

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (WORKING SESSION) – MARCH 9, 2009

CITY OF VAUGHAN PARKING STANDARDS REVIEW REPORT FILE 15.101

Recommendation

The Commissioner of Planning recommends:

1. That the presentation by IBI Group Inc., and material submitted dated February 2, 2009 be RECEIVED;
2. That the Draft report, "Review of Parking Standards Contained Within the City of Vaughan's Comprehensive Zoning By-law", January 2009, be RECEIVED; and,
3. That Policy Planning staff and IBI Group proceed to complete the report based on this working session and Council's further direction with respect to the next steps to establish an updated parking standards policy for the City of Vaughan.

Economic Impact

The economic impact of the outcomes of this study are yet to be determined and will depend on decisions the City may make on final recommendations (e.g. cost of establishing a parking committee or authority).

Communications Plan

The consultation process to-date has included four half-day staff workshops with City and Regional staff members from the following departments: Policy Planning, Development Planning, Enforcement Services, Economic Development, Corporate Policy, Building Standards, Engineering, Public Works, York Region Transit, and York Region Planning and Development Services Department, Town of Markham Planning, and VIVA Transit).

Four half-day workshops were held with staff as follows:

February 27, 2008 – Presentation to review existing standards, best practices and preliminary survey parking results.

June 27, 2008 – Workshop with staff discussing study findings and draft recommendations and opportunity for feedback from staff.

October 2, 2008 – Workshop to review report highlights and discuss staff comments and concerns from circulation of the report.

January 6, 2009 - Workshop to continue discussion from October session and give participants opportunity to provide detailed feedback from the final draft report circulation.

A copy of the final draft has been circulated to these various departments within the City and the Region for their comment and feedback.

In addition to staff workshops, the consultation process has also included interviews with various stakeholders such as Kleinburg Ratepayers Association, Maple Ratepayers Association, Woodbridge Core Ratepayers' Association, Developers, Smart Commute North Toronto, and Vaughan Chamber of Commerce. Details of the interviews conducted by IBI Group are found in the "Review of Parking Standards Contained within the City of Vaughan's Comprehensive Zoning By-law: Consultation Report" (Appendix D of Attachment 1).

A City-wide community notice of statutory public hearing will be advertised as per the Planning Act, at such time as the zoning by-law is to be amended.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to inform Council on the work to-date, and obtain direction for staff to proceed with next steps.

Background - Analysis and Options

Background

On February 13, 2006 Council requested that “the Commissioner of Planning, jointly with the Commissioner of Engineering and Public Works and the Commissioner of Legal and Administrative Services be directed to prepare a report on the feasibility of implementing a City-wide cash-in-lieu of parking by-law, the intent of which is to establish reserve funds for municipal parking initiatives”.

On February 13, 2006, Council also requested that the “Planning and Engineering Departments be directed to undertake a joint review of opportunities and options for guaranteeing a sufficient number of parking spaces available for use by the public within the Woodbridge core, whether on private or public lands or both.” In keeping with this direction, Woodbridge has been identified as a historic urban place within the Terms of Reference and final draft of the report. Specific recommendations have been suggested for the Woodbridge Core as requested by Council.

On April 2, 2007, Council approved the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan for the City. As part of this approval, staff was requested to examine the feasibility of including suitable facilities for bicycle parking within the City's Zoning By-law.

On June 11, 2007 (Item 29, Report No.28), Council adopted the Terms of Reference for the Parking Standards Study and directed staff to commence the tendering process for qualified professionals “to carry out a review of City-wide Parking Standards at a total cost not to exceed \$70,000 (including GST)”.

On October 17, 2007, City staff awarded IBI Group for “Consulting Services for the Preparation of a Review of Parking Standards contained within the City of Vaughan's Comprehensive Zoning By-law.”

On November 10, 2008 (Report No, 53, Item 35), Committee of the Whole directed planning staff to bring forward a report to future Committee of the Whole meeting, to “deal with the issue of drive-throughs”. Policy staff are currently looking into undertaking the analysis and development of policies for drive-through uses.

Analysis

The “Parking Requirements” contained within By-law 1-88 demonstrate an auto-oriented approach which ensures that each destination can accommodate peak parking demand on site, thereby minimizing the potential for off-site impacts. The existing requirements do not give consideration to the availability of alternative forms of transportation, urban context, or development forms. Large tracts of dispersed development patterns in Vaughan, strengthen automobile dependence and discourage alternative forms of transportation, such as cycling and walking. Many of the recommendations in the draft final report offer alternative and sustainable forms of addressing the issue of parking in Vaughan.

