



DOWNTOWN
PARIS

Downtown Paris Master Plan: *Progress Update and Next Steps*

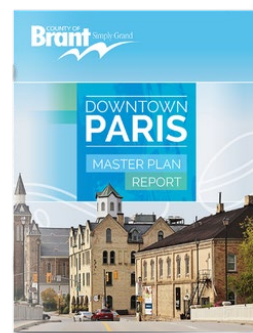


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Introduction

The *Downtown Paris Master Plan* (Master Plan) was developed throughout 2018 and 2019 and approved by Council in November 2019. Informed extensively by community feedback, the Master Plan was created to guide how the downtown core could be reshaped alongside necessary reconstruction projects, including the replacement of underground infrastructure. It sets out design considerations for the core that prioritize vibrancy, preserve heritage charm, foster economic growth, and support a people-first approach grounded in accessibility, inclusion, sustainability, and resiliency.



As a high-level, conceptual vision, the Master Plan was intended to evolve as project phases were implemented. Now that construction is underway and the vision for downtown is becoming more defined through detailed design, policies, and supporting plans, it is an ideal time to review progress and provide an update on the Master Plan.

To support this work, staff have prepared the *Downtown Paris Master Plan: Progress Update and Next Steps* (Progress Update). This review and progress update is informed by:

- The Master Plan and associated community engagement results
- Realities identified during detailed design phase
- Lessons learned throughout initial phases of construction
- Feedback received from the community throughout the implementation of the Master Plan
- Technical inputs including assessments, plans, and policies
- The Downtown Paris Zoning Project and associated community engagement results

The Progress Update outlined below takes stock of work completed to date (as of Spring 2026), highlights current directions and changes, and describes the direction for the remaining work. This Progress Update extends beyond streetscape redesign and highlights how residential and commercial growth, changing parking infrastructure needs, and downtown operations may influence the look, feel, and function of Downtown Paris.

Important Note: *Information included in the Progress Update will continue to evolve throughout implementation.*

The renderings and illustrations included in this resource are conceptual and will be refined through detailed design. As implementation of the Master Plan progresses, the County will prioritize sharing updates to help keep the community informed and engaged along the way.

This resource does not seek to replace the Master Plan but rather reinforce objectives and provide a clearer understanding of the work still anticipated downtown. It is intended to serve as a central, accessible reference point to help the community understand how changes in Downtown Paris, including proposed zoning updates, parking planning, infrastructure projects, and potential private/public partnerships, fit together.

1.0 Overview and Work-to-Date

Overview

The *Downtown Paris Master Plan* (the Master Plan) was approved by Council in 2019. This long-term plan provides a high-level vision to guide the revitalization of the core, while necessary underground infrastructure is being replaced. Since its approval, the County has worked to advance the vision of the Master Plan through streetscape design, reconstruction, technical studies and policies, and land-use planning efforts.

In 2023, Council requested that staff provide an update on the implementation of the Master Plan. As initial phases of construction are nearing completion, it is an ideal time to take stock of work completed and decisions made over the years. As part of this review, the County has prepared the *Downtown Paris Master Plan: Progress Update and Next Steps* (Progress Update). This resource builds on the 2019 plan and presents the current direction to guide the County through the remaining phases of construction (2027 and beyond). While some elements remain subject to change through final design and construction, this update provides a clearer picture of the current direction for the work ahead.

This important informational resource communicates how different elements of work happening in Downtown Paris are interconnected to support the cohesive vision outlined in the Master Plan. It also serves as a framework to guide next steps including community engagement, detailed design of remaining streetscapes, construction, updates to the parking program, and more.

Objectives of the Master Plan

The guiding objectives from the Master Plan still hold true as the County advances improvements to the core and reinforces downtown as a cultural, economic, and social hub. The Master Plan aims to:

- Create a vibrant downtown core that supports the economic prosperity of the County.
- Develop inclusive and accessible spaces where people of all ages and abilities can thrive.
- Protect the unique historic character and charm of the downtown.
- Support a people-centred design that reflects community feedback.

How does this connect with other work happening in Downtown Paris?

As Downtown Paris is revitalized, there is a variety of ongoing work that is interconnected. As shown in the graphic below, the Master Plan establishes a community-focused vision for the downtown core. This guiding vision is being implemented through a series of actions, including the Downtown Paris Zoning Project, design and construction of initial streetscapes, studies, and assessments.

As implementation continues, we can support continuous improvement and cohesion by checking in and providing a progress update to guide future phases of work. As illustrated in the graphic below, this approach follows the Plan-Do-Check-Act process to support effective project management and continuous improvement.

