

CARP Request for Consideration: Parking for Bell Park

The Board of the local Chapter of the Canadian Association of Retired Persons (CARP) has suggested that the city take a "second look" at the old St. Joe's (General Hospital) parking lot before proceeding with the destruction of this facility and going ahead with "greening" plans that may be later regretted.

There is a parking shortage on many occasions at Bell Park, as anyone who attends events would agree. An extra 350 spaces would be a benefit. We are a car community and that is not going to change soon. Most people access the park by car. This space could be used not only for our own citizens but for our visitors - it is of economic tourism value.

From a cost perspective - it costs about \$5,000 to create a paved parking space. We would be destroying a lot that is worth close to two million dollars if built new today. The lot is in relatively good shape and has several years of "life" remaining before any resurfacing might be required. It is understood that \$350,000 is committed to remove the paving and lot infrastructure and then spend much more to turn it into "green" space "sometime" in the future which few will be able to access as there will be no parking available close to the site.

As for storm water treatment .. the major danger is contaminates from vehicles in the winter time. It is doubtful the lot would receive much winter use and could be actually closed in the winter. It is likely that debris from summer storm water runoff could be deposited in appropriate catch basins rather than going to the lake.

This lot would be much safer for visitors to the park as there is signaled intersection for vehicles to enter the parking area and then proceed down to the park area not having to cross busy Paris Street - see photos below.

There does need to be created access to the park from the parking area which could be steps or sloping walkways. The distance to the amphitheater is actually closer than from the present parking areas on Paris.

It would be possible to "enhance" the present parking area with planters etc and provide lookout areas over the park.

It is suggested that the money now "earmarked" for destruction of the present facility instead be used to create access from the lot to the park area below and then evaluate need before destruction of the area.

Many older adults consider the Park as a valued part of our heritage and are frequent users, as are thousands of our citizens and visitors? Convenient and safe access is important.

Further Information: John Lindsay - 705-507-6037 - Vice Chair CARP.

