

**Date:** 2020-11-13

**Subject:** **Driveway Design Specifications**

**Secondary Title:** Driveway Design Specifications in Development Approval Process

**Contact:** Mark Michniak, Development Planner, Planning and Development Services, mark.michniak@brampton.ca, 905-874-3882, and Steve Ganesh, Manager, Planning and Development Services, steve.ganesh@brampton.ca, 905-874-2089

**Report Number:** Planning, Building and Economic Development-2020-394

**Recommendations:**

1. **THAT** the report titled: **Driveway Design Specifications in Development Approval Process** to the Planning Development Committee Meeting of December 7, 2020, be received.
2. **THAT** through the workplan of Brampton Plan and the Comprehensive Zoning By-Law Review, staff be directed to undertake a workshop with members of the public and the Peel Chapter of the Building Industry and Land Development (BILD) that examines housing design and property setback standards.
3. **THAT** staff report back on the outcome of workshop through the Brampton Plan process and Comprehensive Zoning By-Law Review.

**Overview:**

- On October 28, 2020 Council passed motion C407-2020, referring the matter of driveway design specifications in the development approval process to staff.
- This request stems from media coverage relating to driveway designs in Ward 6 along Mincing Trail.

- **The subdivision containing Mincing Trail uses a unique zoning regulation approved by a previous City Council on September 25, 2013.**
- **Mincing Trail features a staggered driveway design which permits one garage to extend within 1.0 metre of the front property line. This design can prevent the homeowner from parking a car on the driveway in front of the extended garage.**
- **The City's Brampton Plan and Comprehensive Zoning By-law processes will provide further engagement opportunities with the public and industry to address this issue in a comprehensive manner examining overall housing design standards.**

### **Background:**

On October 28, 2020 Council passed motion C407-2020 (Appendix 1), referring the matter of driveway design specifications in the development approval process to staff. This request stemmed from media coverage relating to driveway designs in Ward 6 along Mincing Trail.

Council consideration of this matter included clarification that this Council does not support house designs that have garage doors that are located minimal distances (i.e. less than 5.5 m) between the garage door and front property line. Council referred a discussion to this matter to the December 7, 2020 meeting of the Planning and Development Committee.

### **Current Situation – An Overview of Standards Influencing Driveway Design:**

#### Zoning By-law

The Zoning By-law sets out various regulations relating to the development of a residential property including types of dwellings, area, setbacks from property lines, number of parking spaces, and building height. The Zoning By-law is passed by Council and implemented by the Planning, Building, & Economic Development Department.

Regulations for individual subdivisions are created by the proponents of the development and reviewed by Development Services. Development Services circulate various departments for feedback on the proposed zoning regulations before making a recommendation on their approval.

The Zoning By-law regulates driveway depth through prescribed requirements for a minimum setback between a garage door opening and the front or flanking property line on a residential property. Section 10.5 (b) of the General Provisions for Residential

Zones requires a minimum setback of 6 metres. However, many site specific exceptions have been introduced to reduce the setback from the garage door opening to as little as 5.5 metres. In the case of staggered garages, a further reduction in this depth is included in the site specific zone.

The Zoning By-law also prescribes a minimum size for a parking stall of 2.7 metres by 5.4 metres. For most dwellings, a minimum of two (2) parking spaces meeting these dimensions are required. Where those required parking spaces can be provided inside an attached or detached garage, there is no requirement for an additional parking area to be provided on a driveway in front of the garage.

### Engineering Design Standards

City engineering standards are under the stewardship of the Public Works & Engineering Department. These standards are updated and maintained through the City's Engineering Standards Committee. Key to this matter is the right-of-way design, typically made up of two elements: the travelled road portion and the boulevard portion. The travelled road portion is 8 metres for a local road. The boulevard portion contains utility pedestals, transformers, hydrants, watermains, street lights, trees, underground utilities (gas, hydro, cable), and sidewalks.