PLAN - Establishing the Vision

Downtown Paris Master Plan (2019)



DO - Implementing the Vision

- Direction from Council to Optimize Use of Land within the Core (2023)
- Downtown Paris Zoning Project (2024)
- Design and Construction of Initial Phases (2024-2026)
- Plans, Policies, and Studies to Support Future Development
 - Preliminary Parking Needs Assessment, December 2025
 - Archaeological Assessment, 2025-2026 (ongoing)
 - Hydraulic and Flood Risk Assessment, January-June 2026
- Focused Zoning By-Law Amendment Introduced (May 2026)



CHECK - Reviewing the Vision

Downtown Paris Master Plan:
Progress Update and Next Steps (2026)



ACT - Implementing the Vision

Future Work (Summer 2026 and Beyond)

- Detailed Design for Remaining Streetscapes
- Traffic Impact Study
- Planning for and Advancing Construction in Phases
- Ongoing Community Engagement and Communication
- Focused Zoning By-Law Amendment for Recommendation
- Introduction of Community Planning Permit System

Why do we need to review?

The Master Plan provides overarching guidance and identifies potential directions for Downtown Paris. As circumstances have evolved and implementation has progressed, designs have become more defined, and an update helps the County communicate current conditions and direction.

At the same time, the County has advanced construction and technical work, including studies and assessments (as outlined below) to support the vision. Incorporating and aligning the Master Plan with this work is essential to support coordinated decision-making and guide future success.

Key work completed or underway includes:

- (1) *Construction on Initial Phases* – Construction is nearing completion on the initial phases of work, including West River Street and Grand River Street North. As this significant work comes to an end, taking stock of lessons learned will inform successful future phases.
- (2) *Downtown Paris Zoning* – Policy Planning staff have been engaging with the community and working to update zoning in Downtown Paris through the [Downtown Paris Zoning Project](#) that began in 2024. Updates to zoning aim to support thoughtful and focused growth throughout the core.
- (3) *Preliminary Downtown Paris Parking Needs Assessment* – As downtown continues to change, the supply and demand for parking is also shifting. The [Preliminary Downtown Paris Parking Needs Assessment](#) evaluates the current state of parking, looks at factors shifting demand and supply, forecasts future needs, and lists recommendations to guide next steps. As recommended in the Assessment, the County will continue to build on preliminary findings to help ensure there is adequate public parking to support a thriving community within the core for residents, visitors, and local businesses.
- (4) *Hydraulic Assessment* – Completed in June 2026, this work evaluates how prospective development and changes in Downtown Paris will impact the flow and depth of water in the event of different scenarios of riverine flooding. As a requirement dictated by the Grand River Conservation Authority (GRCA), this study helps identify safe and effective development and construction practices that reduce and manage flood risk within the core. This aligns with the Downtown Paris Flood Mitigation Master Plan and related work.

How has community engagement informed the process?

The review and update process is grounded in the Master Plan objectives, which were shaped through extensive community engagement. Throughout 2018 and 2019, the County conducted surveys, public open houses, and stakeholder conversations to better understand the community's priorities, concerns, and aspirations for Downtown Paris. This input informed the direction of the Master Plan and continues to guide efforts within the core.

Community engagement has also remained a vital component of the broader Downtown Dig project. Ongoing communication with residents, businesses, and property owners, along with opportunities to provide feedback on specific design elements, has helped inform implementation as construction has progressed. For example, during the design phase for Grand River Street North, the County sought public input on preferred street furniture and fixtures to help ensure the streetscape reflects the character of Downtown Paris and supports a welcoming, cohesive public realm. Lessons and feedback gathered through this work has shaped directions taken and will continue to inform future phases.

In addition to formal engagement activities, staff have continued to monitor and consider feedback received since the Master Plan was approved in 2019. Several recurring themes have emerged and are incorporated throughout this update:

- **Concerns about parking supply** – Community members have consistently raised concerns about the availability of parking, particularly short-term spaces located close to the core. With the transition from angled to lay-by parking along Grand River Street North, some residents, businesses, and property owners have expressed concern about the potential impacts on overall supply and convenience.
- **Location of future parking infrastructure** – The Master Plan proposes a parking structure behind Council Chambers to address increased parking demand. However, some community members raised concerns about this location, noting that structured parking may be less appealing for short-term visits and quick trips downtown.
- **Importance of preserving downtown character** – The community has consistently emphasized the importance of maintaining the heritage look and feel of Downtown Paris. As the vision moves into detailed design and implementation, protecting and reinforcing this character will remain a key priority.
- **Traffic congestion** – As Downtown Paris continues to evolve and vehicle volume increases, congestion is increasingly raised as a concern. Throughout design, staff are focused on supporting multi-modal transportation along downtown streetscapes.

Looking ahead, the Progress Update supports continued communication with the community by providing a clearer framework for sharing progress, upcoming decisions, and next steps. It also establishes a foundation for future engagement on key priorities, including parking planning and the finalization of streetscape designs. The County remains committed to ongoing information sharing and meaningful community engagement as this work advances.

