

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (WORKING SESSION) FEBURARY 11, 2003

**ZONING BY-LAW AMENDMENT FILE Z.01.006
AUTOMOBILE GAS BARS
CITY OF VAUGHAN**

Recommendation

The Commissioner of Planning recommends:

1. THAT a City-initiated amendment to By-law 1-88 respecting the zone standards for Automobile Gas Bars, BE APPROVED, and that a by-law be brought forward to Council for enactment to:
 - i) permit a retail convenience store use, in association with automobile gas bar uses, limited to a maximum gross floor area of 280m²;
 - ii) permit a drive-through convenience eating establishment use as an accessory use, to a maximum of 25% of the retail convenience store floor area;
 - iii) amend the parking requirements for a car wash to:
 - a) delete the 5 required parking spaces;
 - b) require 1 parking space per vacuum island; and
 - c) require a minimum of 10 stacking spaces.
2. THAT Staff be directed to develop a set of Urban Design Guidelines respecting Automobile Gas Bars, to be forwarded to a future meeting of the Committee of the Whole (Working Session) for discussion.

Purpose

To review the standards of the Zoning By-law respecting Automobile Gas Bars, and provide Council with recommended amendments thereto.

Background - Analysis and Options

On January 15, 2001, Council resolved that "a Public Hearing be scheduled to consider an amendment to the Zoning By-law to incorporate zoning standards for the new format service stations".

A notice of Public Hearing was published in The Vaughan Liberal and the Toronto Star on April 12, 2001, with the Public Hearing taking place on May 7, 2001. To date, responses have been received from the Canadian Petroleum Products Institute (CPPI), which is a non-profit organization composed of a number of Canadian corporations directly involved in the oil and gas industry.

CPPI was in support of the review undertaken by the City, and their issues reflect their willingness to work with the City "to develop a framework of appropriate zoning regulations for automobile gas bars that will:

- (i) ensure the appropriate scale and form of development on each site;
- (ii) provide for the appropriate relationship of these uses with other adjacent land uses;
- (iii) accommodate the emerging trends in the gasoline marketing and delivery sector; and,
- (iv) minimize numerous site-specific variance and/or By-law amendment applications”.

Purpose of the Review

Recent trends in the gas bar industry have created new strategies to improve business revenues at gas bar kiosks. Gas bars that previously functioned as single destination establishments for the sale of gasoline and oils have evolved to include convenience retail services within the associated gas bar kiosk. Staff has noted a significant increase in the number of Zoning By-law Amendment applications to permit retail convenience uses in association with automobile gas bar uses.

Furthermore, the gasoline industry has stated that current technologies associated with car wash facilities allow for faster vehicle turnover, and as such, the number of parking and stacking lane spaces required for the proper operation of a car wash have been significantly reduced.

Official Plan Policies

a) Community Plans

Generally, the City's Official Plans permit automobile gas bars in the *Service Station* and *Service Commercial* designations, and provide opportunity within those designations to permit the sale of products related to the operation of a service station.

The following is a summary of such policy statements as found in the City's Official Plans:

- OPA #350 (Maple Community Plan) permits automobile gas bars within the *Service Stations* designation, providing for the sale of gasoline, oil and lubricants and other related products;
- OPA #240 (Woodbridge Community Plan) provides opportunities within the *Service Stations* and *Service Commercial* designations for the sale of petrol, oil and lubricant and other related products;
- OPA #210 (Thornhill-Vaughan Community Plan) permits automobile gas bars within the *Service Stations* designation and in conjunction with the *Neighbourhood Commercial Centre* designation, providing opportunity for the sale of petrol, oil and lubricant and other related products; and,
- OPA #600 permits automobile gas bars in the *Service Stations and Gas Bars* designation, permitting the sale of auto fuel, oil and lubricant and other related products, including convenience retail uses. The policies also permit automobile gas bar and service station uses in the *Neighbourhood Commercial Centre* and *Medium Density Residential/Commercial* designations.

In view of the above, Staff is satisfied that amending By-law 1-88 to permit a retail convenience store use in association with an automobile gas bar would conform to the Official Plan policies noted above. OPA #601 (Kleinburg-Nashville Community Plan) does not permit automobile gas bar/service stations, and is therefore not applicable when referring to the said By-law amendment.

OPA #424 (Service Station Policies)

OPA #424 was approved in May, 1995 to set out criteria for the evaluation of development applications for automobile, gas bar and service stations. Permitted uses are the sale of petrol, oil and lubricant, and the repair and maintenance of vehicles. Commercial uses may also be permitted if they are sensitively designed and integrated on the site and compatible with surrounding development, and may require a market and/or traffic study.

OPA #424 also sets out location and compatibility policies for service station sites, and site design and transportation criteria, including landscaping, screening, lighting, driveways and parking.

Section 5(c) of OPA #424 states that “overhead canopies above gas pump and kiosk locations shall allow for sufficient clearance height for truck movement below the overhead canopy, but shall not exceed a maximum height of 4.2m (i.e grade level to underside of canopy)”.

Staff is of the opinion the maximum height requirement for canopy covers is not a detail that should be implemented through the City’s Official Plan policies, but rather through the City’s zoning by-law. Accordingly, Staff recommends that at such time as a Public Hearing is being held to consider general or related amendments to the Official Plan, that the deletion of Section 5(c), thereby removing the 4.2 metre maximum height restriction of overhead canopies for automobile gas bars, be included in the amendment. Consequently, the maximum height of canopy covers would be restricted through the C6 and C7 Zone standards in By-law 1-88, with the maximum height being 11m, the same as for the kiosk.

