the cars to watch the parade in the downtown area. As a result, there have been incidents where children flow into the parade route close to the parade itself and have been injured by oncoming parade participants. Secondly, those who view the parade from their vehicles often leave their engine running to remain warm. The exhaust fumes are an irritant to those watching the parade and also pose environmental issues.

The St. Marys BIA have asked that the Town help prevent these issues from occurring at this year’s parade. For these reasons, two possible scenarios to mitigate the concerns are available. Either restrict/regulate Downtown on-street parking or alter the parade route away from areas with defined on-street parking. Staff does not recommend altering the route since it is a signature event in St. Marys with many years of tradition associated with it.
The St. Marys Santa Claus Parade will be occurring on Friday, November 17. Staff is seeking council direction in hopes to mitigate the concerns articulated by the BIA and other members of the community. Staff implemented an on-street parking restriction on Queen Street for the OPP Golden Helmets during Evan’s Touch the Truck in 2016 event and gained knowledge on lessons learned for some of the challenges with closing on-street parking. Staff have experience with parking restrictions and their challenges for winter snow storage removals.

When considering a parking restriction in the core area staff has effective measures to implement the restriction. First, in ideal scenarios, the restriction shall start when traffic volume periods are low to avoid peak parking hours, usually in the early morning or late evening. This results in fewer cars needing to be removed as well as provides more time to contact owners of parked cars and arrange for removals.

Caution tape with barricades has proven to be an effective preventative parking mechanism as it is highly visible and road users are less likely to remove the caution tape. Furthermore, caution tape enables staff to block more parking spaces with less traffic control devices. Using cones to block each space individually is not viable as the Town does not have enough pylons to obstruct all 72 parking spaces and block corner space access in the parade area. Cones have proven somewhat ineffective as drivers will find space between the cones to access parking, or simply move the cones to access parking spaces.

Staff has held internal discussions and has developed five possible parking configurations, given existing traffic control resources, to implement a downtown parking restriction for the parade route.

**Option 1: No Closure**

This option does not disrupt daily traffic patterns or downtown business, and the parade will continue as normal. However, vehicles will remain along the parade route, and the concerns brought forward by community stakeholders will not be addressed. Recently upgraded illuminations standards of the core would also assist to increase safety levels for spectators, but does not address idling concerns.

**Option 2: Full Closure at 1:00 p.m.**

In this scenario, Town parking spaces would be closed from Church Street to Water Street along Queen Street, as well as on Water Street from Queen Street to Jones Street. The closure would begin at 1:00 p.m. and would be in effect until 9:00 p.m., the conclusion of the parade. This option incurs no disruption to the daily traffic patterns until 1:00 p.m. but would suffer a partial disruption to local businesses in the afternoon.

However, this option allows for a limited time frame to notify parked vehicles owners, and for the blocking of spaces as they become available. It cannot be guaranteed that all straggler vehicles will be removed in time for the parade, and it doesn’t prevent someone from parking downtown early in the morning in anticipation of the parade. To implement this method, staff will need to competently ensure traffic control abides by the regulations imposed by OTM Book 7 which outlines temporary traffic control devices. Public Works Operators have OTM Book 7 training and have compliant PPE, they are also familiar with administering traffic control and working around the road allowance.

The presence of the Operators would be required starting at 1:00 p.m. to initiate the closing of parking spaces, and would require additional traffic control devices (cone and barricades) to help facilitate this process. The Town does not currently have enough OTM standard pylons to block all 72 parking spaces, thus, more would have to be acquired. Public Works operators would start to monitor the parking spaces from 1:00 p.m., slowly blocking them off as patrons leave local businesses. Experience from winter operations has led to the discovery that many downtown residents work shifts and utilize the on-street parking when returning from work in the afternoon. The operators may also be required to work additional hours to ensure the closure of all 72 parking spaces and for the removal of traffic control measures after the parade. These additional work hours would require overtime compensation.
Option 3: Partial Closure at 7:00 a.m., and Full Closure at 1:00 p.m.

The closure area would be the same as Option 2, however a partial closure would be enforced beginning at 7:00 a.m. on one side of Queen Street and Water Street in the downtown core. This would initiate the closure process, and the Town Operators would be able to use caution tape to block off larger sections of parking spaces resulting in the reduction of the number of traffic control devices required. At 1:00 p.m. the operators would enforce a complete closure of the parking spaces as per Option 2. This process creates a partial disruption of parking in the morning, and a full disruption in the afternoon. This option enables the staggered closure of parking spaces, and results in limiting the impact on local businesses in the downtown areas, increases the opportunity to have all cars removed from on street spaces, and facilitates a complete parking restriction. This option also reduces the required staff time to complete the full closure as well as required resources. However, staff will still incur overtime hours for removal of the traffic control measures upon the completion of the parade.

