



Hamilton

CHRISTMAS FREE PARKING PROGRAM

Presentation to the BIA Advisory Committee

March 22, 2022

Outline of Presentation

- Christmas Free Parking Program History
- Program Benchmarking
- 2021 Program Challenges
- Feedback and Discussion

Christmas Free Parking Program History

- Program began in 2003 by providing two hour limited free parking from Nov. 24 – Dec. 24 in all BIA areas except Concession, Westdale, Ottawa and Dundas (on-street).
- Westdale had free parking only on the six Saturdays before Christmas due to McMaster student parking issues, which was eventually extended to eight Saturdays. This was further amended to four Saturdays and the five week days before Christmas in 2009. This was further amended to the month-free parking program to align with all other BIAs in 2015.

Christmas Free Parking Program History

- Ottawa BIA entered into the program in 2005
- Concession BIA entered into the program in 2012 on a trial basis which was made permanent in 2015

Christmas Free Parking Notification

- Program notifications include all City social media channels, city website, flyers available for circulation through local businesses, bagging of machines where available, Passport Parking App
- Prior to 2021, HMPS meter technician staff opened up approximately 1700 single-space meters to insert “Free Parking” insert



2021 FREE PRE-CHRISTMAS PARKING

FREE ON-STREET PARKING IS AVAILABLE FOR TWO (2) HOURS:

NOVEMBER 24 - DECEMBER 24

- Barton Village B.I.A.
- Hamilton Downtown
(West Ave to Queen, Hunter to Cannon, also James Street from Charlton to Barton)
- Ancaster B.I.A.
- Ottawa Street B.I.A.
- King Street West B.I.A.
- International Village B.I.A.
- Concession Street B.I.A.
- Locke Street B.I.A.
- Westdale Village B.I.A.

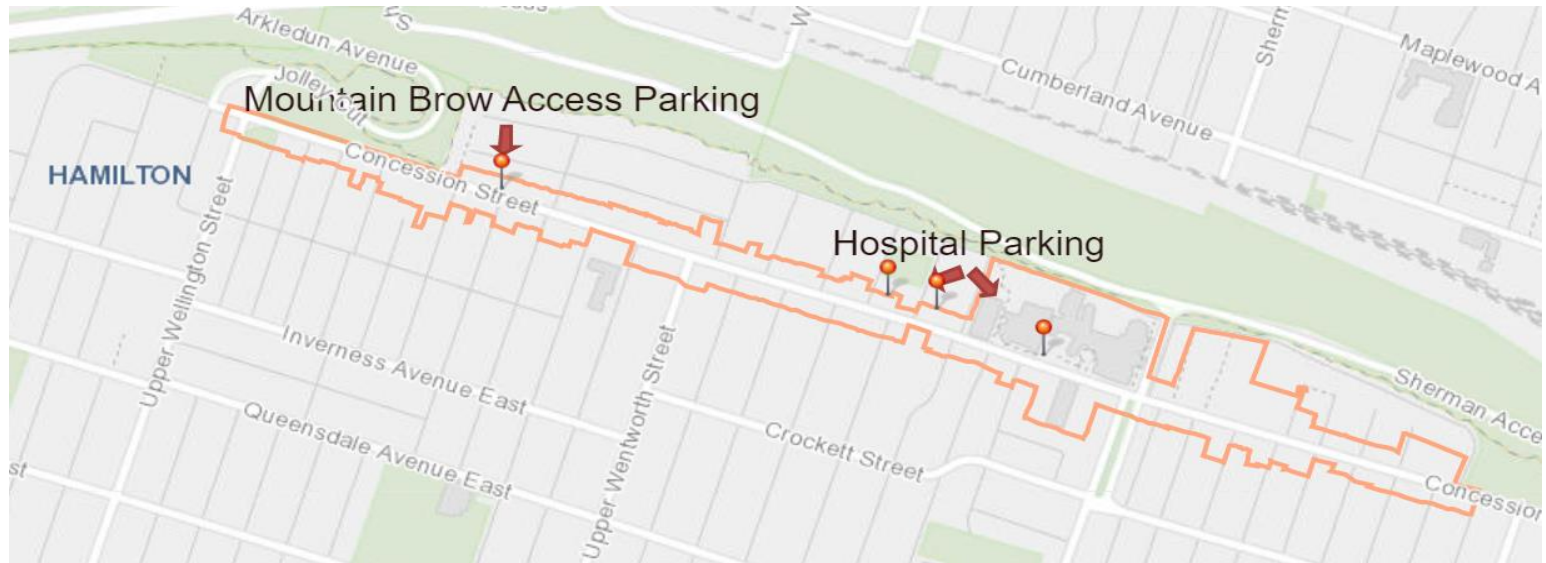
FREE PARKING IN ALL DUNDAS MUNICIPAL LOTS FROM DECEMBER 1 - DECEMBER 31.

