

# Parking in Downtown Canada

The New iPhone App "Nosey Parker" takes the hassle out of parking in an unfamiliar town or city or helps you find a cheaper car park in your home town. Developed for business travellers, tourists, shoppers, parents or anyone who doesn't want to pay the earth for a parking space, Nosey Parker finds the nearest car park to your current position or you can go for the cheapest or safest.

*In 1996 the author fell victim to a reorganisation of the local authority in the UK. After enjoying a job as the Head of Engineering, within 10 years the only engineer left was part time 3 days a week.*

In the eyes of many, an even sadder outcome was that I became a parking consultant, a fact I was frequently questioned about, where surprise was often expressed that such a simple task as parking would require consultants.

I started collating a database of "Publicly Accessible" parking lots and garages in the UK, which now numbers over 13500 and is still growing - probably to about 16000.

Next, I started to expand into Europe and Canada but was always hampered both by cost and not being able to easily geocode, as in the UK, the work was put on ice till now. The intervening period was spent learning how to collate the databases and fund the cost of doing it. (It is still necessary to fund a major part of the costs from parking consultancy work which unfortunately, has reduced in the last 18 months.)

Cooperation from the major companies in the private sector has increased of late, as they realise now the usefulness of the exposure at a national level. It was a Canadian parking manager who made me realise that a modest one-off payment by both the public and the private sector was possible to enable the work to proceed, so a request was sent to many larger Canadian organisations and a response to which is now awaited.



Work has now restarted, and I am asking those who have already supplied data earlier to update and geocode it and in addition, all members of the CPA are being asked for assistance. The target is that at the very latest in June 2011 a website will be launched similar in function to [www.carparks4u.com](http://www.carparks4u.com) as will an iPhone App, and frankly the earlier the better. An important shop window for the parking industry is also the two websites owned by Microsoft: Bing Maps and Multimaps, plus the [www.carparks4u.com](http://www.carparks4u.com) and the iPhone App "Nosey Parker".

The next step is to place on all these sites the details of the lots and garages collated and geocoded on the database so far, to ensure that those who have made the effort to collate, geocode and supply the details are rewarded. So, this is your invitation to help make it really useful to the shoppers, drivers and the shop owners in downtown Canada.

The iPhone App will have to wait on really good coverage of Canada. In the UK the App is linked to [www.carparks4u.com](http://www.carparks4u.com) for the details of the lots and garages. It is planned to do the same in Canada as the App will then always be current and accurate. ■