

## **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (WORKING SESSION) - MAY 22, 2012**

### **RESIDENTIAL PARKING ISSUES CONSEQUENT ON THE “NEW URBANISM” CITY-WIDE**

#### **Recommendation**

The Commissioner of Engineering and Public Works in consultation with the Commissioner of Legal and Administrative Services and City Solicitor, the Commissioner of Planning, and the Director of Enforcement Services, recommend:

1. THAT this report and presentation from staff on parking issues in new residential communities be received; and
2. THAT Council provide direction on whether any of the potential solutions to the residential parking issue outlined in this report should be pursued further.

#### **Contribution to Sustainability**

Alternative development standards (ADS) contribute to the sustainability of the City by enhancing the livability of communities, reducing life-cycle cost of development, and result in the need for less municipal infrastructure. ADS support compact urban form which helps protect the natural environment by minimizing the consumption of land for development.

#### **Economic Impact**

There is no economic impact resulting from the recommendations of this report.

#### **Communication Plan**

A communication plan may need to be developed to inform stakeholders of any change to on-street parking policies through media coverage, website postings, advertisement and print material.

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an assessment of the emerging parking issues resulting from the implementation of alternative design standards and more compact urban forms in the communities within OPA400/600, and provide potential solutions.

#### **Background – Analysis and Options**

Council, at its meeting on September 21, 2009, directed staff to bring forward to Council options to address residential parking issues consequent on the new urbanism including budgetary considerations. This report has been prepared to begin to address this parking issue.

#### **The Province issued alternative development standards (ADS) for new urban communities**

In an effort to influence a shift to the development of more compact urban communities in the province, the Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs released a document entitled “Alternative Development Standards – Making Choices” in April 1995. The intent of ADS was to provide municipalities with a “suite” or “formula” of alternative engineering and development standards

which could contribute to making new communities more diverse, compact, sustainable, cost effective, livable, transit supportive, pedestrian friendly, and with an improved “curb appeal”. The development of more compact urban communities also results in the more efficient use of land through narrow lot frontages, less requirement for municipal infrastructure, and helps to protect the natural environment by saving land from development.

The ADS document presents a range of alternative development standards in a comprehensive way. The document focused on design and servicing issues including lot sizes and frontages, siting of houses on lots, street pavement and right-of-way widths, the number and location of sidewalks, and on and off-street parking requirements all geared to provide more sustainable and compact urban communities.

### **The City adopted new road cross section standards for development in OPA400/600 in response to ADS**

In December 1996, Council adopted alternative road cross section standards for the planned development in OPA400/600 areas. These alternative road standards used many of the concepts and design alternatives that were recommended in the ADS-Making Choices document. Some of the notable differences between the City’s traditional road standards and the newer ADS standards are:

- Narrower pavement and boulevard widths
- Non-symmetrical road cross-section (one boulevard is wider than the other)
- Sidewalk alignment moved closer to the curb
- Use of traffic calming measures
- Adoption of a laneway standard

These initial City ADS road cross sections have been used in the OPA 400 block development that preceded 2004, such as the Woodbridge Expansion Area, Blocks 10 and 33E, and part of Block 39. This initial local road standard cross-section (Standard Drawing B-9) includes a 17.5 metre right-of-way, an eight metre pavement (curb face to curb face) and no-symmetrical boulevard widths as shown on Attachment No.1. The one boulevard is 4.0 metres wide and the other is wider at 5.5 metres so it can accommodate a 1.5 metre wide sidewalk.

In January 2002, Council received a report entitled “Design Standards Review”, prepared by Brook McIlroy Inc. and Totten Sims Hubicki Associates, dated January 2002. This report provided a review of certain building issues related predominantly to smaller residential lots in OPA400/600 including narrow single detached, semi-detached and townhouse building forms. In addition, the Design Standards Review (DSR) examined the individual elements within the public and private realm and the interface and relationship between the two.

Based on the findings of the DSR, Council directed that certain aspects of the City’s Zoning By-law be amended to achieve a higher quality of urban design objectives for the future communities in OPA400/600, in particular Blocks 11, 18, 33W, 39N and 40. In addition, the City’s local road standards were also revised to complement and support the new urban design objectives. The notable changes in the road standard were the repositioning of the street trees to be between the sidewalk and the curb and the resulting relocation of the sidewalk closer to the property line as shown on Attachment No.2 (Standard Drawing B-12).

