

City of Mississauga

Corporate Report



Date: October 4, 2023 To: Chair and Members of Planning and Development Committee From: Andrew Whittemore, M.U.R.P., Commissioner of Planning & Building	Originator's files: BL.01-PAR
	Meeting date: October 23, 2023

Subject

INFORMATION REPORT (Wards 1, 4, 5 and 7)

Feasibility of Reducing Residential Parking Requirements along the Hazel McCallion Line

Recommendation

1. That the report titled "Feasibility of Reducing Residential Parking Requirements along the Hazel McCallion Line" dated October 4, 2023 from the Commissioner of Planning and Building be received for information.
2. That staff are authorized to report back to Planning and Development Committee in Q1 2024 with recommendations for reducing the off-street parking per unit rates for apartment uses (condominium and rental) for the area(s) along the light rail transit (LRT) corridor, known as the Hazel McCallion Line between Matheson Boulevard and Port Credit.

Executive Summary

- Off-street parking refers to the number of parking spaces (resident and visitor) that are required on a property as part of any development and/or land-use.
- City staff were directed to investigate the feasibility of reducing the per unit parking rates for residential uses along the light rail transit (LRT) corridor, known as the Hazel McCallion Line).
- Through this initial review, City staff are of the opinion that reduced per unit parking rates are feasible for condominium and rental apartment uses along the LRT corridor. However, staff need to undertake additional research and consultation to establish specific resident and visitor parking rates that are supportable and/or if the rates will need

to vary across the study area.

- A set of criteria will be used to guide the level of the reduction proposed. Consideration of the long-term supply of other off-street parking opportunities will also be required. Staff will also consider the applicability of implementing maximum parking requirements along the LRT corridor.
- As a next step, City staff are seeking permission to initiate a review of the Zoning By-law study and consult the Housing Panel and the broader public.
- City staff aim to bring a report and a draft amendment of the Zoning By-law to the Planning and Development Committee (PDC) for further consideration in Q1 2024.

Background

At the June 28, 2023 Council meeting, City staff were directed to investigate and “report back on the feasibility of reducing parking requirements in parking precincts that are, or will be, served by the Hazel McCallion Line, including investigating an elimination of minimum parking requirements for resident land uses”. This Information Report provides an initial analysis and considerations to Council based on the motion’s direction (see Appendix 1).

The Evolution of Parking Standards in the City of Mississauga

On April 19, 2022, Planning and Development Committee approved staff’s recommendations to update off-street parking regulations and rates (see [Corporate Report](#)), resulting in the creation of city-wide Parking Precincts that corresponds to distinct parking requirements based on areas with similar characteristics for parking management (e.g., access to transit, mix of uses, density of development, etc.). It also introduced progressive parking regulations such as reduced rates for affordable housing, electric vehicle-ready parking spaces and shared visitor and non-residential uses in residential mixed use developments.

Amendments to the Zoning By-law to implement staff recommendations were approved by Council in June 2022 and are now [in-effect](#). Parking Precinct 1 currently includes lands located along the LRT between Matheson Boulevard and Downtown Cooksville, as well as Port Credit Community Node. Downtown Hospital and parts of Mineola fronting Hurontario Street are located in Precinct 2.

The existing minimum parking requirement for apartments (condominium and rentals) in both Precincts is 0.8 spaces per residential unit plus 0.2 visitor parking spaces per unit (although visitor parking is 0.15 in the Downtown Core). Requirements are 50% lower for affordable dwellings provided by a non-profit housing provider. New parking regulations implemented a number of Council approved transportation studies such as The Parking Master Plan and Implementation Strategy, 2019, TDM Strategy, 2018, and the Cycling Master Plan, 2018.

Although the in-effect rate of 0.8 space per unit was recently adopted, the demand for resident parking spaces along the LRT has continued to decline as recently approved buildings are providing less than what is required through minor variance or rezoning applications to accommodate purchaser demands. Since June 2022, the City has received almost 20 requests for parking rate reductions for condominium apartments along the Hazel McCallion Line; these applications are in various stages of approval. The proposed minimum parking requirements range from 0.32 to 0.7 parking spaces per unit (plus visitor parking). Most of these requests are coming from Port Credit Community Node, Downtown Core and Downtown Cooksville. This trend is a positive development in that government investment in transit, active transport and creating more walkable communities appears to be having the desired effect.

