



**Date:** 2026-04-07

**Subject:** **Development of a City-Wide Childcare Centre Land Use Study**

**From:** Steve Ganesh, MCIP, RPP  
Commissioner, Planning, Building & Growth Management

**Report number:** Planning, Bld & Growth Mgt-2026-335

**Strategic Focus Area:** Growing Urban Centres & Neighbourhoods

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### Recommendations

1. That the report prepared by Jessica Yadav, Policy Planner III, Integrated City Planning to the Council Meeting of April 8, 2026, re: **Development of a City-Wide Childcare Centre Land Use Study**, be received;
2. That Council direct staff to undertake a study to inform the planning and traffic/parking requirements for childcare centres City-wide and evaluate long-term actions to refine the location of childcare centres within Brampton's Community Areas, comprised of Mixed Use Areas and Neighbourhoods, defined in Schedule 2 of *Brampton Plan, 2023*; and
3. That Council direct staff to undertake one or more actions outlined in Table 3 to regulate childcare centres while the study is ongoing.

### Report Summary

- In response to Council direction, this report provides an overview of how childcare centres are licensed and planned, and presents short- to long-term land use planning actions for Council to consider to further refine childcare centre permissions.
- The Province is responsible for regulating and licensing childcare centres through the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014*.
- In accordance with the *Provincial Planning Statement, 2024*, the City is responsible for land use planning of childcare centres as critical public infrastructure needed to meet current and future population needs. The City cannot regulate the operation of childcare centres, particularly the number of children per centre.
- The City plans for childcare centres by permitting them:
  - within the Neighbourhoods and Mixed Use designations on Schedule 2 of *Brampton Plan, 2023*, with more specific requirements outlined through Secondary or Precinct Plans, and

- broadly across residential, commercial, mixed-use, and institutional zones in the new Comprehensive Zoning By-law
- The report outlines potential short- and medium-term land use control tools in accordance with the *Planning Act* that Council may consider during the completion of a study that will refine criteria for effectively locating childcare centres in a manner that balances safety, traffic congestion, and proximity to where residents live.

## Background

This report is in response to direction from Council received at the Committee of Council meeting on April 1, 2026 through Motion 15.4, as follows:

WHEREAS the City of Brampton is advancing land use planning studies to support the continued revitalization and intensification;

WHEREAS Council has identified the importance of fostering complete communities, including creating an environment that supports families and workers;

WHEREAS childcare centres are a critical component of community infrastructure required to support residential intensification and family-friendly, walkable neighbourhoods;

WHEREAS it is appropriate to undertake a review or study to guide the development of childcare centres across the City;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED :

1. THAT Council direct staff to undertake a review and/or study for the purpose of establishing policy guidance for the development of childcare centres in the City of Brampton.
2. THAT staff be directed to report back at the April 8, 2026 City Council meeting with recommendations for Council to consider land use controls within the study area while the review and/or study is ongoing.
3. THAT staff be directed to report back to Council with the results of the study, including any recommended amendments to the Official Plan and Zoning By-law, across the City, and any associated implementation tools.

## Childcare in Ontario's Land Use Planning Context – An Overview

### Provincial Planning Statement, 2024

Ontario's *Provincial Planning Statement (PPS), 2024* enshrines a policy framework that provides guidance to municipalities for planning for community infrastructure that ensure the creation of complete communities. A key direction throughout the *PPS* is that growth and intensification must be supported by adequate and essential infrastructure, which includes social services such as childcare centers, locating them in accessible,

community-based settings to meet the needs of current and future populations (Section 3.1).

Specifically, the *PPS* identifies childcare centres as critical community infrastructure and included in the definition of “public service facilities”, requiring planning authorities to:

- prioritize public service facilities within strategic growth areas, and more broadly to achieve the creation of complete communities (2.1.6, 2.4.1.3)
- locate public service facilities to be easily accessible by active transportation, near transit corridors, schools and community hubs (2.1.6), and
- co-locate public service facilities such as within schools, high-rise developments, and other compact built forms (Section 3.1).

#### *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014*

The operation of childcare centres is regulated through the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014* (CCEYA). The CCEYA includes detailed regulations as it relates to the safe operation of licensed and unlicensed childcare centres including:

- the minimum ratio of staff to children, according to age group
- the maximum number of children permitted per age group
- the minimum indoor and outdoor play space required per child, according to age group, including:
  - 2.58 – 2.8 sqm of unobstructed indoor floor space per child (according to age group)
  - 5.6 sqm of outdoor play space per child, for programs running for six hours or more
- lighting, temperature, maximum storeys where childcare space is permitted, staff training and qualifications, play materials, equipment, furnishings, etc.

