

TOWN OF ESSEX

COLCHESTER SECONDARY PLAN PARKING STUDY

JULY 21, 2023

DRAFT



Source: Town of Essex and Google Streetview



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PROJECT NO.: 221-02714-00

CLIENT REF:

DATE: JULY 21, 2023

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1 INTRODUCTION

The Town of Essex has undertaken the process of updating their Official Plan which was last updated in 2017. A key component of the new Official Plan is the review and update of the Colchester Secondary Plan (CSP). The CSP was previously adopted in 2007 to conceptualize the development of the waterfront hamlet of Colchester. A parking study was to be completed, as part of the CSP, to determine if current on- and off-street parking areas can support residential tourism and growth in Colchester.

Nestled along the picturesque shores of Lake Erie, Colchester offers a serene and scenic setting that captivates both locals and visitors alike. Colchester is known for its agricultural roots, with vast stretches of fertile land and vineyards. As shown in **Figure 1**, the Colchester Harbour and Beach provide the focal point of the community where residents and visitors can relax during the summer months and enjoy the small-town charm.



Figure 1: Aerial of Colchester (Source: Google Maps)

According to the 2021 Census, the population of Colchester (2,300) saw an annual population growth of just under one percent between 2016 and 2021. This growth rate slightly outpaces that of the Town of Essex but is less than the average for the province of Ontario. The median age of the population is just under 50 years old with one in five residents over the age of 65. By comparison, Colchester has a higher median age than both the Town of Essex and the province of Ontario. While many residents are employed in construction and manufacturing, the primary industries in Colchester are agriculture, tourism, and small businesses.

This Parking Study provides an in-depth review of parking concerns in Colchester to address current and future parking needs. Through a comprehensive review of relevant policies and studies, and interviews with key stakeholders a list of parking priorities and recommendations was developed to best deal with Colchester's current and future parking needs.

2 POLICY REVIEW

This section builds on relevant county and local-level planning documents to ensure that the Parking Study aligns with previously established objectives, visions, and provisions. The following overview provides context to the comprehensive planning policies and plans that inform the development of the Parking Study.

2.1 COUNTY OF ESSEX OFFICIAL PLAN AND TOWN OF ESSEX OFFICIAL PLAN

The County of Essex Official Plan establishes a policy framework that commits municipalities to growth management, resource conservation, and land use decisions. The Town of Essex Official Plan sets out in general terms the future pattern of development for the Town. The purpose of the Town's Official Plan consists of designating sufficient lands to accommodate future developments, enhancing the Town as a desirable place for living, working, and leisure, and ensuring that transportation facilities satisfy the needs of residents for sustainable, accessible, safe, and efficient movement. There are existing policies and provisions outlined in the Colchester Hamlet Guideline Plan (within the Town's Official Plan) that provide specific guidance on parking and access. The Secondary Plan consists of development strategies that identify a cohesive vision for the Colchester Hamlet by providing planning directions of the Main Street and Waterfront Area. The vision is to create a complete and sustainable waterfront community that accommodates residents' daily activities and promotes the surrounding features. Policies that have the highest degree of relevance to this study are referenced below:

Policy Considerations

- Ensure the location and design of onsite parking and vehicle accesses minimize impact on abutting residential development and other design elements and ensure adequate off-street parking facilities to serve proposed developments (Town of Essex Official Plan, 2008).
- Establish criteria of secondary uses that ensures parking uses do not create safety hazard or become a public nuisance (County of Essex Official Plan, 2015).

Main Street Area

- Accommodate parking behind or at the rear of buildings rather than in front to minimize potential conflicts with other users and create a more pedestrian-oriented, 'main street' environment along Murdock Street. Access to parking areas will be encouraged from rear lanes that are accessible from existing side streets. Developments should be designed to create and maintain safe and convenient pedestrian linkages, be barrier free for persons with disabilities and encourage shared parking. This was recognized as a long-term vision for the main street and is included in the Community Design Guidelines.
- Prohibit front yard parking on Main Street and provide on-street parking and bicycle lanes on both sides of Murdock Street and Jackson Street within the Main Street Area.
- Require a minimum right-of-way width of 28 metres for Jackson Street to accommodate on-street parking, future public transit opportunities, bicycle lanes and wider boulevards, by acquisition through the development approvals process, dedication, or other means.

Waterfront Area

- Reconfigure and expand the parking area to accommodate additional parking on the periphery of the park with clearly identified pedestrian walkways.
- Examine opportunities to provide additional public parking to accommodate resident and tourist parking within and in proximity to the Waterfront Area.
- Ensure the parking area design minimizes the potential conflicts with pedestrians and park/beach users.

2.2 TOWN OF ESSEX ZONING BYLAW NO. 1037

A zoning by-law governs the land use in the community by stating the primary use of land, location of buildings and structures, specific requirements on how a use, building, or structure may be located on a property, and parking requirements. The Zoning By-law implements the policies of the Official Plan. The Town of Essex Zoning By-law No. 1037, being a by-law to zone all lands within the limits of the Town of Essex, includes sections on parking space and parking area regulations (section 11 and 12 respectively). Relevant by-laws and provisions are listed in **Table 1**.