Option 4: Full Closure at 7:00 a.m.

This closure would occur throughout the entire duration of business hours, beginning at 7:00 a.m. along on-street parking spaces on Queen Street from Church Street to Water Street, and on Water Street from Queen Street to Jones Street. While similar to Option 3, this option has proved effective in implementation for other events such as Heritage Festival and OPP Golden Helmets. Spaces would be blocked immediately in the morning before routine traffic patterns commence. Furthermore, longer sections can be blocked with caution tape and barricades, reducing the number of traffic control resources required on both sides of the road. Town operators would not be needed to monitor traffic throughout the day. Also, it enables a longer time-frame to notify the owners who need to move their vehicles. Similar to Option 2 and 3, public works operators would be required to administer traffic control. Parking restrictions implemented earlier in the day will require less staff time for setup and removal and can be implemented with existing resources.

Option 5: Partial Closure

Unlike Option 2 and Option 3, only one side of the road would be closed to parking during the parade. Therefore a partial disruption to downtown traffic parking would occur. The crucial issues of safety and environmental concerns would continue to persist on one side of the road. This option is the lowest cost of the solutions proposed, but it is expected due to the number of spectators in attendance that spectator/community concerns would persist.

Option 6: Full Closure starting at 4:00 p.m.

Implementation would involve a larger crew of public staff to cone off parking spaces as they become vacated and available from 4:00pm onward. On the surface this approach appears to be a relatively passive and would have least amount of impact to downtown merchants and traffic patterns. Staff’s experience based on previous parking restrictions with snow storage removal and town events is that the implementation window would not be sufficient to clear all on-street parking. For the Santa Claus Parade in particular, staff have observed cars parked downtown in the early hours of the morning in an attempt to reserve their parking space well into the evening. Furthermore a larger amount of staff time would be required along with additional traffic control cones. Also it should be noted staff have experienced issues with restricting on street parking using cones only. Motorists have been observed will ignoring the cones and maneuvered around to access parking, or simply exit the vehicle and move the cones out of the path.

SUMMARY

This report outlines Six (6) Options for the reconfiguration of parking in the downtown core during the Santa Claus Parade. These Options have been developed based on the concerns raised by the BIA and community members, with the consideration to ensure the smooth operation of the parade as well as the safety and enjoyment of participants and attendees.

It is the recommendation to Council that Option 3: Partial Closure at 7:00 a.m., and Full Closure at 1:00 p.m. be selected as the preferred option. Option 3 addresses the concerns regarding on-street parking
during the Santa Claus Parade, while addressing parking requirement and needs during business hours.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The reconfiguration of parking during the 2017 Santa Claus Parade will have financial implications in regards to staff overtime and in some cases the necessity of acquiring more traffic control resources.

The additional costs of each option are located in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Staff Time (Overtime)</th>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>Total Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Option 1: - No Closure</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>No Additional</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Option 2: - Full Closure at 1:00 p.m.</td>
<td>$724.00</td>
<td>$19.00 per pylon x 33 Pylons = $627.00</td>
<td>$1,351</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Option 3: - Partial Closure at 7:00 a.m., and Full Closure at 1:00 p.m.</td>
<td>$526.00</td>
<td>No Additional</td>
<td>$526.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Option 4: - Full Closure at 7:00 a.m.</td>
<td>$262.00</td>
<td>No Additional</td>
<td>$262.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Option 5: - Partial Closure</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>No Additional</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Option 6 -</td>
<td>$757</td>
<td>$19.00 per pylon x 33 Pylons = $627.00</td>
<td>$1,384</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Apart from Option 1, Option 4 has the least financial implications and the option that is most feasible to ensure complete parking closure. However, Option 3 is similar in design but better addresses the business and residents parking needs during the business day.

**STRATEGIC PLAN**

☒ Not applicable to this report.

**OTHERS CONSULTED**

Trisha McKibbin, Director of Corporate Services / Deputy Clerk  
Todd Thibodeau, Public Works Supervisor

**ATTACHMENTS**

None

**REVIEWED BY**

Recommended by the Department

![Signature](image)

Jed Kelly  
Director of Public Works

**Recommended by the CAO**

![Signature](image)

Brent Kittmer  
CAO / Clerk