### **The City’s Zoning By-law provides a balanced house to street relationship**

The house to street relationship together with the on-street and on-lot parking accommodations are key considerations when establishing appropriate zoning and ADS standards. A shorter separation between building facades (face to face) across the street in an urban setting is considered desirable because it provides a more vibrant and active streetscape. In addition, the handling of on-lot parking can influence the public realm and the livability of the street.

Accordingly, zoning requirements were established that were complementary and compatible with the new ADS road cross-sections and in keeping with the findings of the DSR.

With respect to parking, a typical car measures 5.8 metres in length. Accordingly, Zoning By-law 1-88 specifies a minimum setback to the face of garage ranging between 5.0 and 6.0 metres depending on whether a sidewalk crosses the driveway and which by-law schedule applies. These zoning standards would permit on-lot parking of one vehicle between the garage door and the property line or sidewalk. In practice, a lot with a two car garage would have sufficient room on the driveway to park two vehicles side by side without encroaching onto the sidewalk. Where there is no sidewalk on the boulevard, there would be sufficient room to park a total of four small vehicles (two vehicles in tandem) on a double driveway as shown on Attachment No.3. Narrower lots with only a single car garage and driveway would only have sufficient room to park one or two vehicles, respectively. Accordingly, there is insufficient room to park two vehicles in tandem on a single driveway where a sidewalk crosses the driveway.

The Zoning By-law also specifies that a minimum of two parking spaces be provided for small singles, semi-detached and townhouse units. Generally, this parking requirement is provided by one space in the garage and one on the driveway.

### **On-lot parking needs may exceed supply in some cases**

Currently, the majority of households in Vaughan own more than one vehicle. Situations exist where a homeowner cannot make effective use of the garage for parking. On smaller lots with single car garages, this situation will result in the number of effective parking spaces being reduced to one where a sidewalk crosses the driveway. In cases where a household has two vehicles, parking the second vehicle over night becomes a problem. In many cases, the homeowner has no other alternative but to park the second vehicle on the driveway in such a manner that it overhangs the sidewalk or road curb, or park the vehicle on the roadway over night. Both these scenarios contravene the City's Parking By-law, and the homeowner is subject to fines.

### **Only a small percentage of homeowners are affected by on-lot parking limitations in Vaughan**

The objectives of Official Plan 400/600 envision a mix of housing types in the new block communities. In practice, many of the block plans approved to date include predominantly lower density development. Based on a review of air photo and block plans, staff roughly estimate that there is on average approximately 15 percent narrow lots (small singles, semi and townhouse) with single car garages in the new communities of OPA400/600. Assuming that only half of the local roads within these communities have sidewalks on one side of the road, then about 3,000 units could potentially have an on-lot parking problem. Typically, these lot types are clustered together on a street or neighbourhood, which can accentuate the parking issue.

In January 2012, the Province introduced Bill 140; *The Strong Communities Through Affordable Housing Act*. This Legislation requires municipalities to implement official plan policies and zoning by-law provisions that allow second units (like basement apartments). With this new provincial act together with the City's intensification objectives, on-lot and on-street parking will become more critical in the future. Also, it is widely recognized that the demand for on-street parking is related to the density of development. In other words, in areas of higher density, the need for on-street parking increases.

### **A number of potential solutions to address the parking demand have been identified**

Staff has reviewed a number of potential solutions to this parking demand problem including the following:

1. Relocation of the sidewalk closer to the curb to gain space on the driveway to try and achieve tandem parking
2. Increasing the garage setback to try and achieve tandem parking
3. Combination of 1 and 2 above
4. Amending the current zoning by-law to permit widening of driveway onto the front yard for the parking of a second vehicle on the lot
5. Permitting overnight on-driveway parking of vehicles that overhang the sidewalk between the hours of 11pm and 6am
6. permitting on-street parking

These options are examined further in the next several paragraphs.