What construction has happened?

Since the Master Plan was approved, the County has begun construction on several phases of work. As of Spring 2026, the following construction is underway or nearing completion.

West River Street

In the original Master Plan, this work was scheduled for the final stages. However, as detailed planning began, staff recognized the value in advancing this phase earlier. As of Spring 2026, construction is substantially complete and the road is open. Work completed includes:

- Full replacement of natural gas services
- Full replacement of municipal services (including water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure)
- Full replacement of sidewalks
- Repaving of roadway and the addition of traffic-calming features

The Master Plan proposed several design considerations for West River Street, including the addition of bio-swales within boulevards to facilitate natural stormwater management and reduce the risk of over-land flooding. While this approach had merit, detailed design confirmed that there was insufficient space within the road allowance to accommodate these features. As a result, the County prioritized wider, consistent sidewalks, and a more open roadway to facilitate on-street parking and the efficient flow of traffic.

Grand River Street North

Through 2025, construction on Grand River Street North, from the Nith River Bridge to William Street, progressed significantly. Work completed includes:

- Full replacement of natural gas services
- Full replacement of hydroelectric plant and servicing
- Full replacement of municipal services (including water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure)
- Replacement of street lighting and traffic lights
- Repaving of roadway and partial replacement of sidewalks
- Installation of permanent planters and landscaping elements
- Reconfiguration of on-street parking from angled to lay-by spaces

During the 2026 construction season, finishing elements, including the addition of new street furniture, street trees, and bicycle storage, will be installed on this section. Sidewalks, hardscaped amenity spaces, and hydro infrastructure will also be completed.

In designing and reconstructing Grand River Street North, the Master Plan proposed several design approaches for consideration, including the addition of a mini roundabout and the transition from angled to parallel parking on the main street. Through detailed design, it was determined that the proposed mini roundabout at the intersection of Mechanic Street and

Grand River Street North could not be accommodated due to spatial constraints within the existing road allowance.

The County proceeded with the transition to lay-by parking, as proposed in the Master Plan. This design approach was selected to increase sidewalk space, improve accessibility and pedestrian comfort, and create additional opportunities for businesses to activate the downtown through events, sidewalk sales, and similar uses. This design is also intended to enhance road safety and support more efficient traffic flow. A mix of two-hour spaces and short-term loading zones were also added throughout the design.

Beginning in Spring 2026, the intersection of Grand River Street North and William Street was closed to facilitate the replacement of underground infrastructure and streetscape improvements. This work is anticipated to be completed by Fall 2026.



Lessons Learned

As the initial phases of this expansive project near completion, the County has identified several key lessons to inform future work:

- Ongoing engagement throughout the “Downtown Dig” has demonstrated the value of consistent and transparent communication in keeping the community informed on progress.
- Traffic congestion emerged as a key concern throughout construction. While Grand River Street North was closed, movement across Paris was more challenging. Maintaining access where feasible, providing clear detours, and coordinating with other construction projects across the community will be essential in future phases of this work.
- Working in a high-density, historic area has presented construction delivery challenges. Unknowns related to utilities, historic features, and existing infrastructure have affected scheduling and required flexibility throughout implementation.

- Early and ongoing engagement during the detailed design phase helps identify potential concerns and opportunities for improvement prior to construction. As design elements, such as amenities, are refined, early staff involvement and cross-departmental collaboration can help ensure functionality and alignment with community needs. Encouraging comprehensive staff involvement and feedback throughout the design process will continue to be helpful in mitigating concerns.
- Beyond the built environment, complementary initiatives, such as special events, enhanced local services and dedicated staff support, will play an important role in achieving the long-term objectives of the Master Plan.
- A dedicated Construction Liaison position was established to serve as a key connection between the County, contractors, utility providers, and local businesses, residents, and property owners during the construction phase. This role has provided heightened support to help minimize the disruption associated with ongoing construction efforts.

As implementation continues, incorporating these lessons learned will be critical to the success of future phases.





DOWNTOWN PARIS

2.0 Progress Update and Next Steps

This section summarizes work completed and decisions made since the 2019 Master Plan. It reflects the current direction for the remaining phases of streetscape reconstruction, including 60% design renderings where available, and outlines how accessibility, downtown operations, economic vitality, residential and commercial growth, and parking infrastructure and program changes, are being advanced to support a cohesive, people-focused downtown.

Streetscape Design

A central component of the Master Plan is the redesign of streetscapes throughout Downtown Paris to support the growing community, enhance economic vitality, improve accessibility, and strengthen connections to the area's heritage. As noted above, West River Street and Grand River Street North are complete or nearing completion. Future phases will focus on Mechanic Street, Broadway Street West, and William Street. In addition, Grand River Street South (south of the Nith River bridge) will be reconstructed to address the necessary replacement of underground infrastructure. This work will be coordinated with other reconstruction efforts to ensure a cohesive and well-connected downtown.