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Program Benchmarking

City	Free Parking?	If yes, Duration	Time limit	Method of Notification	Modifications to the Meters	Comments
St. Catharines	Y	Dec. 13 - Dec. 31	3 hrs	Social media, website, flyers to businesses	Stickers on machines	Stickers being torn off machines. Residents cancel permits early to save on monthly parking so had to move date to mid-december. Staff of businesses park in the free parking areas.
Burlington	N	NA	NA	NA	NA	Discontinued in 2020. City says since introducing the program it's made positive changes to downtown parking, including mobile payment options and real-time parking availability signs.
Toronto	N	NA	NA	NA	NA	
Thunder Bay	Y	Dec 17 - Dec 24	2 hours	Social media, website, communication to the BIAs	None	
Winnipeg	N	NA	NA	NA	NA	In December 2021, the City was offering one hour of free on-street parking in order to support businesses struggling with the impacts of COVID-19, but that program had been in place for several months. We also offer two hours of complimentary on-street parking on Saturdays in all paid parking areas but, again, this program is not limited to the month of December.
Windsor	N	COVID Parking since : Dec 14, 2020	15 Mins	Social Media and local press release	None use by APP only	The City of Windsor instituted a 15 minute free parking for curbside parking to assist restaurants for pickup.
Guelph	Y	December 23 to December 27 and again from December 31 to January 2.	24 Hours	Press release, social media and a long standing practice.	We did not make any adjustment to our equipment other than setting our gates to complimentary access	Other than goodwill during the holidays it has not seen an increase in usage.

Concession St. Data Example



2019 On-Street Utilization
(Parking Master Plan)

89%

2021 On-Street Utilization
(Free Christmas Parking)

61.5%

Benefits of Free Christmas Parking Program

- Can be leveraged by businesses in combination with other marketing programs
- Good will gesture that may be appreciated by some shoppers

Challenges of Free Christmas Parking Program

- Potential for non-retail users and employees to take up free parking
- Enforcement of time restrictions necessary and labour intensive
- Increasingly people are using Mobile Payment App and pay before leaving car
- Customers who receive tickets for exceeding time limits surprized and upset
- Branding of program does not reflect an increasingly diverse population

Motion on Parking Meter Inserts

(f) **MOTIONS (Item 11)**

(i) **Parking Meters Located in Business Improvement Areas During the Free Christmas Parking Program (Item 11.1)**

(Braithwaite/Giessler)

WHEREAS, the holiday shopping season is an important season for businesses located in Business Improvement Areas;

WHEREAS, Business Improvement Areas that take part in the Free Christmas Parking Program rely on this benefit for their businesses to attract customers during the holiday shopping season; and,

WHEREAS, parking meters located in the Free Christmas Parking Program areas were not clearly identified for the 2021 Free Christmas Parking Program;

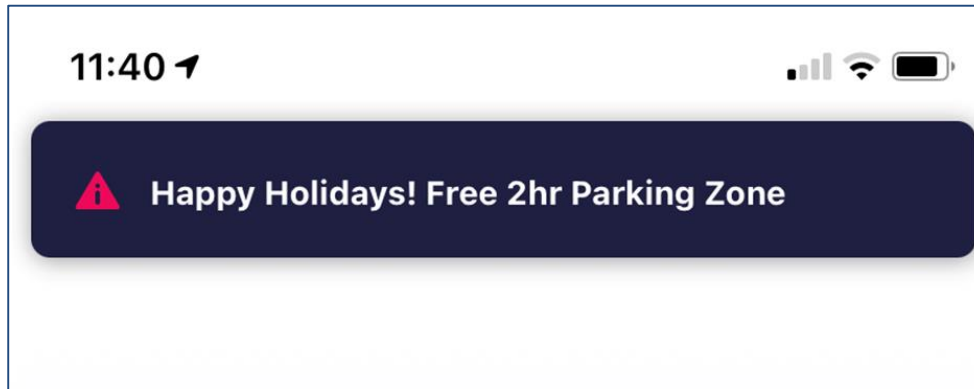
THEREFORE IT BE RESOLVED:

That Parking Staff be directed to investigate ways to clearly mark all parking meters in Business Improvement Areas that take part in the Free Christmas Parking Program during the holiday shopping season (November 24 – December 24) and attend the March 22, 2022 Business Improvement Area Advisory Sub-Committee meeting with an update.

Operational Challenges of Meter Inserts

- Meter insert effort takes 4-5 staff members to complete over 4-5 days, and another 4-5 to remove, resulting up to 10 additional days of free parking in certain areas
- These staff are responsible for responding to technical equipment issues city-wide, meter collection and winter operations which they can't complete during those 8-10 days

Uptake of Passport Mobile Pay



- Almost half of all transactions now processed electronically by credit card or through the app
- Over \$500k of transactions passed through app in 2021
- A great tool to provide communication and messaging

Program Notification

- HMPS can distribute more flyers to BIA areas endorsing the program to hand out to individual businesses, display in shop windows and provide to customers
- Sandwich boards can be placed outside businesses with program messaging to increase reach
- Meter bags can be provided to BIA areas to bag and unbag meters during the appropriate time frame of the program



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Feedback and Discussion Period

THANK YOU