**Option 1 – Repositioning the sidewalk falls short of providing sufficient extra room to provide tandem parking on the driveway**

Staff has reviewed the opportunities to move the placement of the sidewalk closer to the roadway to provide additional room on the driveway to accommodate the parking of two vehicles in tandem. The current local road standard locates the sidewalk at an offset of 1.0 metres from the property line as shown on Attachment No. 2. It is technically feasible to relocate the sidewalk to an offset of about 2.75 metres from the property line without negatively impacting other utilities or winter maintenance activities. This sidewalk offset was specified on the City's original ADS road standards (Attachment No.1), which were subsequently amended based on the recommendations of the Design Standard Review. If the current zoning set back to the face of the garage is maintained, then the shift in the sidewalk location would provide an effective driveway length of 8.75 metres. Given that a minimum driveway length of 11.5 metres is needed to accommodate the parking of two vehicles in tandem, a shift in the sidewalk location would not realize sufficient extra room on the driveway for a second car. In addition, the repositioning of the sidewalk on the boulevard closer to the road would negatively impact the urban design and urban streetscape as outlined in the 2002 DSR report. Staff anticipates there will be significant obstacles to implementing such a solution.

**Option 2 - Increasing the garage setback will provide driveway parking opportunities but will impact the built form and streetscape**

Another means of providing more space on the driveway would be to increase the setback to the face of the garage. The current garage setback under the Zoning By-law 1-88 ranges between 5.0 and 6.0 metres depending on whether a sidewalk crosses the driveway and which by-law schedule applies. Based on the City's current local road cross-section, an additional 1.0 metre of driveway is available on the boulevard between the sidewalk and property. Accordingly, based on current standards there is generally 7.0 metres of usable driveway available on each lot, which is sufficient to park one vehicle. A minimum driveway length of 11.5 metres is needed to accommodate the parking of two vehicles in tandem. Accordingly, the garage setback could be increased to 10.5 metres (an increase of 4.5 metres) to provide sufficient room for tandem parking. Although this may be technically feasible, increasing the setback to the garage will impact the building form and the urban streetscape along the street.

Pushing the garage further back will have a negative impact on the building floor plan design. It will considerably reduce the buildable area on the lot and result in a very narrow living space on the main floor and potentially on the second floor as well. Accordingly, it is anticipated that the building industry will raise concerns with this potential solution. From an urban design/streetscape perspective, the resulting jog in the building face and the additional on-lot parking will detract from the character and visual interest of the streetscape. Accordingly, this option significantly impacts the built form and streetscape.

### **Option 3 - A blended approach also impacts building form and streetscape**

Applying a balanced approach, both the sidewalk placement and the garage setback could be adjusted to accommodate tandem parking. Based on the information presented above, the sidewalk could potentially be relocated to an offset of about 2.75 metres from the property line and the garage setback could be increased to 8.75 metres (an increase of 2.75 metres) to provide sufficient room for tandem parking on the driveway. However, this option will also have similar impacts as Options 1 and 2 above.

### **Option 4 - Parking on the front yard will impact streetscape**

Some homeowners have opted to hard-surface a portion of the front yard next to the driveway to accommodate the parking of the second vehicle. This situation is currently prohibited through by-law because it results in a streetscape that is dominated by parked cars and driveways, which will greatly reduce the overall soft landscaping along the street. In addition, above ground utilities may be at greater risk of being damaged by vehicle strikes because of the sharp angle that reversing drivers must take to exit the front yard parking spot. For these reasons, permitting the construction of parking spaces in the front yard is not ideal.

### **Option 5 - Permit parked vehicles on the driveway to overhang the sidewalk over night will obstruct pedestrians**

Staff also reviewed the potential to allow permit parked vehicles on the driveway to overhang the sidewalk between 11pm and 6am when pedestrian traffic is low. Under this scenario, the overhang from a vehicle would impact pedestrian movements, especially those persons in wheel chairs, persons with strollers and small children on bicycles. When faced with a vehicle over the sidewalk, pedestrian would have no alternative but to go onto the road to get around the car, which is inconvenient and potentially unsafe.

As every personal trip – made by walking, bicycle, public transit or motor vehicle – begins and ends on foot, the sidewalk is a key component of the public right-of-way. It provides opportunities for all residents in particular seniors, children in strollers, people in wheelchairs and others with limited mobility with a safe and accessible pedestrian connection to community services such as schools, parks, open spaces, businesses and transit. It also acts as an interface between the public and private realms, and can play a role in defining the urban character of a neighbourhood. A city's "walkability" is an important measure of the quality of its public realm, social and economic health and vitality.

Accordingly, obstructing a sidewalk regardless of the time of day goes against the City's objective of creating a walkable City.