Updated renderings have been prepared to illustrate proposed streetscape designs for Mechanic Street, Broadway Street West, and William Street. These build on information included in the Master Plan, which outlined potential improvements but did not include detailed visualizations. The current renderings are conceptual and reflect the 60% design stage. They are subject to change as detailed design is advanced.

As designs are further developed, details such as the placement of amenities, including street trees, planters, bicycle storage, and street furniture, will be finalized. Opportunities to incorporate shared cycling facilities will also be explored as part of a broader, interconnected active transportation network across the downtown core. Prior to construction, renderings will be updated to reflect the 100% design stage and shared with the community.

The timeline for the remaining streetscape reconstruction is still to be determined. More information is included in the [3.0 Moving Forward section](#).

Mechanic Street

Mechanic Street is a key east-west corridor within the downtown core, connecting Grand River Street North to West River Street. The street supports a mix of established retail, administrative, and service-based businesses, along with a multi-storey residential building, contributing to a diverse and active streetscape.

A defining feature of Mechanic Street is the Paris Winkey Mills, centrally located along the corridor. This landmark heritage building accommodates both administrative and retail uses and serves as an important reminder of the County's manufacturing and milling history. Its central location between the Downtown retail core and Lion's Park positions it as a natural anchor for public activations and a focal point for placemaking initiatives.

Mechanic Street also plays a key role in connecting the downtown core to Lion's Park, a key outdoor and recreational destination, as well as to the Cenotaph at the corner of Grand River Street North and Mechanic Street. Together, these connections reinforce the street's role as both a key transportation link and valued public space.

At this stage, the overall streetscape design for Mechanic Street reflects the approach taken on Grand River Street North to maintain visual and functional consistency throughout the Downtown. Preliminary renderings based on the 60% design phase include intermixed paving stone surfaces within the sidewalk area and retain parallel on-street parking to support short-term visits. Wider sidewalks and barrier-free curbing are also incorporated where feasible to enhance pedestrian comfort and accessibility.

What's changed and what can be expected in the future?

The Master Plan recommended transforming Mechanic Street into a shared street, characterized by textured or permeable paving materials and a flush curb design intended to prioritize pedestrians and calm vehicle speeds. Following further technical review and cost analysis, the current 60% design direction identifies asphalt as the preferred surface treatment for Mechanic Street, rather than a textured/brick finish. This approach balances fiscal responsibility, visual cohesion with adjacent streets, durability, and support for a broader range of uses, including cycling and vehicle travel. While this represents a departure from the original surface treatment concept, the broader objective of creating a people-focused, low-speed environment remains and would be supported through other design elements.





Broadway Street West

Broadway Street West runs north–south, parallel to Grand River Street North and West River Street. The street is currently characterized by a vehicle-oriented right-of-way, with surface parking lots located along both sides. With limited residential and commercial buildings fronting the street, it primarily functions as an access route, rather than as an active public space.

Since the adoption of the original Master Plan, a significant site change has occurred. The former OPP station located at the corner of Mechanic Street and Broadway Street West has been demolished and replaced with a public surface parking lot, creating a vacant space that presents opportunities for future revitalization and redevelopment.

What's changed and what can be expected in the future?

The Master Plan proposes several key design considerations to activate the streetscape and support shared use. These include:

- *Celebratory Hardscape over the Mill Race Route* – A decorative hardscape treatment was proposed to commemorate the historic Mill Race and strengthen connections to the Grand River. While this concept remains of interest, it is not included in the current 60% design and may be considered in future phases as part of placemaking or public art initiatives.

- *Removing Angled Parking* – The Master Plan recommends removing the 12 angled parking spaces on Broadway Street West to reduce vehicular dominance and create more room for pedestrians. This direction is reinforced in the current designs, with replacement parking to be addressed through broader parking infrastructure improvements.

The updated renderings illustrate the preliminary streetscape design for Broadway Street West. Similar to the approach taken on Mechanic Street, the design prioritizes improved pedestrian mobility and supports multiple modes of travel while maintaining necessary vehicle access. Key features include:

- Widened sidewalks to enhance pedestrian safety and accessibility
- Grassed boulevards to reduce the visual impact of large, paved areas and introduce greenery
- Dedicated painted bicycle lanes to support cycling and encourage active transportation
- A narrowed vehicular roadway to support traffic calming and improve safety

Over time, Broadway Street West may evolve through redevelopment and infill opportunities. Where development occurs, it would be encouraged to align with the established character of downtown while contributing to increased activity along the street. Residential and commercial development along Broadway Street West could support a more vibrant, active, and financially sustainable downtown, helping to transition the corridor from a primarily vehicle-oriented street to a more balanced and people-focused environment.