Zoning

Automobile Gas Bars are permitted as-of-right in the C6 Highway Commercial and C7 Service Commercial Zones. Staff is of the opinion that accessory convenience retail uses and drive-thru eating establishment uses can be permitted in combination with a gas bar use, and propose the following amendments to the Automobile Gas Bar definition in By-law 1-88 (the revision in **bold**):

Section 2.0(6):

Automobile Gas Bar – Means a building or place:

- i) where gasoline or other motor fuels are kept for sale and for delivery directly into a motor vehicle;
- ii) does not include an automobile service station, a public garage, or a car wash;
- iii) **permits a convenience retail store in association with an automobile gas bar use, provided the maximum Gross Floor Area does not exceed 280m²; and,**
- iv) **permits drive-thru convenience eating establishment as an accessory use, to a maximum of 25% of the retail convenience store Gross Floor Area.**

Limiting the area of the convenience retail store to 280m² is in keeping with the By-law definition for a convenience retail store. Specifically, By-law 1-88 defines a Convenience Retail Store as:

“a retail store servicing the daily or occasional needs of the patrons in the immediate area with a variety of goods such as milk and dairy products, groceries, meats, produce, carbonated beverages, sundries, tobacco, stationery, magazine and newspapers, with a gross floor area not exceeding 280m²”.

Staff is satisfied that permitting a convenience retail store in association with an automobile gas bar, limited to a total Gross Floor Area to 280m², is an appropriate combination of uses and will not impact on-site vehicle or pedestrian circulation.

In addition, Staff is also satisfied that permitting drive-through convenience eating establishment as an accessory use is appropriate, provided that the use is not free standing but contained within the retail convenience store to a maximum of 25% of the Gross Floor Area. Through the implementation of site plan control and the proposed Urban Design Guidelines, gas bar sites can be designed to screen the drive-through component and properly accommodate on-site traffic.

The current parking standards for an automobile gas bar is 5.5 spaces/100m² of Gross Floor Area, which Staff can support as the continued standard. The current stacking requirement for drive-through eating establishment is for 8 vehicles, which is supportable for this use on a gas bar site.

Parking and Stacking Lane Requirements for a Car Wash

The gasoline industry has advised that the current technology associated with car wash facilities allows for faster vehicle turnover, and as such, the number of stacking lane spaces required for the proper operation of a car wash has been significantly reduced.

In view of the above, Staff conducted a survey of surrounding municipalities to determine the zone standards for stacking lane spaces required for a car wash. The following is a summary of the findings:

	<u>Required Stacking Lane Spaces</u>
City of Brampton	10
City of Burlington	10
City of Mississauga	10
Town of Richmond Hill	no requirements

The results show that stacking lane requirements in surrounding municipalities are significantly less than the City of Vaughan requirement of 20 spaces. Staff is satisfied that with the current technology for drive-thru car washes, 10 spaces would provide an adequate service level and an improved site design, requiring less paved area for idling vehicles.

In addition to the above, Staff reviewed the 5 parking spaces required for a car wash, and have determined that the parking standards required for the automobile gas bar (5.5 spaces/100m² GFA) can accommodate the number of vehicles parking at any one time. Furthermore, there are no parking requirements for vacuum islands, which are typically associated with a car wash.

Accordingly, Staff proposes to amend the parking standards for a car wash to require 1 parking space/vacuum island, rather than 5 spaces for the car wash. The following is the proposed amendment to the Car Wash parking requirements (the revision in **bold**):

Section 3.8(a):

Car Wash **1.0 parking space/vacuum island**, plus **10.0** car storage spaces.

Urban Design Guidelines

The City's Site Plan By-law requires automobile service stations and gas bars to be subject to the complex site plan application process. Staff is of the opinion a comprehensive set of Urban Design Guidelines should be developed for Automobile Gas Bars. Members of the Canadian Petroleum Products Institute (CPPI) have expressed an interest in providing input into this process.

The purpose would be to develop a set of Urban Design Guidelines respecting Automobile Gas Bars, by identifying current issues and opportunities respecting the form and function of automobile gas bar developments in the City of Vaughan. The review would consider the following:

- the relationship of buildings to adjacent buildings on-site;
- the relationship of buildings with the street;
- pedestrian circulation;
- landscaping; and,
- location of parking areas.

Also, design aspects associated with site plans would be considered, including the location of pump islands and kiosks (including store entrances), drive-through lanes and pick-up windows, car wash facilities, garbage storage and collection, and fire routes.

Upon completion of the urban design guidelines, amendments to the By-law may be required to implement the results (i.e building setbacks, pump locations, landscape detail, etc.). In this event, a Public Hearing would be required to consider any required zoning amendments.

Conclusion

Staff has reviewed the information and considered options with a goal to achieve the following:

- i) reduce the number of Zoning By-law and Committee of Adjustment applications;
- ii) provide regulations and standards that address the evolution of the service station industry;
- iii) provide regulations and standards which will not adversely impact adjacent properties; and,
- iv) identify additional issues and opportunities respecting the form and function of automobile gas bar developments through a set of urban design guidelines.

In summary, Staff recommends that a by-law be prepared and brought forward to a future Council meeting for enactment, to:

- i) permit a retail convenience store use in association with automobile gas bar uses, limited to a maximum gross floor area of 280m²;
- ii) permit a drive-through convenience eating establishment use, as an accessory use, to a maximum of 25% of the retail convenience store floor area; and,

- iii) amend the parking requirements for a car wash to:
 - a) delete 5 required parking spaces;
 - b) require 1 parking space per vacuum island; and,
 - c) require a minimum of 10 stacking spaces.

Staff also recommends that a comprehensive set of urban design guidelines for automobile gas bars be prepared and brought forward to a future meeting of the Committee of the Whole (Working Session) for discussion.

Should the Committee concur, the recommendation contained in this report can be adopted.

Attachments

N/A

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Respectfully submitted,

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