Table 1: Policy Considerations (Source: Town of Essex)

| By-law Section | Relevant Policies and Provisions |
|--|--|
| <p>Section 11 – Parking Space Regulations</p> | <p>Application</p> <p>The regulations for parking spaces in this Section apply to the use of all lots in all zoning districts enumerated in this by-law, unless otherwise specifically provided in this by-law.</p> <p>General Parking Space Provisions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each required parking space, not including a required loading space, shall have a minimum length of 5.5m (18f) and width of 2.75m (9f), provided that where one side of the parking space is bounded by a wall or fence, the minimum parking space width shall be 3.5m (11.5f); • A barrier free parking space shall have a minimum length of 5.5m (18f) and a minimum width of 4.5m (15f); • A parking space is permitted in a required yard, except a required front yard, landscaped yard or landscaped buffer, unless otherwise specifically provided by this by-law; • No person shall permit or cause to permit a parking area or parking space to encroach upon a public walkway. <p>Location of Parking Spaces</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All required parking spaces, including all required bicycle parking spaces, special motor vehicle parking spaces and loading spaces, shall be located on the same lot as the use(s) they are intended to serve; • A corner lot cannot be used for the parking of a motor vehicle within 6m (20f) of the intersection of any two streets or a street and a railway right of way, except when the motor vehicle is parked within a building. |

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>Section 12 – Parking Area Regulations</p> | <p>Application</p> <p>Unless otherwise provided in this by-law, no person shall construct or maintain a parking area, which is used for the provision of five (5) or more parking spaces, except in accordance with the regulations of this Section.</p> <p>Construction of Parking Areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All parking areas shall be graded and drained into the municipal sewer or municipally approved drainage system to prevent the runoff of surface water onto a street, alley or abutting properties; • Outside of an urban centre or hamlet, all parking and access areas shall, at minimum, be covered with a gravel surface and treated on a continual basis so as to prevent dust contamination onto abutting properties; • Full cut-off lights shall be used to illuminate any parking area and shall be arranged and designed so as to deflect light away from abutting lots on which a dwelling or dwelling unit is located; • All required parking spaces shall be accessible directly and exclusively from a maneuvering aisle. |
|---|--|

2.3 ADDITIONAL POLICY DOCUMENTS

County Wide Active Transportation System (CWATS) Master Plan 2012

The County of Essex adopted the County Wide Active Transportation System Master Plan in 2012 to expand and connect active transportation corridors like walking paths and bicycle lanes throughout the region. Along with its participating municipalities, the County developed the Master Plan to identify a long-term strategy for active transportation in the region. The Waterfront Trail that passes through Colchester and a north-south connection with Harrow along Dunn Road and County Road 13 were identified as part of the CWATS network. At the time of this report, the CWATS Master Plan was being updated.

Town of Essex – Strategic Action Plan 2023-2027

The Town of Essex has developed a comprehensive Strategic Action Plan that outlines its visions and objectives for various aspects of community development. The Strategic Plan addresses key areas such as infrastructure investments, jobs and economic opportunities, tourism, and collaboration with community groups to foster economic prosperity and enhance the overall quality of life of residents and visitors. The plan acknowledges the importance of managing growth in a sustainable manner, one that balances economic growth with environmental stewardship and community well-being. Parking was recognized to promote tourism as an economic driver. The Town plans to “review parking challenges in Colchester Park/Beach to determine short-term and long-term solutions” (Strategic Action Plan, 2023-2027).

Climate Ready 2021-2026

Climate Ready is a Climate Change Adaption Plan for the Town of Essex 2021-2026, intended to inspire both Town Administration and community members to work together towards addressing local climate issues. The Colchester Harbour Marina received Blue Flag certification, which signifies that the beach/marina has met high international standards in water quality, environmental management, and safety and services. Some climate change issues identified in the Colchester community consist of flooding of residential streets and drains due to intense storm events, and intense wave action from high wind and high lake water levels.

Colchester Hamlet Guideline Plan – Community Open House 2018

In 2018, the Town of Essex hosted a Community Open House for residents to provide their input on the Colchester Hamlet Guideline Plan. One of the main concerns raised by the community was the increased traffic and the issue of

visitors parking in front yards. As a mitigation measure, the Town proposed to use the municipally owned land at the corner of County Road 50 and Dunn Road for public parking. An additional proposed measure was the rezoning of land from residential to commercial on specific sections of Murdock Street and Jackson Street. Based on the community feedback, most participants supported the proposed parking measures.

Town of Essex Agritourism Development Strategy 2021

The Town’s Agritourism Development Strategy (2021) supports objectives such as establishing a shared understanding of agritourism among stakeholders, evaluating challenges to agritourism development, identifying the destination’s strengths and opportunities within the agritourism sector, and looking at actions for growing the visitor economy through agritourism. The Town of Essex acknowledges its unique assets and the potential of agritourism to target broader markets and act as a driver of economic growth. The report outlines specific initiatives and various projects underway in the town, including the development of tourism infrastructure, promotion of local attractions and events, and collaboration with tourism-related organizations. It also highlights the importance of land use planning and zoning regulations to guide development in a sustainable manner.

Town of Essex Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (2019-2024)

The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan provides the framework for developing accessibility standards. The Town of Essex will meet accessibility laws when building or making major changes to public spaces, including accessible off-street and on-street parking. The Sub-Committee of the Essex Accessibility Advisory Committee (EAAC) performed a survey of accessible parking in Harrow and Colchester Centre which revealed there were sufficient spaces, though better signage and marking were required.