William Street

William Street is a key gateway into the downtown core, providing an important crossing of the Grand River and an east-west connection through downtown. Between Broadway Street West and Grand River Street North, the street has a distinctly urban character, with a mix of established retail, administrative, and service-based businesses. Notable landmarks along William Street include the Arlington Hotel, Paris Baptist Church, and the Paris Branch of the County of Brant Public Library. West of Broadway Street West, the street transitions to a quieter, predominantly residential space.

The existing streetscape features narrow sidewalks, with a mix of concrete and paving stones used along the south side. Street trees are limited to sections of the south side, and there are currently minimal coordinated street furniture or pedestrian amenities. Most of the on-street parking is angled and located along the south side of the street.

What's changed and what can be expected in the future?

Since the approval of the Master Plan, there have been minimal changes to the overall design direction for William Street, reflecting continued alignment with the original vision. A key focus of the updated design is supporting cohesion with the other streetscapes in the core. Current design directions include:

- Conversion of angled parking to lay-by parking to improve streetscape organization, traffic safety, and the efficient use of the road allowance
- Expanded sidewalks to increase public space and enhance pedestrian comfort
- Continuous concrete sidewalks to improve durability and consistency



Fostering Accessibility and Reducing Barriers

A core objective of the Master Plan is to support enhanced mobility and accessibility throughout the core. During the detailed design phase for Grand River Street North and West River Street, attention was given to compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and the Integrated Accessibility Standards for the Design of Public Spaces (DoPS), to support spaces that are more inclusive, safe, and usable by people of all abilities.

To date, the County has incorporated several measures to reduce barriers, including:

- Wider sidewalks to support improved pedestrian flow, better accommodate permanent and temporary ramps, and promote accessible building entrances. Notably, on Grand River Street North, three metre sidewalks exceed the 1.5 metre standard outlined in DoPS.
- New rollover curbs were incorporated. These sloped curbs create a gradual, seamless transition between the sidewalk at the street.
- Construction efforts focused on making the street flatter and matching the grade of the sidewalks to business entrances wherever possible.
- Tactile warning surfaces were installed at crosswalks to improve safety and navigability for individuals who are visually impaired.
- New streetlights and raised concrete crosswalks were installed to improve visibility and pedestrian safety day and night.
- Tactile plates, featuring raised domes, were added to provide a "tactile" warning underfoot or via a cane, to alert pedestrians with vision loss that they are approaching a road crossing or a change in elevation.
- Accessible Pedestrian Signals with standardized sounds were installed to help pedestrians with vision loss identify which direction has the right-of-way at the intersection of Grand River Street North and William Street.
- New brickwork and concrete finishes are chosen to provide visual distinction and heighten contrast between pedestrian zones, seating areas, and vehicle lanes helping those with low visibility.
- Rest areas were installed along Grand River Street North including new benches and seating clusters. These areas were set back from the main flow of traffic, ensuring that those using strollers or assistive devices have ample room to bypass. The addition of a new tree canopy and planter boxes will provide shaded rest spots, improving comfort during warmer months.
- With the shift from angled to lay-by parking, an increased number of accessible parking spaces were incorporated and loading zones were added to support drop-off and pick-up.

Throughout the detailed design process, several accessibility challenges have been identified, particularly in areas with older buildings and varied entrance elevations. For example, regrading sidewalks along Grand River Street North has improved accessibility for some properties by better aligning entrance thresholds with the sidewalk. However, in other

locations, this approach has had limited effectiveness due to building configuration, entrance height, or structural constraints.

As a result, temporary or permanent ramps will continue to be required in certain locations to provide barrier free access from the public sidewalk. Given the wide variation in entrance heights, setbacks, and building conditions, adopting a single standardized ramp design is not feasible. Instead, accessibility improvements will require site-specific, property-by-property solutions developed in coordination with individual building owners.

Staff continue to explore opportunities to support individual businesses in reducing barriers and achieving compliance with accessibility requirements where possible. Options under consideration include ongoing training and grant programs to help cover the costs associated with accessibility upgrades, such as the Downtown Community Improvement Plan (CIP).

As design and construction advance throughout the rest of Downtown, accessibility will remain a guiding principle. Through continued collaboration with property owners and targeted investment in public realm improvements, the County will continue working toward a more inclusive, welcoming, and accessible space for all users.

Downtown Operations, Activation, and Economic Vitality

Beyond physical improvements to the public space, effective services and management are essential to supporting long-term economic vitality. As the downtown continues to grow and evolve, the County is committed to working collaboratively with the Business Improvement Association (BIA), residents, and visitors to foster vibrancy and economic resilience. This section outlines how coordinated supports and services can complement improvements to the built environment and contribute to lasting social and economic benefits.