### **Option 6 - On-street parking makes maximum use of the municipal infrastructure but must be managed**

On-street parking makes maximum use of the municipal infrastructure and avoids excessive paved surfaces in the front yards, which impacts the overall streetscape. The ADS document suggests that "an 8.5 metre paved street (and on an 8.0m pavement in low traffic, low snowfall areas), a lane of parking can generally be accommodated along with two traffic lanes without impeding the traffic function or safety". In addition, on-street parking may improve safety by sending a message to drivers to slow down. The findings of the recent City Parking Standards Review encourage the use of on-street parking as a means of meeting demand.

A City-wide early morning parking prohibition (2am to 6am) has been in place for many years. While the intent of this may have been to allow for winter maintenance activities to take place, snow storms occur at all times of the day, and the City's response to such events is generally immediate. As such, the ongoing validity of this principle is now somewhat unjustifiable.

Should Council wish to consider the option of allowing on-street parking, the impacts on routine and winter road maintenance, waste management, emergency access, signage and pavement marking, location criteria, and parking zones need to be thoroughly reviewed through the development of a parking criteria. For example, to ensure that snow ploughs can get down the street, parking could only be permitted on one side of the street during the winter season. To reduce the need to haul and dispose of snow in the event of winters with heavy snowfall, parking should remain on the same side of the street during the entire winter period. Normally these would be the west and south sides of the street in order to maximize the solar snow melting process on the other side of the street. To allow for routine summer street sweeping, parking should alternate between sides on a predetermined basis.

Consideration also needs to be made as to whether or not to charge a permit fee for on-street parking. If a permit fee is charged, then the administrative requirements of implementing on-street parking increase significantly. Each street would need to be physically assessed by staff to determine how many parking spots there are on each side of the street, prior to issuing any permits. Given that there needs to be some alternation of parking for the reasons noted earlier, the lowest number of parking spaces is the maximum number of permits that could be issued. Having a no fee system, would make administration easier, and reduce implementation time, but would impact on potential revenues that an on-street permit parking system could bring in. Accordingly, a comprehensive cost/benefit analysis would need to be undertaken before moving forward with permit parking.

Another factor that needs further review is to determine what area(s) of the City an on-street parking system would apply. While the current situation may be limited to certain areas, with the legitimization of basement apartments, the need for parking may increase in all areas of the City.

#### **Staff is seeking Council's direction on presented options**

Staff has identified a number of potential solutions to address the apparent emerging parking issues resulting from the implementation of alternative design standards and more compact urban forms in some localized neighbourhoods within the OPA400/600 communities. Staff is seeking input from Council on whether any of these options should be pursued further.

#### **Enhancing parking permits process may provide long term solution to managing on-street parking**

In 2002 the City of Vaughan began offering overnight on-street visitor parking permits. Five permits are available per month, per household based on address at a cost of \$5.00 per permit. These permits are currently only available by attending City Hall Monday to Friday between 8:30am and 8:30pm. Visitor parking permit fees currently generate about \$5,000 annually. Expanding this program to address resident parking may be an option.

#### **Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020/ Strategic Plan**

This report is consistent with the priorities previously set by Council and the necessary resources have been allocated and approved.

#### **Regional Implications**

On-street parking on City roads may have implications to the Region if it negatively impacts the delivery of local transit.

## **Conclusion**

Currently, the majority of households in Vaughan own more than one vehicle. Situations exist where a homeowner cannot make effective use of the garage for parking. On smaller lots with single car garages, this situation will result in the number of effective parking spaces being reduced to one where a sidewalk crosses the driveway. In this case, where a household has two vehicles, parking the second vehicle over night becomes a problem. This report outlines a number of potential options to address this residential parking issue. Staff is seeking Council's input on how to proceed in this regard.

## **Attachments**

Attachment No.1 – Local Road Standard (Standard Drawing B-9)

Attachment No.2 – Current Local Road Standard (Standard Drawing B-12)