Town of Essex: Colchester Centre Landscape Master Plan 2012

In 2012, The Town of Essex initiated a comprehensive master planning process for Colchester Centre. The intent of the Plan was to provide specific program elements, site composition, and design to enable a realistic implementation process. The Landscape Master Plan outlines parking requirements and proposed plans in key destinations and areas as shown in **Table 2**. Relevant goals and visions included the expansion of the marina, accommodated by improvements to the steep entry road and the enlargement of the parking lot, which is now overflowing. Extend parking further away from the marina and into residential areas.

Table 2: Colchester Centre Landscape Master Plan Concepts (Source: Town of Essex)

| Jackson Streetscape | Colchester Common | Proposed Lower Parking |
|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct visitors to the waterfront. • Provide on-street parking and parking lots in the rear of the development. • Restrict surface parking between Jackson Street and the building itself. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable the grassy lawn to serve as a functional parking space for overflow parking. | <p>Since the Marina and waterfront parking is predominantly at the top of the slope, it is proposed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A lower parking lot should be created narrow enough to avoid restricting marina space while providing comfortable circulation for vehicles with boat trailers. |

2.4 SUMMARY

The policy review of relevant planning documents revealed recurring themes and visions. The Town of Essex prioritizes sustainable growth management – balancing economic growth with environmental stewardship and community well-being. This is essential in managing parking needs as there may be more sustainable options and opportunities than creating new capacity. The points are summarized as follows:

- 1 Consider overarching themes: Parking solutions should align with broader goals such as addressing climate change, promoting tourism, enhancing the visitor economy, and contributing to the overall growth of the town.

The Town recognizes its unique assets and therefore believes agritourism has the potential to attract a wider market and stimulate economic growth. This may be a consideration in the parking planning process.

- 2 Create a pedestrian-oriented environment, reconfigure parking areas, and minimize conflicts with other users: To promote a pedestrian-friendly environment, parking areas should be reconfigured, and additional spaces should be accommodated. Conflicts with pedestrians and park/beach users should be minimized.
- 3 Develop short-term and long-term solutions to parking challenges: Both immediate and sustainable long-term strategies should be developed to address parking challenges effectively.
- 4 Improve and expand parking infrastructure: Enhancements should be made to the existing parking facilities and infrastructure to accommodate the growing number of vehicles. This includes creating additional parking spaces and facilities.
- 5 Importance of designating sufficient lands for parking and ensuring accessibility and safety: It is crucial to designate adequate land for parking purposes. Additionally, the parking areas should be easily accessible and designed to ensure the safety of users. This provision applies to both off-street and on-street parking to cater to the needs of residents and visitors.
- 6 Addressing increased traffic and visitors parking on front yards: Measures need to be taken to prevent the parking of vehicles on front yards due to increased traffic and visitors. This can be achieved through the prohibition of visitor parking on front yards.
- 7 Proposed changes and visions for Main Street and Waterfront area: Parking changes and visions for both the Main Street and Waterfront area should be developed and implemented to ensure efficient and convenient parking options.

3 PARKING CONDITIONS

WSP conducted stakeholder interviews with several departments within the Town of Essex including Infrastructure Services, Community Services, Economic Development, and Capital Works & Asset Management. WSP also conducted an interview with Tourism Windsor-Essex. These interviews along with additional relevant information provided by the Town allowed WSP to develop a thorough understanding of existing and future parking conditions.

3.1 EXISTING CONDITIONS

In Colchester, public parking near the Harbour/Beach is provided through several off-street lots along Jackson Street. As illustrated in **Figure 2**, lots A, B, C, D, and LL are within a short walk to the Harbour/Beach. Parking Lot E and G are both municipally owned lots; while the County Road Lot 50 (Lot 'F') is privately owned with an agreement in place for the Town to rent out the lot for 2023.

