



Public Works & Engineering Environment & Development Engineering

January 15, 2021

To: Michelle Gervais, Policy Planner

Re: Proposed Elimination of Minimum Parking Requirements

At the December 9, 2020 Council meeting, Council provided direction for staff to hold a statutory public meeting to present a Zoning By-law amendment that proposes to eliminate minimum parking requirements in the Downtown, Central Area and Hurontario-Main Corridor for all uses, except low density, lodging houses and senior citizen residences.

The City of Brampton declared a climate emergency in 2019, and the Community Energy and Emissions Reduction Plan (CEERP) was unanimously approved in September 2020. As parking policies have environmental implications (largely caused by policies encouraging parking space oversupply and the use of single occupancy vehicles), the proposed elimination of minimum parking requirements can have benefits for climate change and sustainability.

The environmental implications of parking infrastructure can include:

- land consumption, and loss of open space and biodiversity caused by the construction of parking spaces;
- reduced urban density that encourages automobile dependence and hinders the development of transit supportive and walkable communities;
- emission of greenhouse gases (GHGs) from automobiles using the parking area;
- large impervious surfaces that lead to excessive storm water run-off;
- a heat island effect where asphalt parking lots absorb and radiate heat from the sun, contributing to a rise in urban temperatures; and
- construction and maintenance costs of parking lots/structures. A large amount of resources are used to create surface parking lots (asphalt) and parking structures (concrete), which have their own environmental implications consisting of the total amount of energy consumed, and emissions produced, in creating and maintaining the parking spaces.

The proposed elimination of minimum parking requirements would support the City's environmental sustainability and climate change goals and targets, as stated in the city documents described below.

Community Energy and Emissions Reduction Plan (CEERP): Strategic Priorities

Green Communities

The shape, structure, and form of a community greatly influences how and when energy is used. Green communities incorporate transit-oriented development. They also encourage healthier lifestyles and provide more economical and equitable living by focusing on improving transit and active

transportation options, and creating accessible neighbourhoods that allow residents to meet most of their needs within walkable distance from home. More walkable and transit-oriented communities means less cars on the road and reliance on fossil fuels. An elimination of minimum parking requirements could lead to less parking lots, resulting in the potential for improved community structure and form, and a decrease in the use of automobiles.

Mobility

Transportation in Brampton accounts for about 60% of community-wide GHG emissions and 50% of the total dollars spent on energy in the community, reflecting that Brampton is largely an automobile-dependent community. For the most part, Brampton's growth has occurred as a typical automobile-oriented suburban form, characterized by separated land uses, low-density residential communities, large format retail, abundant parking, and a transportation network made up of wide arterial roads. An abundant supply of parking at free or low prices reduces the cost of car travel and induces more individuals to drive – instead of using other transport modes – to reach their destinations.

Because abundant parking encourages the use of single occupancy vehicles and therefore discourages walking, biking, and the use of public transit, it greatly contributes to urban congestion and sprawl. Urban sprawl is enabled by the provision of roads and parking infrastructure – without them, it would not be feasible. The space requirement to accommodate vehicles (e.g. larger roads, major highways, and parking) leads to more sprawl. This increases the resources, infrastructure, and energy requirements needed per person to service this larger, sprawled area.

An elimination of minimum parking requirements in the Downtown, Central Area, and Hurontario-Main Corridor can promote transit and active transportation, which will reduce sprawl and support moving towards more compact, mixed-use, and walkable neighbourhoods.

Green Infrastructure

The space requirement to accommodate vehicles (e.g. larger roads, major highways, and parking) leads to more sprawl. This in turn increases the resources, infrastructure, and energy requirements needed per person to service this larger, sprawled area. The typical urban landscape contains a high degree of impervious surfaces including paved roads and parking lots. These hard surfaces cause greater volumes of stormwater runoff to be discharged into local water bodies and sewers during wet weather, and increases pressure on stormwater management infrastructure.