Attachment No.3 – Current Street View

## **Report Prepared By:**

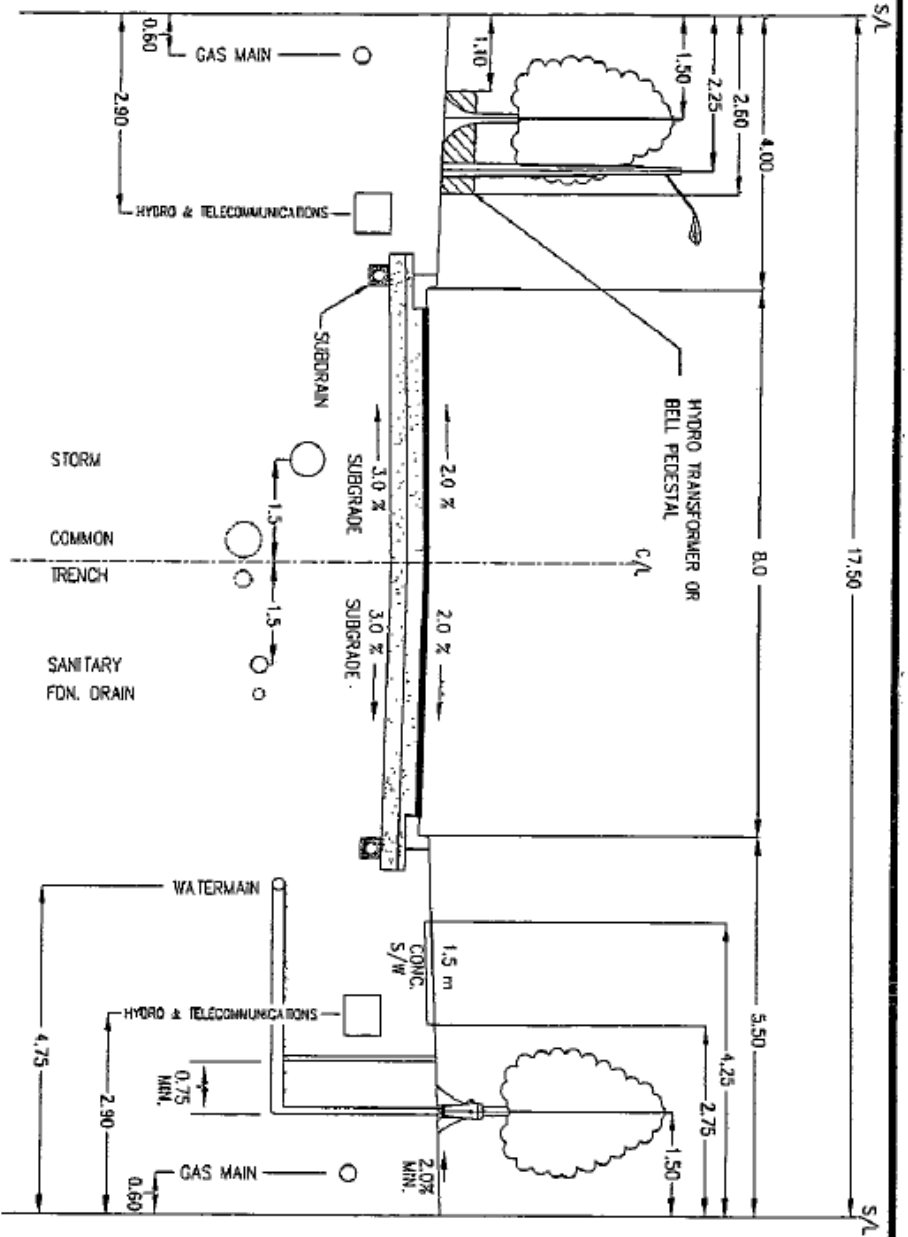
Andrew Pearce, Director of Development / Transportation Engineering, Ext. 8255

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Jankowski, P.Eng.  
Commissioner of Engineering  
and Public Works