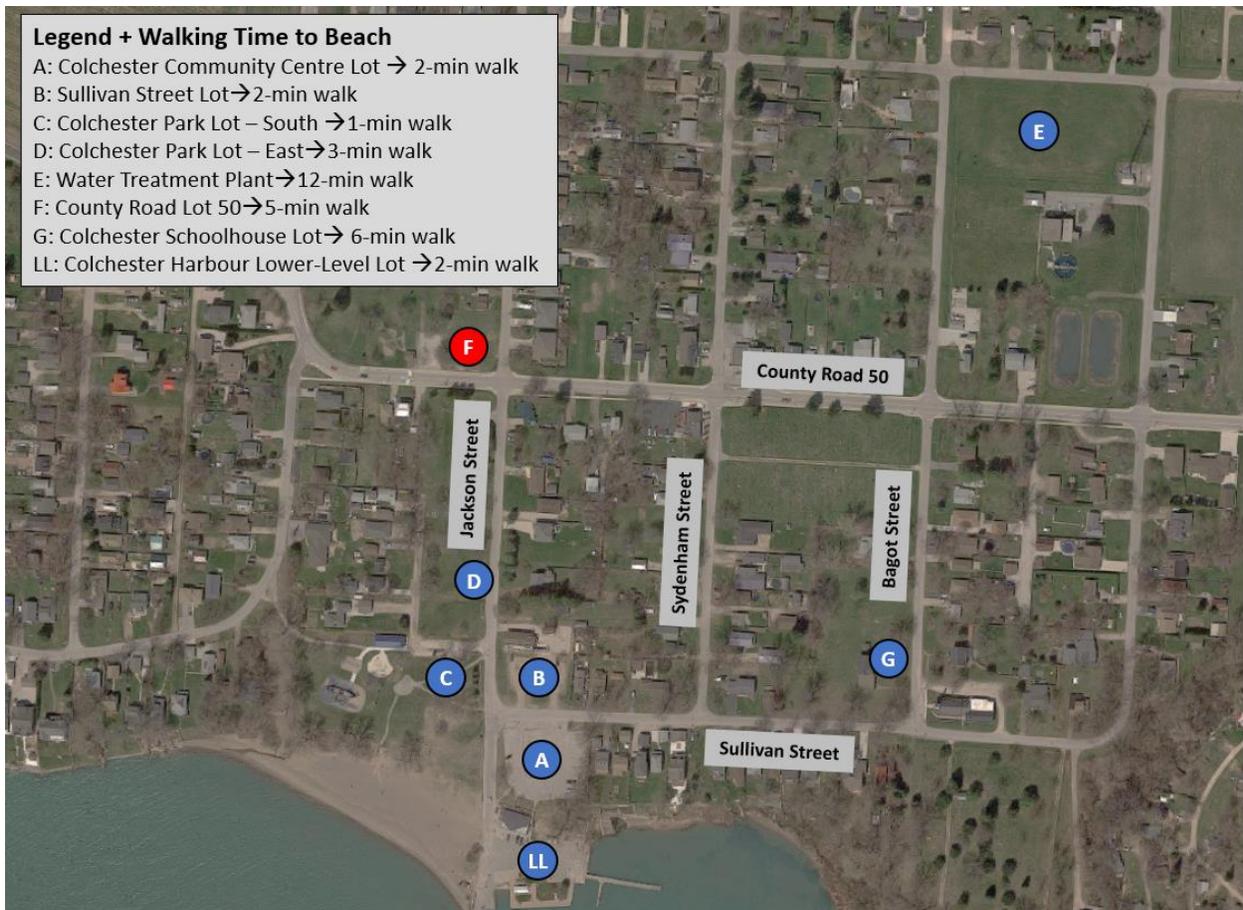


Figure 2: Parking Inventory in Colchester (Source: Google Maps)

The number of parking spaces for each lot is summarized in **Table 3**. It should be noted that the totals for Lots E, F, and G are approximate and does not necessarily represent the actual number of vehicles that park in those lots. There is no overnight parking permitted at any of the lots and there are no parking fees throughout the day for passenger vehicles.

Table 3: Parking Inventory in Colchester

| Lot Designation | Total Public Parking Spaces | Additional Parking Spaces |
|------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| Lot A | 20 (including 2 accessible) | 16 spaces for facility access 14 spaces for trailer parking 1 space for security |
| Lot B | - | 19 spaces for trailer parking* |
| Lot C | 12 (including 1 accessible) | - |
| Lot D | 13 | - |
| Lot E | 56 | - |
| Lot F | 18 | - |
| Lot G | 94 | |
| Lot LL | 2 (both accessible) | 30 spaces for permit parking 1 space for accessible trailer |

*Trailer parking permitted from 6 a.m. to 1 p.m.

As noted from the stakeholder interviews, parking is busiest between June and September on weekends. Moreover, long weekends, such as Labour Day, are much busier as Colchester attract visitors from not only across the County, but from the Greater Toronto Area and the United States. The warmer beach temperatures and shallow waters make it more appealing than other beaches along Lake Erie. Additionally, there is a growing cottage industry in Colchester. In Essex County there are over 800 cottages with over 100 in the Town of Essex. In fact, approximately half of the visitors to the beach are visiting friends or relatives of locals and in which case the beach was not the key driver for their trip.

On a busy day, the off-street lots (A, B, C, and LL) will reach capacity first followed by the angled parking along the west side of Jackson Street (shown as Lot D in **Figure 2**). On these days, it is not uncommon for drivers to circle the block from Jackson Street to Sullivan Street and back to County Road 50 several times in search of a parking space in one of these lots rather than on-street parking on nearby streets or parking at further lots.

On-street parking is not common in Colchester. For instance, despite a 20m right-of-way (ROW) along Sydenham Street, drivers are hesitant to parallel park adjacent to private properties. As shown in **Figure 3**, the paved roadway is approximately 6m wide and with no visible delineation between the Town's ROW and private property, most drivers will not park on these side streets such as Sydenham and Bagot.