**Notably, the authority to regulate the number of children per childcare centre rests with the Province through the regulation of floor space required per child. The City cannot regulate the number of children per childcare centre.**

**Additionally, the Province is responsible for the licensing process of childcare centres across Ontario.**

#### *New Provincial Safety Measures – Concrete Barriers required*

In a letter from Minister Calandra in September 2025, the Province enacted further safety measures in response to a fatal incident in Richmond Hill wherein a vehicle drove into the glass wall of a childcare center, and a child passed away. Concrete vehicle barriers are now required where parking spaces are adjacent to childcare facilities.

In December 2025, the Province launched the Liam Riazati Memorial Fund to raise money to provide concrete barriers to community-based licensed childcare centres, free of charge. The Province further noted in a news release that further consultation with the sector and technical experts would be undertaken on recommendations to update design guidelines and regulations for licensed childcare program, including best

practices, to better safeguard indoor and outdoor play spaces and reduce risks to children. Results from this consultation are not yet completed and/or publicly available.

### Region of Peel

Peel Region is accountable to the Province for the funding, administration, and operation of all early years and licensed child care services across Peel, including administering subsidies through the Canada-wide Early Learning and Childcare (CWELCC) program. On March 31, 2025, Peel's CWELCC target expanded through Ministry of Education direction, to more than 12,000 new spaces, which must be licensed and opened by December 31, 2026.

Further, Peel Public Health is responsible for inspecting licensed childcare centres for infection control and food safety compliance. Overall, Peel plays an important role in supporting early years programming through funding, health and safety oversight, and service delivery in Brampton.

### City of Brampton

At the municipal level, the City can regulate childcare centres solely through land use planning and controls, identifying the areas where childcare centres can be located.

Accordingly, the City's Official Plan, "*Brampton Plan*" was endorsed by Council in 2023 and sets forward a framework to enable a greater mix of uses through the 15-minute neighbourhood concept to reduce reliance on the car and shift residents to be able to access daily needs within a 10-15 minute walk, bike ride or transit ride. Ensuring a mix of everyday community amenities close to where people live, inclusive of childcare centres, was enabled through Community Areas identified on Schedule 1A.

*Brampton Plan*, consistent with the *PPS 2024*, identifies key locations across the city where childcare centres are appropriate, notably through policy 2.2.7.24, they are permitted as-of-right in the Neighbourhoods and Mixed-Use designations on Schedule 2 of *Brampton Plan* (Attachment 3). Further, as a sensitive land use, childcare centres must be separated from prime Employment Areas in accordance with land use compatibility requirements.

In response to a [resident delegation](#) expressing concerns with respect to a lack of available childcare resources due to the City's childcare centre zoning provisions, staff [reported to Planning & Development Committee on June 21, 2021](#) on the City's planning framework for childcare centres. In response to questions from Committee, staff noted that the Comprehensive Zoning By-law (CZBL) Review would include consideration of relaxed restrictions for childcare centres.

In this regard, the City's new Comprehensive Zoning By-law (adopted by Council on February 4, 2026) modernizes and broadens the permissions for childcare centres, recognizing their importance as a civic infrastructure use. Table 1 demonstrates how the new CZBL broadens the zones where childcare centres are permitted, in comparison to the old Zoning By-law, which permitted childcare centres in limited, specific zones.

Table 1. Comparison of old versus new zoning permissions for childcare centres.

	<b>Previous Zoning By-Law (still in effect)</b>	<b>New Comprehensive Zoning By-law (subject to appeal)</b>
<b>Zones that permit childcare centres</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institutional One</li> <li>• Service Commercial</li> <li>• Central Area Mixed Use One</li> <li>• Hurontario Corridor Mixed Use One</li> <li>• Queen Street Mixed Use Transition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High-Density Residential zones</li> <li>• Local, General, Highway and Recreational Commercial zones</li> <li>• All Mixed-Use zones</li> <li>• All Institutional zones</li> </ul>

### Policy/Zoning Scan across GTA Municipalities

Municipalities across the GTA (e.g. Mississauga, Vaughan, Toronto) plan for childcare centres similarly to Brampton by permitting them broadly in residential, institutional and commercial/mixed-use zones and applying land use compatibility policies to separate from major facilities/prime employment areas, inclusive of the Lester B. Pearson Operating Area.