The overall approach adopted in this study is that parking zoning standards should be responsible, implementable, and promote more sustainable forms of development. Multiple approaches for assessing and developing parking standards are used. Highlights identified in the report include:

- “Responsible” Parking Requirements – balancing the need to require appropriate levels of parking without contributing to extensive oversupply and inefficient land use
- Reducing Number of Uses – to simplify the standards and improve their accuracy, the proposed standards consolidate uses, where appropriate, particularly for retail, restaurant and industrial/employment uses
- Sensitivity to Urban Context – The proposed standards specify alternative minimum and maximum (in certain instances) parking requirements for four different urban categories, reflecting alternative transportation conditions and planning objectives for these areas
- Sensitivity to Parking Demand and Existing Supply – adjustment factors are also specified to tailor parking requirements to local conditions (e.g. reduction of parking for sites within close proximity to public transit)
- Cash-in-lieu and Public Parking – Cash-in-lieu is recommended as one strategy to help fund for the provision of parking spaces as well as improvements to public parking (e.g. signage, site access, pedestrian realm)
- Improved Parking Design – recommendations are provided regarding parking space access and dimensions, and potential by-law requirements for design aspects such as landscaping, location, layout and stormwater management
- Bicycle Parking – bicycle parking requirements are specified for office, retail, restaurant, multi-unit residential and school and other institutional uses for both interim and long-term spaces
- Accessible Parking – it is anticipated that Vaughan will conform to the Province’s Accessible Built Environment Standards, currently being developed as part of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, therefore recommendations are not proposed at this time

The framework for determining parking standards involves:

a) Background Studies

- Review of relevant, OPA’s, By-laws and Background reports
- Assessment of best practices in other jurisdictions such as: City of Mississauga, City of Toronto, Town of Markham, City of Vancouver, City of Calgary, City of London, City of Hamilton, City of Ottawa, and City of Winnipeg
- Review of existing parking data and trip generation rates in the City of Vaughan
- Stakeholder consultation, a multi-faceted approach has been pursued to-date including four half-day staff workshops with City and Regional staff, and in-person meetings and telephone interviews with development planners, zoning staff, developers, landowners, ratepayers groups, BIA’s and Vaughan Chamber of Commerce

b) Technical Studies

- Empirical surveys of on-site demand/supply
- First principles approach based on observed mode shares and trip generation rates

c) Policy Input

- Transportation Demand Management (TDM) and transit-supportive development goals
- Urban design and land use objectives
- Innovative approaches (e.g. cash-in-lieu, public parking, shared parking, off-site parking, and land banking)

Options:

The proposed parking standards are summarized in the full report (Attachment 1), of particular note are the following:

a) Reduction of the number of uses – Currently, parking requirements are specified for over 60 uses, many of which have significant overlap or are not justified in having their own parking requirement (e.g. video store versus convenience store versus retail store). To simplify standards and improve accuracy, the proposed standards consolidate uses, where appropriate, particularly for retail, restaurant, and industrial/employment uses.

b) Cash-in-Lieu and Public Parking – With development of the Vaughan Corporate Centre and the growth of development in historic places, one of the options is for Vaughan to take a greater managerial role concerning parking. Cash-in-lieu is recommended as one strategy to develop and sustain funding for public parking and also provides flexibility for developers to provide less parking on-site. Funds could be used for constructing and operating public parking, improved signage and access to existing lots, and reducing parking demand in an area (e.g. pedestrian improvements, pathways, sidewalks, etc.).

If Vaughan opts to increase its role in parking management and the provision of public parking, it will need an appropriate organizational structure to guide and implement these activities. Five parking management types are considered in the report. However, the recommended option is the creation of a Parking Advisory Committee and creation of a Parking Manager position to provide and coordinate staff support for this committee from various City Departments. This is the approach that the Town of Markham has taken.

c) Shared Parking – Shared parking using shared parking rates is recommended for individual uses on a particular site. If there is change in use on the site, shared parking calculations should be recalculated and additional parking will only be required if the minimum requirement increases by more than 10% (exceptions are places of worship and banquet halls due to the generation of parking demand outside of expected peaks).

d) Off-site Parking – Off-site parking agreements must at least be registered on title of the donor site as a restrictive covenant and easement. The registration of an easement on title will solidify the agreement, and the City will not need to police/enforce the agreement, rather the receiving and donor landowners will be obliged to resolve issues themselves.

e) On-Street Parking – The recommended approach is to: provide reductions in on-site requirements for lay-by parking provided on-street; consult with the Region to have them modify their lay-by policy to allow this parking to be used towards on-site requirements; and, create a

policy that on-street parking can be substituted for off-street parking requirements where appropriate and secure into the future.

f) Transit – York Region Transit (YRT) would like the support from the City to create park and ride spaces. Park and ride activity is already occurring informally at a number of private lots. YRT would like to formalize these agreements. This option would require a policy to be formulated rather than a provision in the zoning by-law. Transit adjustment factors may need to be specified as a policy, since transit routes are often changing.