Figure 3: Sydenham Street ROW (Source: County of Essex)

The Canada Day long weekend was described by stakeholders as the busiest weekend of the year. In 2022, the Town retained RC Spencer Associates Inc. to conduct a traffic impact study to better understand operations along Jackson Street between County Road 50 and Sullivan Street. The analysis was conducted mid-afternoon on Saturday July 2nd during the Canada Day long weekend. Along with traffic data collection, the study collected parking utilization at Lots A-D and F, shown in **Figure 4**. The results of the utilization survey indicated that all lots were not only at capacity, but many were operating above capacity with drivers squeezing into the parking lots in areas that were not marked as parking spaces. The study also found that the total traffic volume in the peak hour along Jackson Street was just under 180 vehicles, which validates the anecdotal statements from the key stakeholders that many vehicles will drive around Jackson Street and other local streets until they find a spot in one of the main lots.

| | Lot "A" | | | Lot "B" | Lot "C" | | Lot "D" | Lot "F" |
|---|------------|-----|----|---------|------------|---|------------|------------|
| | G | R | B | G / B | G | A | G | G |
| | 18 | 16 | 14 | 20 | 11 | 1 | 18 | 18 |
| 1:00 p.m. | 18 | 14 | 10 | 15 | 12 | 0 | 20 | 21 |
| 2:30 p.m. | 20 | 14 | 10 | 16 | 12 | 0 | 20 | 32 |
| 4:00 p.m. | 20 | 16 | 8 | 19 | 12 | 0 | 21 | 40 |
| Max % Usage | 111 | 100 | 71 | 95 | 109 | 0 | 117 | 222 |
| General (G) Reserved (R) Boats / Trailers (B) Accessible (A) | | | | | | | | |

Figure 4: 2022 Parking Utilization Near Beach (Source: RC Spencer Associates Inc.)

From the stakeholder interviews, the Schoolhouse (Lot G) and the Water Treatment Plant (Lot E) lots do not experience the same level of occupancy unless it is a special event or long weekend. Often these lots will be partially full during summer weekends with many visitors unwilling to walk from those lots to the beach.

Finally, based on comments from stakeholders, only a small portion of visitors bike or walk to the beach area. It is more common for these trips to take place on weekdays rather than weekends. The primary active transportation connection to Colchester is the Waterfront Trail along County Road 50, which is provided through a paved shoulder to the east and west. In Colchester, between Dunn Road and County Road 13, it is a shared pathway on both sides of the County Road 50 (Murdoch Street). Additionally, the paved shoulders on Dunn Road north to County Road 13 provide a cycling connection to Harrow. A sidewalk at the southwestern corner of the County Road 50/Jackson intersection connects the Waterfront Trail to the beach area along the west side of Jackson Street, and a sidewalk through the park to Dunn Street provides another option for cyclists and pedestrians accessing the Beach from the west side of Colchester. A sidewalk from the intersection of Jackson Street and Sullivan Street to the beach provides a gentle and more accessible slope for pedestrians and people with mobility challenges to the beach. The active transportation network is shown in **Figure 5**.



Figure 5: Active Transportation Facilities in Colchester (Source: Google Maps)

3.2 FUTURE CONDITIONS

Commercial and residential growth is expected in Colchester in the short and long term. In 2023, the Grove Motel will open at the northeast corner of Dunn Road and County Road 50. It is expected that the Motel would be at maximum occupancy during peak season. A longer-term development is the Colchester Bay Condominium development located at the northwest corner of County Road 50 and Dunn Road, as shown in **Figure 6**. While there are no imminent plans to begin construction, it is anticipated that this development will eventually be constructed. When complete, the development is estimated to increase the population of Colchester by approximately 500 residents. To access the beachfront by foot or by bike, residents and visitors from both these developments would be required to cross County Road 50 at the designated crosswalk just east of the Dunn/County Road 50 intersection.