Andrew Pearce, C.E.T.,  
Director of Development & Transportation  
Engineering

# ATTACHMENT NO. 1



**SUPERCEDED MARCH 2004**

**M** DIMENSIONS IN METRES  
EXCEPT AS NOTED

NO.	REVISIONS	DATE
1		
2		
3		
4		

**VAUGHAN**  
*The City Above Toronto*  
**ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT**

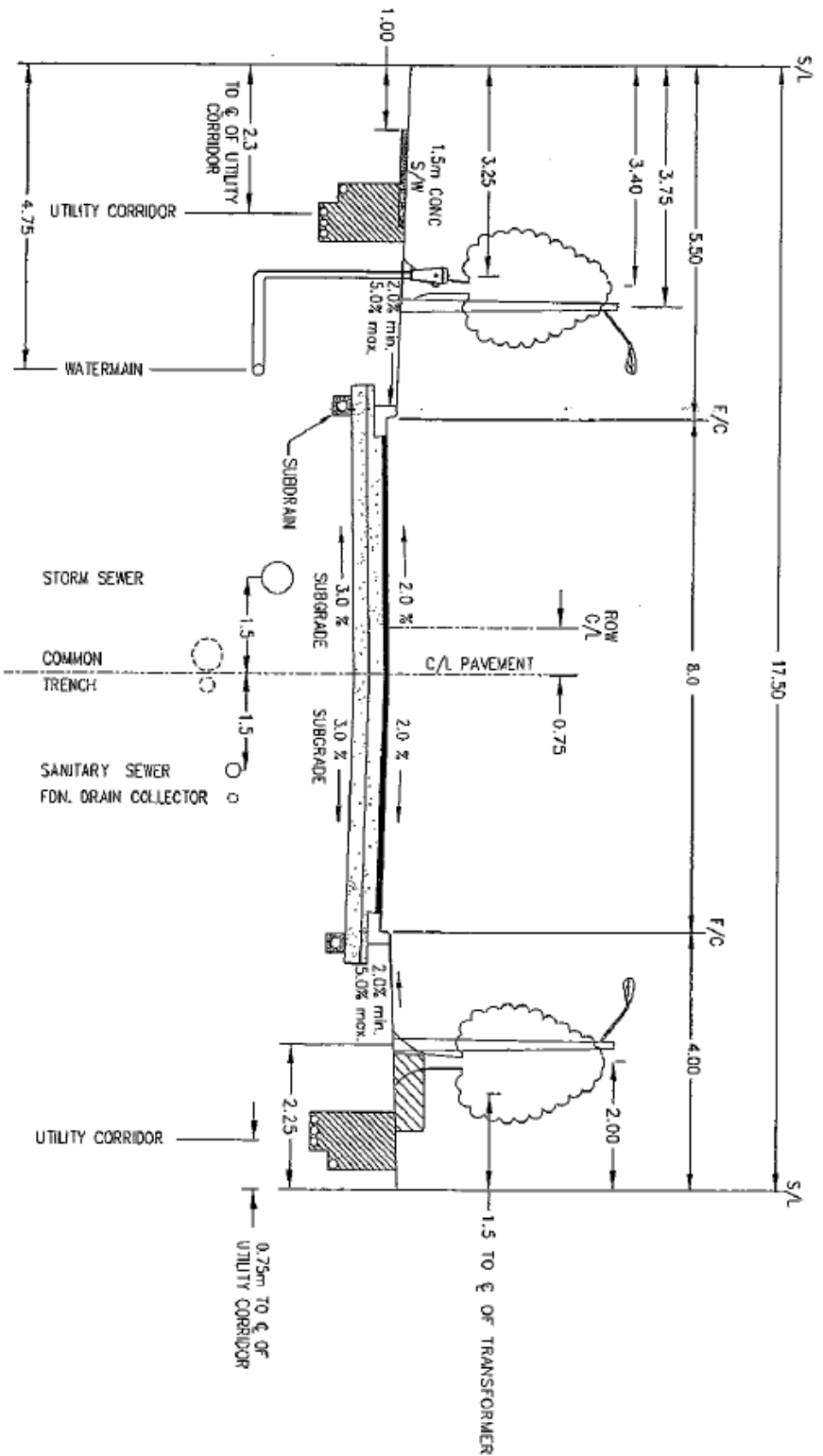
CITY OF VAUGHAN ENGINEERING STANDARD  
**LOCAL RESIDENTIAL ROAD**  
 17.5 m R.O.W.

NOT TO SCALE      APPROVED:        N/A  
 DESIGNED:        N/A      DATE: MARCH 2004

STD. DWG.  
**B - 9**



# ATTACHMENT NO. 2



## NOTES

1. PAVEMENT WIDTH IS DESIGNED TO ACCOMMODATE 2 TRAVEL LANES WITH 1 PARKING LANE.
2. PAVEMENT DESIGN SHALL CONFORM TO MINIMUM CITY STANDARDS AND/OR APPROVED GEOTECHNICAL REPORT.
3. ACTIVELY GROWING No. 1 NURSERY SOD TO BE LAID ON 150mm OF TOPSOIL, PROPERLY GRADED AND ROLLED.
4. DEPTH OF COVER ON ALL MUNICIPAL INFRASTRUCTURE SHALL CONFORM TO MINIMUM CITY STANDARDS.