Activation, Programming, and Promotion

Ongoing activation through programming and events is a key tool for increasing foot traffic, supporting local businesses, and reinforcing downtown as a year-round destination. Opportunities to explore include:

- Expanding the range and frequency of special events and ongoing activities, including both large-scale and smaller, recurring initiatives that animate downtown across all seasons and attract residents and visitors to the core.
- Pursuing larger-scale promotions and coordinated marketing efforts to elevate downtown's profile as a unique destination.

BIA Engagement, Governance, and Support

As the downtown business community grows in scale and complexity, there may be opportunities to strengthen advocacy, governance, and operational capacity within the BIA. Potential areas of focus could include:

- Formalized staff support from the County to provide consistent marketing and communications assistance, special event coordination, and organizational and board governance support.
- Strengthening collaboration between the County and BIA as new service-levels and placemaking initiatives, such as crosswalk painting and seasonal décor, are explored.

Data and Service Level Enhancements

Improved access to data can enhance understanding of visitor patterns, foot traffic, and consumer behaviour within the core, supporting evidence-based decision-making for both the municipality and the business community. Maintaining the new Main Street Canada dashboard, developed by the Canadian Urban Institute, would support continued access to this information.

In addition, the County could work with the BIA to explore enhanced service levels to better support a growing and more active downtown. Currently, the County delivers the following services downtown: landscaping (including hanging baskets, planters, and street tree maintenance), holiday décor and banners, and waste collection. Other services, such as sidewalk snow removal and general maintenance, remain the responsibility of individual property owners. As residential and commercial growth continues and Paris solidifies its position as a destination downtown, opportunities to evaluate and expand services, such as enhanced waste collection, snow removal, or other operational services, may be considered.

Resourcing and Implementation Considerations

Enhanced downtown management, programming, and service delivery, as described in this section, would require additional resources, including staff support and a sustainable source of ongoing funding. Dedicated County staff could support event coordination, engagement, communications, and overall downtown activation. If enhanced services, such as sidewalk snow removal or additional staffing, are pursued, adjustments to the tax levy may be required to ensure long-term sustainability.

Residential and Commercial Growth

In addition to County-led streetscape and public realm improvements, Downtown Paris is expected to see continued residential and commercial growth in the coming years. New development will help support local businesses, strengthen economic vitality, and reinforce downtown as a vibrant and livable destination.

In October 2024, the County began engagement on modernizing the zoning in Downtown Paris with the objective of ensuring the permissions reflect the desire to maintain and enhance the existing character that makes the area special. In May 2026, the County also introduced a targeted zoning by-law amendment for a limited portion of Downtown Paris. This interim step is intended to provide clear zoning permissions for select publicly controlled sites, while work on the Community Planning Permit System (CPPS) continues. Once implemented, the CPPS will help advance the broader recommendations of the [Downtown Paris Zoning Project](#).

Increasing residential and commercial density in the core is important to achieving the objectives of the Master Plan. Additional residents help support local businesses, strengthen the downtown economy, and contribute to a more active, diverse, and resilient urban environment. This direction was endorsed in principle by Council in January 2024.

As growth continues, it will be important to ensure supporting infrastructure keeps pace. Adequate parking supply, safe and efficient traffic movement, a well-connected and walkable pedestrian environment, and flood mitigation will all be important to accommodating growth while maintaining a functional, accessible, and attractive downtown core.

Parking Infrastructure and Program

In predominantly rural, car-oriented communities, the provision of adequate and well-located parking remains essential to supporting economic vitality and accommodating ongoing residential and commercial growth. This section outlines a potential location for additional public parking infrastructure, recent and planned updates to parking within the downtown core, and anticipated changes to the broader parking program.