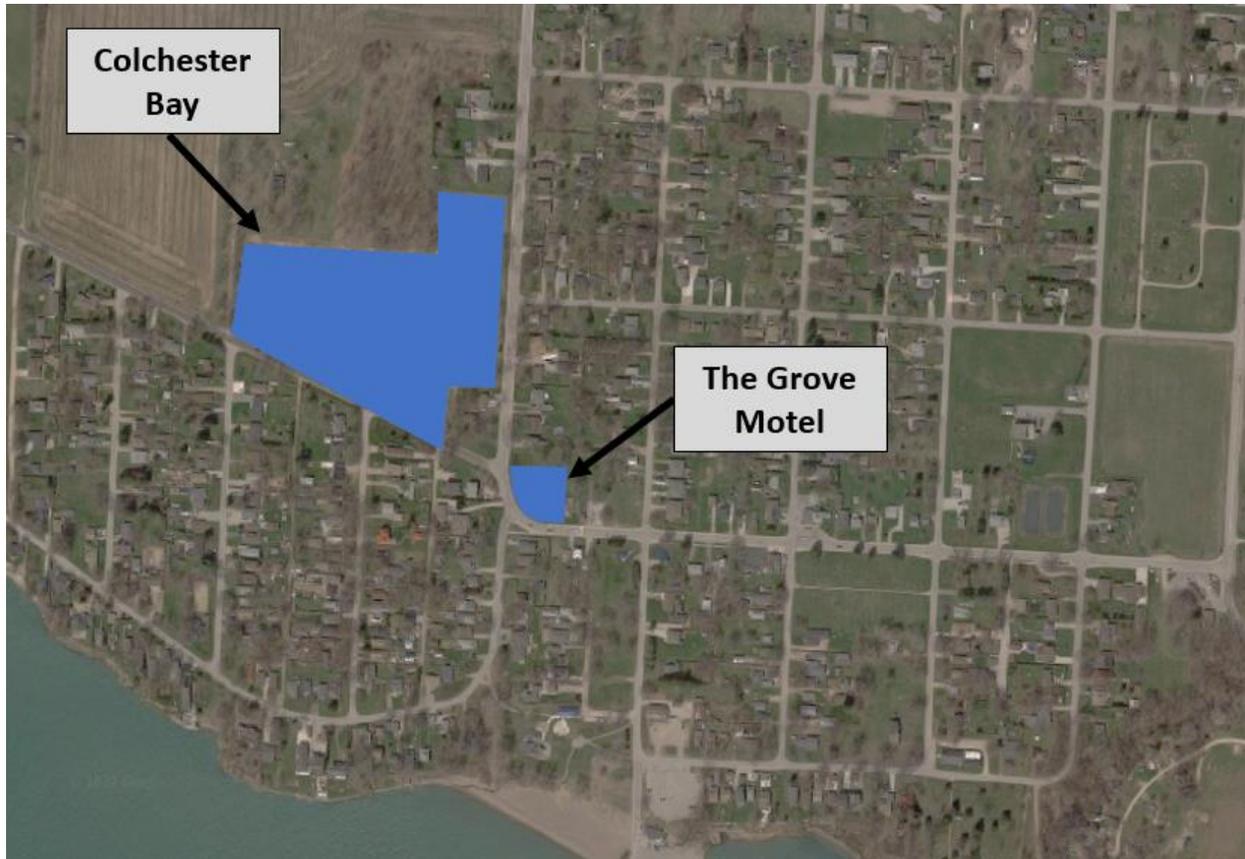


Figure 6: Proposed Developments in Colchester (Source: Google Maps)

Additionally, there has been continued growth from wineries along County Road 50 in the past decade with new wineries expected to open in the future. There is a growing desire from visitors and businesses for a transportation service along County Road 50 to connect various wineries and public amenities. From our stakeholder engagement it was noted that the interest from the public is from the younger generations and tourists, and interest on the private side from the wineries and the Grove Motel.

The Colchester Secondary Plan identified future commercial growth along County Road 50 in Colchester. However, most of that land is currently residential and would require private investment for re-zoning. As previously stated, Lot F along County Road 50 is not owned by the Town. While there is an agreement for the Town leasing out the land, it is expected that the land will eventually be sold for future development. A common comment from the stakeholder interviews was that this land cannot be relied upon for medium and long-term parking plans. Overall, the Town does not view leases as a long-term solution and there are limited publicly owned lots in Colchester that could be used for additional parking.

To create more parking spaces, the RC Spencer Associates traffic study recommended the conversion of Jackson Street (and potentially Sullivan Street) into a one-way street to accommodate additional parking. The Town of Essex Council voted against that recommendation in Spring 2023 citing boat-turning radius at the Jackson/Sullivan intersection and the desire to explore alternate options along Sydenham and Bagot Streets.

4 PRIORITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Parking in Colchester is a crucial component to the continued growth of the community. WSP has prepared a list of priorities and recommendations to ensure that both existing and future parking demand is managed appropriately in the community to best align with existing and future policy, and anticipated economic growth.

4.1 MAKE PARKING MORE EFFICIENT

The Parking Conditions review indicated that there are limited opportunities for more parking lots in Colchester. Leases, while helpful in the short-term, are not a long-term strategy and the Town owns limited land near the Beach and Harbour. However, the review of existing conditions indicated that there are opportunities to increase efficiency with the spaces and lots that the Town currently owns and operates.

RECOMMENDATION #1: OPTIMIZE OPERATIONS AT THE SCHOOLHOUSE LOT

Compared to the lots that are in the immediate vicinity of the Beach/Harbour, the Schoolhouse Lot does not experience the same capacity issues. Unless it is a long weekend or special event, it is unlikely that the lot will fill up. The lot is perceived as being too far away from the beachfront and the lack of sidewalk connectivity from the Schoolhouse was mentioned as a deterrent.

To improve visibility, the Town should consider changes to the lot including the following:

- **Line Painting** on grass will add legitimacy and formality to the Lot. Some drivers may not park at the Schoolhouse Lot because it does not have the appearance of the parking lots such as the lots closer to the beachfront. By providing line painting on the grass, this cost-effective solution should increase visibility to the lot.
- **Improved Signage at Jackson/Sullivan** directing drivers to Schoolhouse Lot may eliminate vehicles driving in repetitive loops while looking for a closer parking space. The existing signage, per Google Streetview in **Figure 7**, is ambiguous and may only be referring to the parking in Lot A. Additional signage closer to the Schoolhouse Lot, along Sullivan Street, could help direct more vehicles towards the lot rather than continually driving in circles.
- **Staff Directing Traffic** from Jackson/Sullivan towards Schoolhouse Lot on busiest weekends. For previously identified peak days/periods, Town staff could coordinate a traffic management service to ensure pedestrian safety and direct vehicles towards the Schoolhouse Lot.
- **Considering Long-Term Maintenance** option such as permeable pavement at the Schoolhouse Lot.