The older local road standard (approved March 29, 2004), found in several older subdivisions featured only 1.75 metres from the pavement to the sidewalk. (See Appendix 2 for cross section.) This allowed the sidewalk to be located 2.75 metres from the property line. The City's road cross sections were revised in 2008. The new standard features 4.0 metres from the pavement to the sidewalk, which results in a sidewalk located 0.5 metres from the property line. (See Appendix 3 for cross section.)

Elements that influence the boulevard configuration, include:

- snow storage
- street light location
- street trees
- parking

### Snow Storage

In winters with heavy snowfall, the boulevard between the back of curb and the sidewalk requires a sufficient width to accommodate snow storage without the snow overflowing onto the roadway, thereby, impeding vehicular movement. The minimum required width is typically 2.5 metres. This area facilitates the storage of snow from the clearing operations from both the roadway as well as from the sidewalk.

### Street Light Location

The location of street light poles has also been revised. The previous location was 0.3 metres from the back of curb. The street light pole location is now 1.0 metres to 1.5 metres from the curb. This new location is much safer from a “clear zone” point of view.

### Street Trees

When street trees are located in the boulevard, the size of the boulevard can determine the health and ultimate size of the tree. Trees obtain moisture from the base of the tree to the dripline (the outer edge of the tree canopy). When the road and sidewalk intrude into the dripline, the trees will not obtain sufficient water for optimal growth. The current standard has a sodded boulevard width of 3.5 metres between the back of curb and the sidewalk. This will enhance the growth of the street trees to maturity sooner than a tree located within a narrow boulevard.

### Driveway Parking

Overnight parking of vehicles on the street is typically prohibited in Brampton, and residents are required to park on their driveways and/or in the garage. The typical front yard setback requirement from the garage to the property line is 6.0 metres.

In the previous local road standard, the total length for driveway parking between the garage and the sidewalk is 8.75 metres (6.0metres + 2.75metres). In the current local road cross section, the total driveway length is reduced to 6.5 metres (6.0metres + 0.5metres). This reduced length can no longer accommodate two compact vehicles parked in tandem between the garage and the sidewalk.

## **The Mincing Trail and Sunnycliffe Subdivisions – An Overview**

### Mincing Trail

The subdivision containing Mincing Trail uses a unique zoning regulation approved by a previous City Council on September 25, 2013. This regulation permits one garage to extend within 1.0 metre of the front property line, whereas the Zoning By-law typically requires a 6.0 metre setback to the garage opening. It is noted that most homes with this zoning regulation do not have this reduced setback. In addition, the subdivision employs an “Alternative Design Standard Minor Local Cross Section” with sidewalks on one side of the roadway. Where sidewalks are present they are located 0.5 metres from the property line as per the current standard.



**Mincing Trail** - Home with staggered driveway design

The zoning regulation allowing reduced driveways was only applied to specific areas within the subdivision. Multiple factors were considered to provide justification for allowing this variation, such as:

- more interior living space by allowing the home to extend into the setback area
- articulation of the front façade creating a staggered appearance that reduced the prominence of the garage.

The proponent justified that parking would not be impacted because each home with this design still provided three (3) parking spaces, which exceeds the minimum requirement of two (2) parking spaces. On this basis the Council at the time saw fit to proceed with the unique zoning regulations.

#### Sunnycliffe Subdivision

The subdivision uses the current Engineering Design Standard cross section for local roads. According to the cross section, sidewalks are located 0.5 metres from the property line. The properties in this subdivision are zoned Residential Single Detached (R1E-15.2-2459) which requires a minimum front yard of 6.0 metres. This results in a driveway length of 6.5 metres (6.0 metre front setback + 0.5 metre sidewalk setback).

## **Other Examples across the City**

In addition to the examples provided at the Council meeting, Staff have identified other locations within the City with a similar driveway regulation. (See Appendix 4 for a plan illustrating the location of zones with the staggered driveway regulation.) This regulation also carries into the City's Condominium and Rear Lane Garage Communities. In these instances, the reduced setbacks to garage openings, do not allow for parking of a vehicle on a driveway.