New Proposed Location for Added Parking Infrastructure

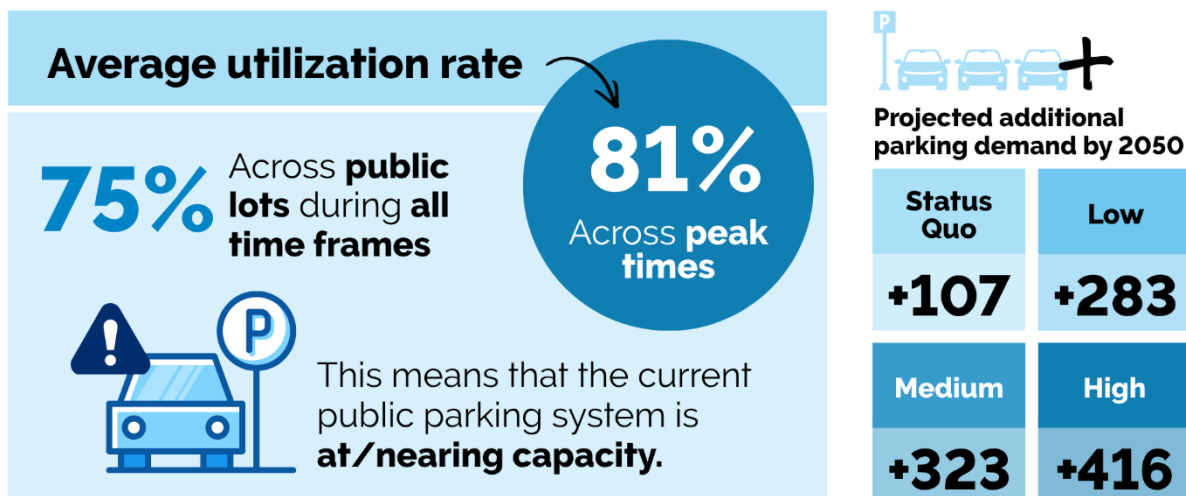
Findings from the [Preliminary Downtown Paris Parking Needs Assessment](#) completed in December 2025 indicate that, under both low- and high-growth scenarios, the County will need to consider innovative approaches to increase parking supply within the downtown core. As originally introduced in the 2019 Master Plan, and reinforced through the assessment, there remains a clear need for additional public parking infrastructure to meet the growing needs of the community and to respond to anticipated shifts in parking demand and supply.

Additional parking could be provided through a range of infrastructure solutions, including surface parking, structured parking, or a phased or hybrid approach that allows the site to evolve over time. This flexibility will help ensure that parking provision is appropriately scaled, fiscally responsible, and reflective of both current and future needs.

A municipal parking structure was initially considered for the surface lot located behind Council Chambers. However, following further review of available parcels and collaboration with a private landowner, staff have identified an alternative potential location that may offer greater flexibility for the introduction of additional parking while supporting traffic circulation, land use efficiency, and the needs of downtown residents and visitors.

Figure – Overview of Findings from the Preliminary Downtown Paris Parking Needs Assessment

Public Parking in Downtown Paris



What influences the changing parking needs?

- Latent demand
- Increased population and attraction to downtown
- Mode share adjustment as reliance on personal vehicles declines and people use alternative modes of travel (carpool, public transit, ride share, active transportation)
- Replacing spaces lost due to streetscape enhancements and changing on-street parking configuration

The corner of West River Street and Mechanic Street has been identified as a potential location for added parking infrastructure, subject to further technical review, partnership discussions, budget consideration, and future Council direction. This site is being considered for the following reasons:

- **Serves Downtown Paris and Lion's Park** - While located within the downtown core, this site is close to the pedestrian bridge connecting downtown to Lion's Park, allowing it to serve shared parking demand and strengthen links between these two key destinations.
- **Utilizes a site with limited development potential** - Based on guidance from the GRCA, the site is unsuitable for residential or commercial development due to its location within the floodplain. Parking infrastructure, whether surface parking, an open-air structure, or a combination, paired with naturalized space along the Nith River represents an appropriate and efficient use of the land.

- **Supports a walkable corridor** - The location could reinforce pedestrian connectivity between Lion's Park, Winney Mills, and the broader downtown commercial areas. If development increases along Broadway and Mechanic, added parking in this location may support mobility throughout the core.
- **Partnership opportunity with a private developer** - One potential delivery model that could be explored is a partnership with a private developer, which may involve private construction and ownership with the County leasing and operating parking for public use. Any such model would be subject to future agreements, financial review, and required approvals.
- **Maintains existing surface lot for short-term parking use** - Surface lots located closer to the downtown core are typically better suited for short-term visits (two hours or less). Maintaining and enhancing the lot behind Council Chambers could continue to support quick trips, while any future facility at West River Street and Mechanic Street may primarily accommodate longer stays for employees, residents, day visitors, and event attendees.

Conceptually, the site could accommodate a range of parking formats, from surface parking to a multi-level structure, depending on demand, funding, technical feasibility, approvals, and timing. The following considerations should guide future design and implementation of any new parking infrastructure:

- **Aesthetics and integration with the downtown core** - Any built parking infrastructure should be designed to complement the architectural character of Downtown Paris and reinforce Mechanic Street as a key gateway between downtown and Lion's Park. Landscaping, materials, and urban design elements should be considered to support a high-quality and context-sensitive outcome.
- **Right-sizing and phasing** - Careful consideration should be given to ensuring the parking supply is appropriately scaled to forecasted needs. This may include evaluating surface parking, future structural expansion, and number of storeys, if applicable.
- **Climate resiliency** - Any parking infrastructure should be designed to address climate-related risks, including flooding, extreme heat, and intense precipitation. Site design measures may include naturalized buffers along the river corridor and preservation of existing vegetation where feasible.
- **Climate sustainability** - Opportunities to integrate sustainable and energy-efficient design features will be explored where suitable.
- **Flexibility and alternative uses** - Recognizing that parking demand may change over time or seasonally, future infrastructure should be designed with adaptability in mind. Potential complementary or alternate uses could include market space, community amenities, or public art.
- **Traffic flow and safety** - The safe and efficient movement of vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists will be a key consideration throughout the design and implementation process.