Regarding site specific planning, site plan control is used to ensure adequate pick-up/drop-off areas, minimum parking, site access, queuing areas/stacking lanes, and to address traffic impacts. There are no examples of childcare-specific zones, and limited examples of childcare-specific zoning provisions in other GTA municipalities. Rather, zoning provisions apply broadly to the residential, institutional, and commercial/mixed-use zones that childcare centres are permitted within.

### Access to Childcare Resources in Brampton

In alignment with the *PPS 2024*, the City must plan for community amenities in response to population needs. According to Statistics Canada Census of Population, 2021, early age groups (0-14yrs) make up approximately 18% of the City's population (Table 2) and must be planned for accordingly by enabling the development of childcare centers in accordance with Provincial and City policies and permissions. In comparison, there are approximately 80 licensed, community-based childcare centres (Attachment 1) in Brampton with the majority at capacity (according to Region of Peel database).

Table 2. Breakdown of total number of 0–14-year-old children in the City of Brampton (Statistics Canada Census of Population, 2021).

<b>Age Group</b>	<b>Population (2021)</b>
0 to 14 years	117,660
0 to 4 years	35,770
5 to 9 years	39,580
10 to 14 years	42,305
<i>Total population (all age groups)</i>	<i>656,480</i>

As the service system provider, Peel Region has identified that Brampton is underserved by childcare resources and in need of more safe, licensed childcare resources.

It is important to note there may be unintended consequences of overly restricting where licensed childcare centres can locate. Where communities are in need of childcare resources and licensed centres are not available or permitted to establish, there may be an increase in instances of unlicensed, ad-hoc childcare services operating in homes, which may unintentionally reduce the City and Province's ability to regulate and plan for safe, affordable childcare. If childcare centres are not permitted in Neighbourhoods and Mixed-Use Areas, there are limited other locations to establish childcare centres in Brampton.

### Current Situation

Recently, the City has seen a growing number of development applications proposing childcare centres within residential areas. To ensure a balanced approach to delivering critical public infrastructure in communities, City Council has directed staff to evaluate proactive measures to effectively locate childcare centres in a manner that balances safety, traffic congestion, and proximity to where residents live. The City has limited capacity to restrict or control childcare centres beyond land use planning controls.

As a result, the table below highlights land use control options, in accordance with the *Planning Act*, to evaluate in the short and long-term horizon to address Council's motion on April 1, 2026:

Table 3. Short-, Medium-, and Long-term Land-use Planning Actions for Council to Consider

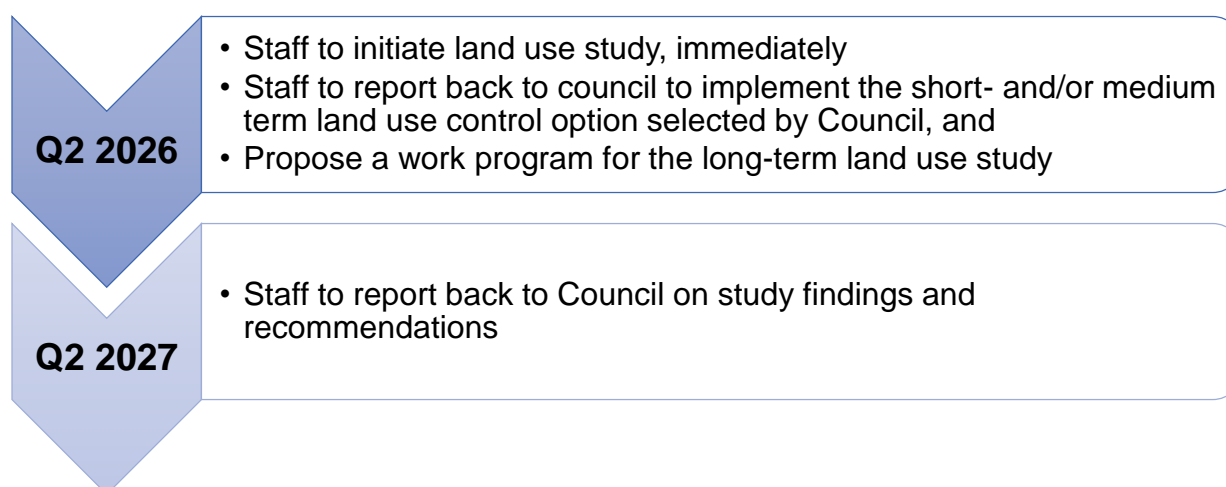
Timeline	Actions for Council to Consider	Risk Level
<b>Short-term</b>	<p><b>Advocate to the Province for improved Childcare Safety Standards to address Overcrowding</b></p> <p>Building on consultation to be undertaken by the Province on improving childcare safety and on the proposed Bill 98, Council can advocate to address overcrowding through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lowering the ratio of staff to children</li> <li>• Increasing the minimum amount of indoor and outdoor play space required per child</li> <li>• Retaining the City's capacity to effectively evaluate and require necessary studies through site plan control, to ensure safe development of childcare centres.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Low:</b> Provides a response to resident concerns for childcare centres in neighbourhoods by outlining problems to the Province, who is the governing body responsible for regulating childcare centres. Advocacy to the Province is required to retain site plan control, as proposed changes being consulted on through Bill 98 would further reduce its scope, limiting the City's ability to address and mitigate resident concerns related to development.</p>