Green infrastructure is a strategically planned network of natural and semi-natural features and spaces managed to deliver a wide range of ecosystem services to the community. Green infrastructure can play a role in reducing community energy demand by mitigating heat island effects, reducing energy requirements for cleaning drinking water and managing stormwater, or reducing heat loss in buildings from cold winds.

The proposed elimination of minimum parking requirements could result in converting what would be parking area into green space or integrating green space into parking lots. This would decrease stormwater runoff, mitigate the heat island effect, increase carbon sequestration, and improve air quality.

Environmental Master Plan

In 2014, the City of Brampton released Brampton Grow Green, the City's first Environmental Master Plan. Brampton Grow Green establishes a comprehensive framework to improve Brampton's environmental performance, including principles, goals, actions, metrics, and targets organized around the core components of People, Air, Water, Land, Energy, and Waste. The proposed elimination of minimum parking requirements would support the goals of the EMP, particularly related to Air, Water, and Land:

Air

Vehicle emissions contribute to air and water pollution. As noted above, road infrastructure, including parking lots, contribute to stormwater runoff, heat island effect, and occupy land that could otherwise be green or living space. Eliminating some parking could reduce automobile use, resulting in increased use of transit and active transportation, which promotes a healthy lifestyle whilst improving Brampton's air quality and reducing its GHG emissions.

Water

Stormwater management involves integrated best practices, from sediment and erosion control, to quantity and quality control facilities, to measures that can be implemented in front and rear yards, parking lots and along roads. This includes reducing impermeable surfaces, like parking, which contribute to stormwater runoff. As such, reduction in dedicated parking areas will result in reductions to stormwater runoff and improved water quality in Brampton's rivers, streams, wetlands, and lakes.

Land (Sustainable Development)

Brampton's urban environment comprises approximately 83 per cent of the city's land area. Concerns over public health, climate change, and energy and resource use has brought sustainable urban design to the forefront of planning, building, and managing communities. The Brampton Grow Green EMP Action Plan calls for the development of an Alternative Parking Strategy to encourage underground parking, tiered parking structures, green parking lots, and opportunities to reduce parking requirements in exchange for community benefits.

The environmental impacts of parking are not limited to the use of automobile-centric infrastructure. The negative effects start far before any parking space is even made available. The extraction, transportation, production, and application of the materials (e.g. asphalt, concrete, metal) needed to build underground, surface, and multistory parking involve intensive use of fossil fuels and natural aggregates, and result in GHG emissions, air and water pollutants, water use, land disturbance and habitat destruction. As such, reducing the amount parking in Brampton would lessen the city's contribution to the environmental and public health damage related to these materials.

We appreciate the ability to work with you on the overall Zoning By-Law Review and look forward to the potential environmental benefits that can result from eliminating minimum parking requirements in the Downtown, Central Area and Hurontario-Main Corridor.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to me directly.

Sincerely,
Michael Hoy
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Transportation Planning Initiatives and Infrastructure Projects

The City is undertaking a number of transportation planning initiatives and infrastructure projects that will help with the reduction/ elimination of parking requirements in strategic, higher density nodes. A focus on higher order transit improvements and active transportation facilities will provide the necessary infrastructure to encourage shifting automobile dependent travel behaviours to more sustainable modes such as transit, walking and cycling, supporting the elimination of parking requirements in intensification areas.

Projects

Queen Street BRT

Queen St – Hwy 7 BRT (bus rapid transit) is planned to connect Brampton to Vaughan in a dedicated centre median running way. The Queen St – Hwy 7 BRT will offer frequent and reliable transit service to increase in ridership and encourage transit oriented development.

The study is currently going through the Metrolinx Business Case process, which will guide funding and construction timelines. The BRT infrastructure is forecasted for approximately 2027.