g) Historic Places – The areas designated as “Historic Places” (Woodbridge Core, Thornhill Heritage Conservation District, Maple Heritage Conservation District, Kleinburg-Nashville Heritage District) in the draft study report, are proposed as having a relatively low minimum and maximum requirement which applies to surface parking. This would discourage large surface parking developments in areas within this designation. It was discussed in staff workshop #4 (January 6, 2009), that a maximum of 4.5 spaces /100m² for retail uses (as recommended in the report) would be too high and might allow too much surface parking. The minimum standard proposed for retail uses is 3 spaces /100m² (refer to Exhibit ES-3 in Attachment 1). Alternatively, staff suggested in Workshop #4 that the parking standards should only specify minimum standards and require any spaces above the minimum to be provided in structured or underground parking areas.

h) Woodbridge Core – Council directed that Staff conduct a specific review of opportunities and options to guarantee a specific number of parking spaces available for use by the public within the Woodbridge Core. Empirical studies conducted by IBI Group shows that there is significant parking availability at peak times. Only 60% of the customer and publically accessible parking supply is occupied over the surveyed area within the Woodbridge Core. The study concludes that the majority of the lots that are underutilized are those that are less convenient and less visible. The report recommends:

1. Improved signage – much of the parking supply in the Woodbridge Core is behind buildings and not directly visible. Collaboration between the City, existing businesses and, developers in the Woodbridge Core is recommended to develop more consistent and clear approach to parking signage.
2. Consistent parking enforcement for time limits – the study results found that the parking turnover rates were inconsistent. It is recommended that additional reinforcement combined with improved signage and public awareness of parking options is required (e.g. area maps highlighting parking areas/lots).
3. Improved design of existing and new facilities – the study recommends new development should be designed with appropriate lighting, pedestrian pathways, and rear entrances from the parking lot should be established wherever possible. This would encourage pedestrian access from parking lots to destinations.
4. Facilitate cooperation among the business community – no business improvement association currently exists in the Woodbridge Core today. The study recommends that the City and the business community establish a business group to communicate needs, cooperate on, and lead initiatives related to parking and other business concerns.
5. Revise parking standards – proposed requirements should be reflective of actual parking demand in the area and require new development to provide sufficient on-site parking, in addition to provisions for shared parking and off-site parking.
6. Cash-in-lieu – participation of cash-in-lieu provision must be approved by the City and based on the justification that necessary parking cannot be provided on-site. The study

also recommends that maximum participation should be set to the greater of 15 spaces or 10% of required parking. This would enable small developments to proceed with no parking, while larger developments would be able to provide cash-in-lieu of a portion of their required parking.

7. Seek opportunities to increase on-street parking supply – the study recommends that opportunities to increase the supply of on-street spaces should be pursued. Road and sidewalk reconstruction projects could include the objective of maximizing on-street spaces.
- i) Urban Design Guidelines / Drive-Throughs – Additional supplemental studies regarding green urban design guidelines for surface/structural/underground parking structures are required. These are being prepared and will be available in the near future. Drive-Throughs also require further in-depth analysis, recommendations and guidelines.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020/Strategic Plan

The final draft City-wide Parking Standards Review report is consistent with Vaughan Vision 2020 Strategic Plan, through the following initiatives, specifically:

Service Excellence:

- Lead and promote Environmental Sustainability

Management Excellence:

- Enhance productivity, cost effectiveness & innovation
- Plan and Manage Growth and Economic Vitality
- Demonstrate Leadership & Promote Effective Governance

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

Regional Implications

There are three instances that were identified in the draft recommendations of the report that may have Regional Implications:

- YRT would like support from the City in creating park and ride spaces. YRT would like to formalize these agreements in the form of a policy as opposed to Zoning By-law amendment.
- The option for on-street parking may require Vaughan staff to consult with the Region to have modifications made to the lay-by policy to permit parking to be used towards on-site requirements.
- Should the City consider the option to establish a Parking Committee or Authority as discussed in the draft final report. The City may consider coordinating efforts with the Region (as recommended in York Region Transportation Masterplan).

Conclusion

As the City continues to evolve into an increasingly urban environment with more wide-spread and frequent public transportation, the City has recognized the need to review its parking standards. The draft Parking Standards Review Report proposes new parking standards for the City of Vaughan regulating the supply and design of private, off-street parking. It also discusses options and provides recommendations regarding the development of public parking. Should

Council concur with the recommendations, staff will proceed with the next steps to obtain further feedback on the options respecting the update to the City's By-law 1-88.

Attachments

1. Draft Review of Parking Standards Contained within the City of Vaughan's Comprehensive By-law: Final Report (MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF COUNCIL only)

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