<p><b>Short-Term</b></p>	<p><b>Interim Control By-law (ICBL) in Community Areas across the City</b></p> <p>Committee of Council has proposed a study be undertaken, and staff propose through this report the study area be scoped to Community Areas, which are lands designated Neighbourhoods and Mixed Use in <i>Brampton Plan</i>. During such review or study, Council may prohibit the use of the land, buildings, or structures within the defined area for certain purposes, inclusive of childcare centres.</p>	<p><b>High:</b> This would prevent any new childcare centre in the area defined by the by-law for the duration of ICBL (1-2 years). Additionally, when an ICBL is lifted, the City may not enact another ICBL (for any purpose) on the same lands, for three years.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> Although an ICBL is available for Council to use, it is a highly restrictive policy intervention.</p>
<p><b>Medium-Term</b></p>	<p><b>Develop Site Plan Control Provisions specific to Childcare Centres</b></p> <p>Council to direct staff to develop criteria for site plan control applications proposing childcare centre uses, to ensure noise, traffic, and compatibility concerns are addressed through relevant studies.</p> <p><b>Note</b> – as previously <a href="#">reported to Council on June 11, 2025</a> – Bill 17 “Building Faster and Smarter Act” removes municipalities ability to require urban design, sun/shadow, wind and lighting studies as part of a complete planning application.</p> <p>Additionally, the recently proposed Bill 98 consults on proposed changes to further reduce the capacity of site plan control, which may impact the City’s ability to regulate childcare centres through this proposed action.</p>	<p><b>Low to Medium:</b> May be viewed as adding red tape to applicants and discourage the establishment of childcare centres where there is an immediate need. Applicant’s may challenge the City’s requests for certain studies because of Provincial legislation geared to streamline the site plan approval process.</p>
<p><b>Long-Term</b></p>	<p><b>Land Use Study</b></p> <p>Develop locational criteria potentially through street classifications (i.e. local, collector, arterial roads) and existing community amenities to balance planning considerations in locating childcare centres. Evaluating additional land use controls will also be considered, including</p>	<p><b>Medium:</b> Placing additional limitations on where childcare centres can locate may cause additional constraints on the childcare system and impact the ability for families to find suitable spots for their childcare needs. Additionally, families are already</p>

	how the City could use tools such as Holding Provisions.	underserved for childcare in Brampton.
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## Next Steps

Staff propose the following next steps to address short- to long-term action items:



## Financial Implications

The recommendations in this report direct staff to undertake a land use planning study for childcare centres. Should Council approve the recommendations in this report, the study will be delivered within existing approved staff resources with an estimated cost of approximately \$40K to \$75K. No additional funding is required.

There is sufficient funding to proceed with the recommendations in this report.

## Conclusion

Child care centres are critical community infrastructure that support the development of complete communities. As these facilities are regulated by the Province, the City has limited tools to influence their delivery beyond land use planning controls. In response to a growing number of development applications for child care centres, and Council direction received at the April 1, 2026 Committee of Council meeting (Motion 15.4), this report outlines key options across short-, medium-, and long-term time horizons to support a balanced and coordinated approach to planning for child care centres. Staff will report back to Council in Q2 2026 implementing the short and medium-term actions determined by Council through this report and propose a work program for the land use study, which will be initiated immediately in Q2 2026 and finalized in 2027.

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Commissioner  
Planning Building & Growth Management

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**Attachments:**

- Attachment 1 – Existing Childcare Centres in Brampton
- Attachment 2 – Zones where Childcare Centres are Permitted in Brampton
- Attachment 3 – Schedule 1A and Schedule 2 of Brampton Plan, 2023