



## **PARKS, FACILITIES AND RECREATION SERVICES**

*Staff Report*

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REPORT NO: PFRS 2022-23

TO: Council

SUBMITTED BY: Sandy Jackson, Director Parks, Facilities and Recreation Services

PREPARED BY: Sandy Jackson, Director Parks, Facilities and Recreation Services

REVIEWED BY: Sharon Chambers, CAO, Patrick Kelly, Director Corporate Services

DATE: May 16, 2022

SUBJECT: Wilmot Smart Commute Program

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### RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Report PFRS 2022-023 be received for information; and further,

THAT Council endorse the proposed Wilmot Smart Commute Program locations, namely four (4) spaces at the Wilmot Recreation Complex, two (2) spaces at the Kirkpatrick Park parking lot, and two (2) spaces at the Wilmot Administration Complex upon completion of the parking lot expansion project and two (2) spaces at the New Dundee Community Centre.

### SUMMARY:

This report recommends that dedicated carpool spaces be identified with signage at the Wilmot Recreation Complex, Kirkpatrick Park, New Dundee Community Centre, and the Wilmot Administrative Complex when the lot is expanded. The addition of these spaces will promote the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and will result in positive environmental impacts.

**BACKGROUND:**

In 2019, Council passed the following Resolution No. 2019-171:

THAT Wilmot Township shall create a ‘Smart Commute Wilmot Program’. Whereas we will take a phased approach at creating designated carpooling parking spots with appropriate signage located at our municipal properties and locations recommended by staff report, starting with the Wilmot Recreation Complex, and starting in 2020.

Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, this initiative commenced 2022.

**REPORT:**

Workforce demands are changing. The way we get to work is being redefined and with the highest fuel prices in history, workers are increasingly interested in having commuting options. Staff researched other Smart Commute programs including the Region of Waterloo which outlined the following benefits of carpooling and commuting:

- Reduced parking demand and costs
- Increased employee satisfaction and retention
- Increased access to top employees
- Positive corporate exposure and leadership
- Environmental benefits with reduced green house gases.

With the recent installation of the EV Charging stations at the WRC, Kirkpatrick Park, and the Wilmot Administration Complex, adding dedicated commuter spaces is the next natural step towards reaching the TransformWR target of a 50 percent reduction in greenhouse gases by 2030. Should Council approve this report and the recommended locations for dedicated spaces, signage will be installed, and the Township website and social media channels will be used to promote the locations.

Research conducted by staff showed that most of the communities that have extensive Smart Commute programs are large urban centres who deal with significant traffic congestion issues. Being a small, rural Township, Wilmot will benefit from adding a few carpooling spaces available in various locations during peak office hours. The following sign is an example of what may be considered to identify these spaces:



Hours will be added to this signage to indicate that carpool spaces are reserved Monday through Friday 6am – 6pm. This will allow use of these spaces by evening and weekend customers when parking is in the highest demand.

When considering locations for the dedicated carpool spaces, the following criteria were used:

- Proximity to Highway 7/8 corridor and/or 401 corridors,
- Parking spaces that have winter maintenance,
- Parking lot having ample parking spaces such that dedicating these spaces for carpooling will not unduly impact the users of facilities and/or parks,
- Parking spaces that are highly visible from the street or are in high vehicular traffic areas to ensure security of vehicles being left for long hours.

Prior to this report coming to Council, the Sustainability Working Group (SWG) reviewed the recommended number and location of carpool spaces and had two (2) suggestions:

- Consider Mannheim Community Centre due to its proximity to the highway and main road;
- Consider “high value” parking spots i.e., close to entrance/exit of building and/or closest to entrance/exit of highway/road depending on sites to entice usage.

Mannheim Community Centre was considered by staff, but not included in this report as a recommended location due to the smaller parking lot size, the high rate of programs and rentals that would require these spaces, and lack of visibility from the street. When this community centre is in full programming, parking can become a challenge, and with no streetside visibility into the parking lot staff felt there could be vandalism challenges when cars park in the commuter spaces and the public is aware that they will likely be there a long time. Should there be requests for carpooling spaces at this location, this can be considered in future.

With respect to the second suggestion from the SWG, staff will take this under advisement as locations are finalized, however parking spaces closest to entrances and exits of the buildings are important for seniors and families with small children using the facilities.

Staff feel the recommended locations will provide viable options for carpoolers and with some promotional efforts this new initiative can provide some environmental benefits.

#### ALIGNMENT WITH THE TOWNSHIP OF WILMOT STRATEGIC PLAN:

Adding dedicated carpooling spaces in key locations in the Township supports the following Strategic Plan Goals:

- Economic Prosperity
- Environmental Protection
- Quality of Life, and
- Responsible Governance

#### ACTIONS TOWARDS UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS:

- 7. Affordable and Clean Energy
- 11. Sustainable Cities and Communities
- 12. Responsible Consumption and Production

**FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:**

Dedicating these spaces for carpooling will cost approximately \$500 for signage and will require several hours of staff time to install them at the various locations. This unbudgeted expense will be funded through the Parks and Facilities operating budget.

**ATTACHMENTS:** n/a