Figure – Key Considerations to Guide Design of Future Parking Infrastructure

Consistent with the objectives of the original Master Plan, planning for additional parking infrastructure remains an important component in supporting current and future residential and commercial growth within Downtown Paris. The potential site provides flexibility in how and when additional parking could be delivered, allowing the County to respond to evolving demand while considering how any future infrastructure would integrate with the character, function, and long-term vision of downtown.



Changes to Existing Parking Infrastructure

In addition to the proposed relocation of future parking infrastructure, several updates to existing parking have been implemented or are being explored as part of the implementation of the Master Plan:

- **Angled to lay-by parking** – On Grand River Street North angled parking has been replaced with lay-by parking to improve road safety and accommodate wider sidewalks. This design is also slated for William Street. These enhancements reduce barriers and provide additional space for businesses activations, including patios, events, sidewalk sales, and similar activities.
- **New parking amenities** – To respond to evolving transportation trends, the County is exploring the addition of amenities such as bicycle parking, electric vehicle (EV) charging stations, and short-term parking and loading zones to support ridesharing and Brant Transit use.
- **Residential and commercial development** – Moving forward, if redevelopment of existing public parking lots is pursued to optimize land use, any potential reduction in surface parking would need to be considered as part of broader parking supply planning.
- **Council Chambers parking lots** – Opportunities to enhance the parking area behind Council Chambers are being explored, including activating this space and improving connectivity between Broadway Street West and Grand River Street North.

The County continues to pursue solutions that balance the objectives of the Master Plan while maintaining adequate public parking capacity for residents, businesses, and visitors.

Changes to Parking Program

Beyond physical infrastructure, staff are also exploring enhancements to the downtown parking program to support efficient use, sustainability, and long-term viability. Areas of focus include potential paid parking and permit models, updated time limits, revised enforcement strategies, and the introduction of innovative technologies and amenities that better reflect evolving community needs. Comprehensive community engagement will be essential to inform these future changes.



DOWNTOWN
PARIS

3.0 Moving Forward

Downtown Paris revitalization is well underway, with Grand River Street North nearing completion, marking a major milestone in the broader infrastructure program. While construction will continue to create short-term navigation challenges, reopening this corridor after the 2026 construction season will improve traffic flow and restore connectivity through the downtown.

Future construction phasing will continue to be refined to align with development activity, budget considerations, and other projects happening across Paris. Key priorities include coordinating with major redevelopment initiatives, minimizing disruption for residents and businesses, and maintaining safe, efficient traffic circulation and detours. As of June 2026, phasing for the remaining downtown work is still being finalized. Staff will continue to provide updates to Council and the community as schedules are confirmed.

In parallel with County-led roadway reconstruction, additional changes may occur within the core beginning in 2026. These include new residential and commercial development and continued planning for expanded parking supply, including the potential addition of parking infrastructure, to meet current and forecasted demand.

Recognizing that traffic volumes are expected to increase with heightened residential and commercial development and growth in visitors, an updated Traffic Impact Study is underway for Downtown Paris. This study will help determine whether changes to traffic controls, intersection operations, or turning movements are required in the Broadway, Mechanic, and William Street areas of the downtown. More information on this study and its findings will be brought forward in the future.

The Progress Update consolidates work completed to date and reaffirms the direction for the remaining phases. It brings together streetscape reconstruction, accessibility, downtown operations, growth, and parking into a coordinated approach to creating a more connected and vibrant Downtown Paris.

Advancing Detailed Design Phases

The streetscape renderings included in this resource reflect the current 60% design stage for the remaining roadways. As projects advance and timelines are confirmed, the County will update drawings and visuals to reflect final (100%) designs and clearly communicate what to expect during each construction phase.

Engaging and Informing the Community

Ongoing engagement and timely communication will remain a priority throughout future phases of construction. The County will continue to use a range of tools, including on-site notices and project updates, to help residents, visitors, property owners, and businesses navigate impacts, understand upcoming work, and stay informed about schedules and design decisions.

This Progress Update serves as a valuable communication tool to share information with the community on progress made and future work that may be expected. Staff will seek opportunities to share this document with interested and impacted parties. Through thoughtful phasing, clear communication, and continued collaboration, the County will continue working toward a renewed Downtown Paris in the years ahead.

Figure – High-Level Overview of Next Steps