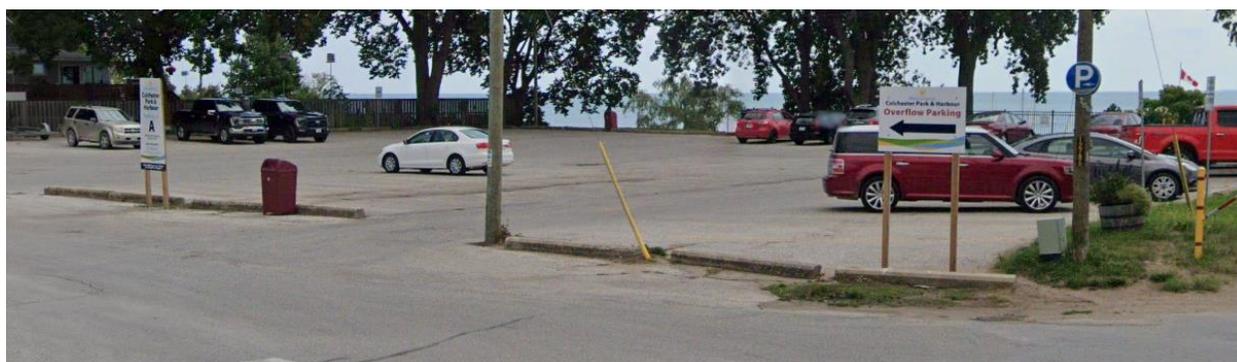


Figure 7: Parking Signage at Jackson/Sullivan (Source: Google Streetview, 2021)

RECOMMENDATION #2: UTILIZE PUBLIC ROW ON BAGOT AND SULLIVAN STREET

While there are no additional publicly owned lots that the Town can use, the ROW allowance on nearby streets such as Bagot and Sullivan should provide additional parking spaces. For instance, implementing parking on the west side of Bagot Street and the east side of Sydenham Street could be feasible. Implementing angled parking spaces would provide a sense of familiarity with the angled parking on Jackson Street and could encourage more visitors to park

there. Similarly, as shown in **Figure 8**, parallel parking on the south side of Sullivan Street to the east of Bagot could provide additional parking spaces.



Figure 8: On-Street Parking Options (Source: Google Maps)

RECOMMENDATION #3: CONSIDER PAID PARKING AT LOTS A-D

To encourage residents from Colchester and nearby towns/cottages to access the Beach/Harbour by foot or by bike, or to encourage them to park at spaces further away (such as the Schoolhouse or the Water Treatment Plant), the Town should consider paid parking in Lots A-D. Paid parking at public beaches is not a rare occurrence. For instance, the Grand Bend Beach along Lake Huron charges for parking from May 15 to September 15 in most of their lots and nearby streets, while still providing free parking options at lots that are further from the beach.

RECOMMENDATION #4: ACCESSIBLE SPACES REVIEW

While there was no indication that there was a lack of accessible parking near the Beach/Harbour, accessible parking near the Beach/Harbour should be reviewed considering that Lot C is not paved (gravel), and one of the accessible parking spaces at Lot LL (shown in red in **Figure 9**) lacks the required access aisle according to Section 11 of the Town's bylaw for barrier-free parking spaces. Additionally, accessible parking spaces should be located as close as possible to the entrance of a building. Consider relocating the accessible spaces in Lot LL closer to the existing curb ramp for the sidewalk around the building, as shown in purple in **Figure 9**. This would also assist in meeting the width and access aisle requirements since two accessible parking spaces can share an access aisle.