Where a rear lane exists, it is typical for the garage to be located close to the rear property line. Parking is accommodated within garages. Zoning regulations for garage setbacks only apply in instances where the home fronts onto a public road or as otherwise prescribed in a site specific zone particular to accommodate a unique development design. In condominium developments, with a private internal road, the developer has flexibility to vary driveway lengths. In either case a minimum number of parking spaces must still be provided.

## **Design Alternatives**

The objective of the staggered driveway design was to reduce the visual prominence of automobiles on the streetscape. Given the feedback from residents and the penalty notices for parking infractions along Mincing Trail, this strategy should be reconsidered. Staggered driveways, which add articulation to the front façade, can continue to be applied with the minimum 6.0 metre setback from the front property line to avoid causing parking infractions. Allowing front porches to extend towards the front property line is another approach that could be implemented.

## **Public and Stakeholder Engagement Opportunities**

The City offers many opportunities for public and stakeholder engagement, enshrined through our hierarchy of planning documents and policies, ranging from our Official Plan through to individual development applications. It is noted that staff had an initial discussion with representatives of Peel's BILD Chapter on November 23, 2020 advising of this report.

The City's Official Plan provides direction for how physical development within the City of Brampton will meet the current and future needs of residents and businesses. The Official Plan guides decision-making for creating Secondary plans and development applications. As the City advances the Brampton Plan consultation process, the public and key stakeholders (i.e. BILD) will have opportunities to participate in the overarching policies that influence community design, density and housing types.

In addition, engagement currently occurs through:

- Creation of Urban Design Guidelines
- Housing Strategy and Secondary Units
- Secondary Plan/Tertiary Processes
- Development Application Review

The development of Brampton Plan and the Comprehensive Zoning By-Law Review provide further opportunity for public consultation. Within the work plan of these projects staff propose to organize a workshop with members of the public and the Peel Chapter of BILD that examines housing design and property setback standards.

### **Corporate Implications:**

#### Financial Implications:

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

### **Term of Council Priorities:**

Living the Mosaic – 2040 Vision

This report supports Vision 3 – “Neighbourhoods”, which envisions Brampton as being a mosaic of characterful and complete neighbourhoods by 2040.

Term of Council Priorities 2018-2022:

The engagement workshop as recommended in this report supports the “A Well-run City” priority.

### **Conclusion:**

The length of residential driveways is governed by the Zoning By-law, which regulates the setback to a garage opening from the property line, and engineering standards for local roads, which specify the location of sidewalks within the boulevard.

Properties along Mincing Trail and other locations feature a variation from the general provisions for residential zones which allows one garage to extend within 1.0 metre of the front property line. Given the feedback from residents and the penalty notices for parking infractions along Mincing Trail, this strategy should be reconsidered.

Staff will continue to engage industry partners and residents in housing design and lot setback standards. Further, to ensure provisions in the Zoning By-law reflect the evolving needs of Brampton’s residents’ staff will undertake a workshop with members of the public and the Peel Chapter of BILD that examines housing design and property

setback standards. This engagement and subsequent report back to Council will occur through the Brampton Plan and Comprehensive Zoning By-law processes.

Authored by:

Reviewed by:

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Mark Michniak, MCIP, RPP  
Development Planner III  
Planning, Building & Economic  
Development

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Allan Parsons, MCIP, RPP  
Director, Development Services  
Planning Building & Economic Development

Approved by:

Submitted by:

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Richard Forward, MBA, M.Sc., P.Eng.  
Commissioner  
Planning, Building & Economic  
Development

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David Barrick  
Chief Administrative Officer

**Attachments:**

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| Appendix 1: | Motion C407-2020                         |
| Appendix 2: | Local Road Standard 201 (Old) – 2004     |
| Appendix 3: | Local Road Standard 201 (Current) – 2013 |
| Appendix 4: | Zones Permitting Reduced Front Driveways |