Hurontario LRT

Hurontario LRT is an 18-kilometre Light Rail Transit (HuLRT), running north - south from the Port Credit GO Station in Mississauga to Brampton Gateway Terminal in Uptown Brampton. The HuLRT project will also include active transportation mode and public realm enhancements. The HuLRT is one of the key transportation projects in the Metrolinx 2041 Regional Transportation Plan and is consistent with goals in the Brampton 2040 Vision.

Design is currently in progress, and Brampton will likely see a significant increase in construction activities by Fall 2021 with tentative completion and commissioning of the system by Fall of 2024.

LRT Extension

The Brampton LRT Extension Environmental Assessment (EA) Study is examining alternatives to extend light rail transit (LRT) on Hurontario/Main Street, from the Brampton Gateway Terminal at Steeles Avenue East to the Brampton GO Station in Downtown Brampton. The EA is anticipated to be completed before the end of 2021 and construction is anticipated to begin within 6 to 10 years.

Policies and Plans

Active Transportation Master Plan, 2019

The Active Transportation Master Plan, endorsed by Council in 2019, provides the implementation framework to advance active transportation network plans, policies and programs that supports the 2040 Vision.

The goals of the ATMP are to improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists, enhance accessibility, maximize the use of infrastructure, invest in expanding the active transportation network, and to improve active transportation coordination and access to transit to increase first and last mile as active transportation choices.

To deliver enhanced pedestrian and cycling infrastructure across the city, the ATMP infrastructure recommendations are being implemented through the City's Capital and budget planning processes.

Complete Streets Guidelines, Ongoing

City staff are currently undertaking the Brampton Complete Streets Guidelines (BCSG). The BCSG is being undertaken to inform a rethink of Brampton's streets to consider design treatments, service levels and experience for all road users, and not just automobile drivers – emphasizing the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and transit users.

The BCSG are helping to support an integrated sustainable transportation network for Brampton, with streets that provide safe, equitable, attractive and convenient travel for all ages and abilities, accommodating all users. Complete Streets informs a policy framework for transportation decision-making to improve transportation choices, enhance existing and planned networks, and support existing and planned development contexts.

The BCSG are in development and expected to be completed in 2021. The BCSG background study and preliminary recommendations for Vision, Principles and design approaches for Brampton's street network are being used to inform the City's Transportation Master Plan Review and Update.

Transportation Master Plan (2015) Review and Update, Ongoing

The Transportation Master Plan (TMP) is the City's long term strategy to guide decision-making for multi-modal transportation planning and investment. Staff is initiating a comprehensive Transportation Master Plan Review and update that will take its broad direction from the Brampton 2040 Vision, and emergent Brampton Complete Street Guidelines, among other considerations.

The review will consider long term needs for a seamless, connected and integrated mobility network that supports the accommodation of growing travel demand in a more sustainable

way - increasing trips made by walking, cycling and transit. The review will prioritize mobility solutions that support compact, high density, mixed land use development in strategic centres, advancing sustainable infrastructure improvements to connect transit and active transportation networks to facilitate short trips and reduce automobile use.

EDO Comments - ZBLA - Elimination of Minimum Parking Requirements
Subject: EDO Comments - ZBLA - Elimination of Minimum Parking Requirements

Hi Michelle

Thank-you for the opportunity to comment. Economic Development staff support the city initiated amendment to remove minimum parking requirements for the lands identified. Developing a viable high density mixed use development is difficult for developers in the current market given the costs associated with building underground or structured parking. Reducing the costs of development provides more affordable housing and commercial leasing opportunities. It also provides an opportunity for development to occur on lands that would have otherwise been used for parking. It makes sense to concentrate efforts on attracting higher density development in the areas identified given the conditions of current and future higher order transit, in addition to the existing policy framework.

Economic Development continues to receive inquiries for readily available office space from investors, site selectors and new entrepreneurs. Removing barriers of entry for more office development to occur will provide new business's with options to stay and grow in our City. Coming out of COVID, supporting entrepreneurs and attracting investment are key parts of the City's Economic Recovery Strategy.

Kind regards

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Resources for reopening and recovery for your business during COVID19 please connect here