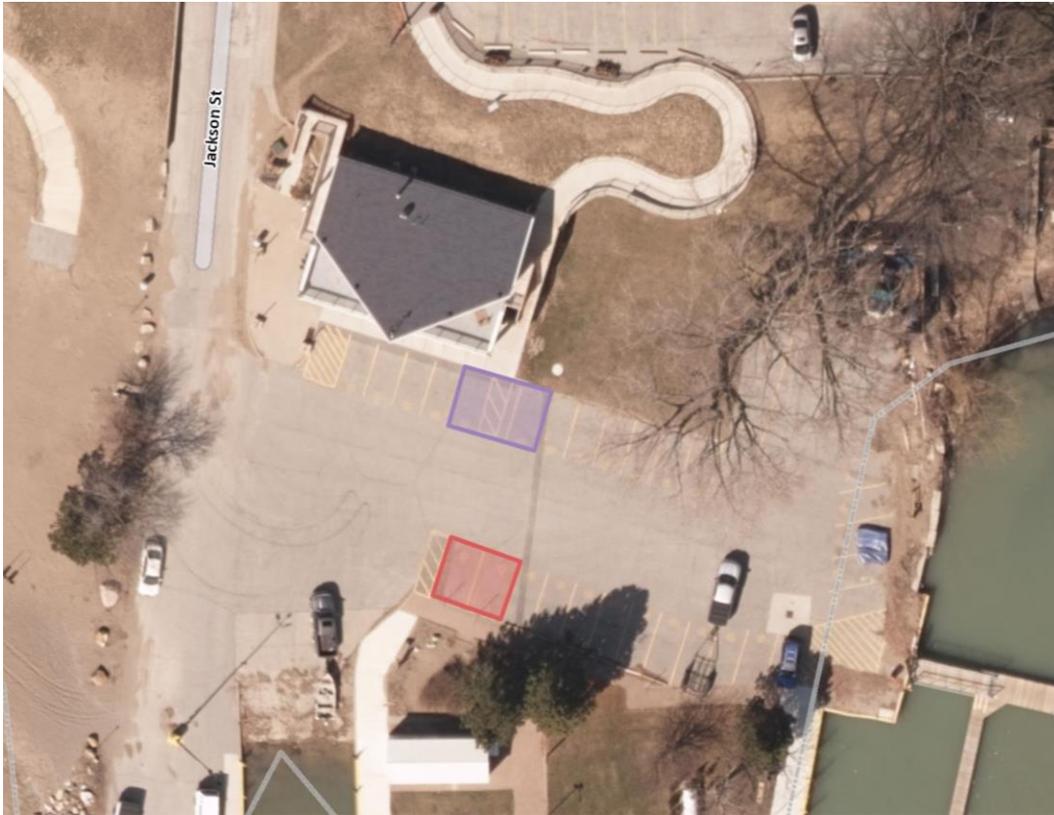


Figure 9: Accessible Parking at Lot LL (Source: County of Essex)

4.2 IMPROVE ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

Stakeholders re-iterated the need for Colchester to develop and implement a plan for investment in active transportation infrastructure for walking and cycling. Continual improvements to active transportation in not only Colchester, but also the Town of Essex could help in shifting visitors away from driving and towards cycling and walking.

RECOMMENDATION #5: IMPROVE PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLING CROSSINGS AT COUNTY ROAD 50

As the speed limit is 50 km/h along County Road 50 it is difficult and unsafe for pedestrians and cyclists to cross the roadway. Currently, the only signed crossings at County Road 50 are just east and just west of the Dunn/County Road 50 intersection. The existing crossings do not meet current standards for pedestrian crossovers (PXOs) in Ontario Traffic Manual Book 15. It is recommended that the existing pedestrian crossing east of Dunn Road be relocated to the intersection of County Road 50 and Jackson Street to provide a more direct crossing for pedestrians walking to the beach. Both crossings should be updated to current standards for PXOs, including proper advance warning signage and pavement markings.

RECOMMENDATION #6: ADD AND PROMOTE ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES (SUCH AS BIKE PARKING) AT THE BEACH AND HARBOUR

To encourage residents and visitors to cycle to the beach, additional bike facilities should be installed. Providing additional bike racks that exceed the current amount of people biking to the beach will encourage people to cycle without worrying about not finding bike parking. A public bike repair station would give an opportunity to make any quick fixes that could be needed before a return ride. All cycling facilities should be located in a visible location so visitors who drive can see that active transportation could be an option for future visits.

RECOMMENDATION #7: IMPROVE CONNECTIONS TO HARROW, KINGSVILLE, AND AMHERSTBURG THROUGH CWATS

As stated in the Policy Review, the CWATS Master Plan is being updated. For Colchester, improved cycling connections from nearby towns would create safer and more comfortable options for cycling from nearby communities. It is recommended that funding and timelines be accelerated for the completion of paved shoulders along County Road 50 to create safe options for cycling to Colchester and other tourist destinations from Kingsville and Amherstburg.

RECOMMENDATION #8: PARTNERSHIPS FOR CYCLING TOURISM

As the tourism industry in the Town of Essex further develops with new wineries and hotels, it is recommended that the Town seek opportunities to partner with businesses to encourage and promote cycling tourism. As a growing wine region, examples can be drawn from municipalities with a more developed wine industry. For instance, Niagara-on-the-Lake has a private bike share system with bike hubs located at wineries and businesses throughout the town. A similar bike share model could be launched in Essex, with bike share hubs located at wineries, new hotels, and at the beach to create more cycling options for visitors and tourists.

4.3 COMMUNICATIONS PLANS

RECOMMENDATION #9: DEVELOP COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

While not required throughout the year, a communications plan for the busiest weekends would inform the public of alternate options rather than parking. A blend of digital and traditional communications could prove most effective to reach as many potential visitors as possible. For instance, a social media campaign through the Town's channels to communicate information about alternative parking options (including remote locations such as the Water Treatment Plant and Schoolhouse) could be effective. Similarly, radio announcements and flyers could reach other portions of the population that are not as technologically inclined.

4.4 FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR SHUTTLE SERVICE

RECOMMENDATION #10: SHUTTLE FEASIBILITY STUDY

The discussions with key stakeholders suggested that there is interest in exploring a shuttle service with stops in Colchester. From a parking perspective, a shuttle service with stops in nearby towns could alleviate some pressure on the existing parking inventory. A feasibility study would help assess the viability of the service, consider factors such as demand, and operating and capital requirements. Additionally, it would aid in identifying potential risks, challenges which would allow for informed decision-making and effective planning.

5 CONCLUSION

The Colchester Parking Study reviewed municipal and county-level policies and engaged with key stakeholders to best understand current and future parking conditions in Colchester. During summer weekends, parking in Colchester near the beach and harbour can become quite busy. While parking lots in the immediate vicinity of the beach area reach capacity quickly, lots that are further out are only likely to reach capacity during the busiest times of the year. Additionally, there is significant growth expected in and around Colchester over the next 5-10 years, which could provide further difficulty with the existing parking supply. Based on these findings, WSP developed 10 recommendations to be considered for the Colchester Secondary Plan as part of the Town of Essex Official Plan. The recommendations ranged from optimizing the existing parking supply, to improving connections for sustainable transportation, and developing a communications plan for big events and summer long weekends.