**m** DIMENSIONS IN METRES  
EXCEPT AS NOTED

NO.	REVISIONS	DATE
4		
3		
2		
1		

**Vaughan**  
*The City Always Towards*

**ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT**

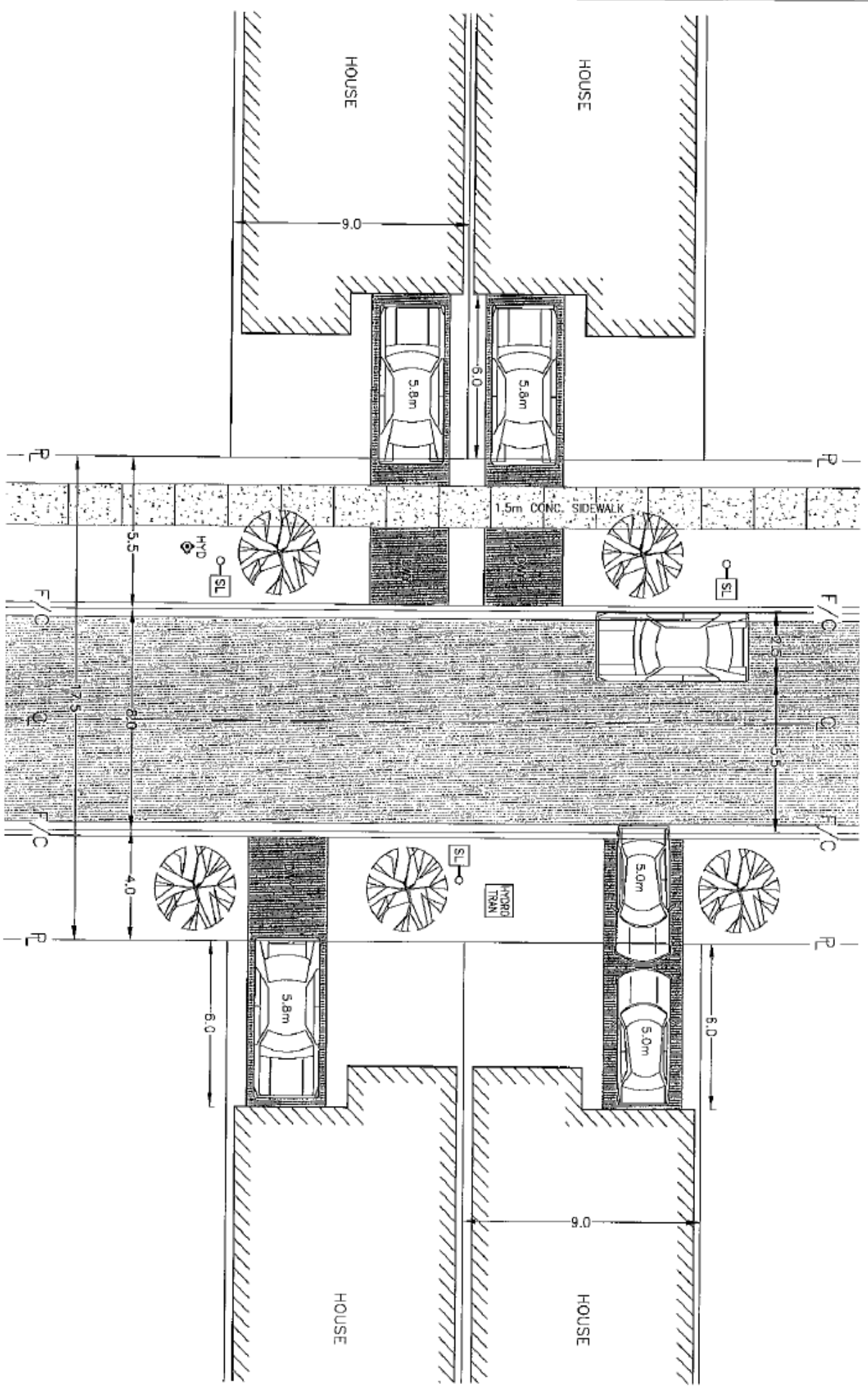
CITY OF VAUGHAN ENGINEERING STANDARD

**LOCAL ROAD**  
**17.5 m R.O.W. - 8m PAVEMENT**

NOT TO SCALE      DESIGNED: ENG. DEPT.  
REVISION: \_\_\_\_\_      DATE: MARCH, 2004      STD. DWG. B-12

# ATTACHMENT 3

## CURRENT STREET VIEW



SCALE 1:200