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**Subject:** Apron Parking Restrictions

**Report to:** Thorold City Council

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## Recommendations

1. That Council **DIRECT** staff to provide a report with recommendations on parking regulations following the presentation and adoption of recommendations from the future Parking Master Plan study.

## Key Facts

- On October 3, 2017, Council passed a by-law prohibiting apron parking
- On September 12, 2023, Council directed staff to provide a report on October 3, 2023 assessing options to address the matter of apron parking
- Apron parking will add additional conveniences of parking to residents and visitors
- Apron parking may lead to some public safety concerns

## Budgetary Status

There are no budgetary impacts associated with the recommendation of this report.

## Analysis

At the September 12, 2023 Council meeting, staff were directed to prepare a report assessing options to address the matter of apron parking to be presented on October 3, 2023.

## Historical

On September 19, 2017, City Council passed a motion directing the Chief Building Official to "initiate wording to simplify ticket issuance for no apron parking". A report was received by Council on October 3, 2017 which stated "For public safety, staff has been directed to enforce no parking in the apron of driveways throughout the City." Within the same report of October 3, 2017, staff

proposed adding a definition for “apron” as well as a set fine for apron parking to the Parking and Traffic By-law. Council passed amendments to Parking and Traffic By-law 150-2012 that added a definition for “apron” and the following prohibition of apron parking:

*“3.9.1. No person shall park a vehicle or permit a vehicle to remain parked on any highway:*

*(12) on the apron;*

*(13) on the front lawn*

*With the exception of snow events (being when municipal snow plows have been deployed) only and further that the vehicle must move back onto street parking once the snow plow has cleared the roadway.”*

## **Analysis**

The “apron” is a portion of the highway, also referred to as the municipal road allowance, that has been improved between the roadway and sidewalk providing vehicular access from the roadway to a laneway or parking area on adjacent lands.

Apron parking is currently only permitted on a temporary basis to accommodate the clearing of snow from roadways during snow events and/or on-street parking bans.

Concerns have been raised by some residents that there is insufficient space for parking on the collective of their private property and the adjacent roadway to accommodate all vehicles.

Allowing parking on the apron of a driveway may accommodate the parking of additional vehicles and relieve some of the challenges of locating a parking space on the roadway or the expense of increasing the parking area on private property.

In 2017, Council directed staff to enforce apron parking due to public safety concerns. The specific public safety concerns were not shared at that time however the following are items for consideration that may impact public safety as a result of apron parking.

1. Reduced or obstructed lines of sight for:
  - a. drivers backing out from properties
  - b. drivers on the roadway to see vehicles backing out from properties
  - c. pedestrians travelling along a sidewalk or roadway
2. Blocked access for vehicles on private property to the roadway.

Municipal by-law enforcement staff do not have access to adequate information to determine if a vehicle parked on an apron is owned or operated by a resident or visitor of a specific property. There have been previous challenges with individuals parking vehicles on neighbours' lands or blocking driveways. The allowance of apron parking may facilitate a vehicle, that is not in the care or control of the occupant on the adjacent property, being parked on an apron and thereby blocking access to the roadway. Municipal staff will not be able to identify this until a complaint is received which may take time to respond to.

Additionally, vehicles parked on an apron may impact access and response times for emergency responders when attending an emergency at an adjacent property.

A consultant has been retained to analyze parking within the City of Thorold, provide recommendations, and develop a city-wide parking master plan. Apron parking is an item that will be reviewed as a part of the parking analysis however the results of the study are not anticipated until later in 2024.

Council should weigh the added convenience of apron parking to accommodate additional vehicles with the possible public safety concerns when considering the allowance of apron parking.

Staff have reviewed the option of allowing apron parking however recommend that Council maintain the current parking regulations prohibiting apron parking until such time as all recommendations of the future parking master plan are presented on a future date.

## **Impact on the Environment, Climate Change**

The allowance of apron parking may continue to promote a car centric society. However, staff were not able to study any possible environmental or climate change

impacts in time for this report. Therefore, any environmental or climate change related impacts to this Report are unknown.

## **Alternatives Reviewed**

The option of authorizing apron parking has been reviewed. Amending the Parking and Traffic By-law to allow apron parking year-round would remove all seasonal prohibitions associated with apron parking. Council may also consider authorizing apron parking for longer than 12 hours as currently prohibited anywhere on a highway. Should apron parking be authorized by Council then further amendments will be required to the Parking and Traffic By-law to ensure parking on an apron does not contravene another provision including but not limited to:

- 1) parking on a driveway too close to a roadway
- 2) parking in such a position that will prevent the convenient removal of any other vehicle previously stopped or parked

In addition to amending some current provisions, additional provisions should be considered when authorizing apron parking such as:

- 1) limiting apron parking to aprons providing access to residential properties only and provided that the vehicle parked on the apron does not obstruct the entire driveway.

Although the allowance of apron parking will accommodate the convenience of additional parking for residents and visitors, staff recommend that Council wait until recommendations of the Parking Master Plan are presented in order to consider all options and their impacts associated with parking.

## **Relationship to Strategic Plan**

The recommendations of this report align with Council's strategic priority of responsible growth and infrastructure planning. Conducting a fulsome study of parking needs will help identify various parking related challenges across the municipality and guide responsible decision making on the needs and impacts options may have on the parking infrastructure in Thorold.

## **Other Pertinent Reports**

- DES2017-78 Parking By-law Amendment for Apron and Front Lawn Parking

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### **Prepared and Recommended by:**

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### **Approved and Submitted by:**

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## **Appendices**

None