No developers are proposing zero resident parking spaces, as they see the merit in providing resident parking spaces. Resident parking spaces remain unbundled to encourage alternative transportation choices. For example, the requested reductions in Downtown Cooksville is due to the close proximity to the Cooksville GO Station.

Other Parking Related Initiatives

The City is also leading initiatives to address parking supply. The Municipal Parking Division are undertaking [Parking Matters 2.0](#), a review of on-street parking permits, lower boulevard parking, and dynamic pricing of municipal parking fees, along with other Transportation Demand Management (TDM) technologies and enforcement solutions. Any available on-street parking could be used to support the implementation of new Provincial requirements to permit at least three residential units per single/ semi-detached lot. Further on-street parking needs might be generated through the implementation of the Increasing Housing Choices in Neighbourhoods Study.

The review of residential parking requirements along the LRT and Parking Matters 2.0 will work together to ensure a balance between parking demands and provisions provided through private development and municipal parking, while influencing city building initiatives and transportation choices along the LRT Line.

Comments

Staff conclude that there are many benefits to be achieved through lower parking rates and recommend specific proposed zoning changes be brought back to Council following public consultation. The following sections outline initial research findings and the rationale that will inform the proposed review of residential parking requirements along the LRT.

Parking Requirements Trends in North America

Over the last decade, several cities have significantly reduced or fully eliminated resident minimum parking standards. Ottawa, Brampton, and Toronto have eliminated minimum resident parking requirements in some of their downtowns, nodes, and intensification corridors for

apartments where frequent higher order transit service is available, whereas Waterloo and Vaughan have reduced minimum parking requirements. Many U.S. cities such as Minneapolis, Buffalo and Nashville have eliminated parking minimums, despite not having any heavy rail transit service such as subways. In the case of Toronto and Nashville, they converted some of their former minimum rates into maximum rates.

The central argument for significant reductions or the elimination of resident parking minimums relates to letting the market decide how many parking spots should be provided. It is not intended to penalize residents who own a car. More specifically, if a municipality sets a rate too high, a developer could be required to build more spaces than are needed. The result of this would be parking spots being sold at a discount which encourages additional vehicle ownership, and usage, that may not have occurred otherwise. If the developer is unable to make money on the discounted space, the financial loss is factored into overall construction costs.

The City of Mississauga has the benefit to learn from others, as several years have passed since cities have begun to eliminate minimum parking standards. There is growing literature citing the cautions of eliminating parking minimums in the absence of a joint suite of measures to support reduced driving. In Minneapolis' "Vision 2040" plan, for example, as parking minimums were removed, public transportation funding increased and the zoning was reformed to disincentivize driving through balancing land uses to accommodate more residents using transit and active transportation.

City Staff contacted colleagues from the cities of Toronto, Ottawa, and Brampton to learn from their experiences once resident parking minimums were removed, if there were unintended impacts, and whether developers provided adequate vehicular parking despite not being a requirement. Contacted staff indicated that eliminating parking minimums addressed climate change initiatives and implemented Official Plan policies directing to lower parking rates and encouraging transit supportive development. It was indicated most development applications for high rise residential buildings still provide parking to accommodate the market demands of each site. As a next step, City Staff will continue to contact colleagues from other municipalities to learn from their experiences.

Appendix 2 includes a summary of the benchmarking of southern Ontario municipalities.

Existing Movement Behaviours Around the LRT Corridor

In considering either reduced parking rates or an elimination of parking minimums, it is important to consider and understand existing behaviours. Eliminating minimum parking standards needs to be done in a way so that behaviours are encouraged to be modified, but not in a negative experience, instead one in which a positive reinforcement is achieved. Key current movement behaviours are noted below:

Residents' Commuting Behaviour

- The Transportation Tomorrow Survey (TTS) 2016 shows that driving is the main mode of choice amongst Mississauga residents
- 2021 Census shows the main mode of transportation of the employed labour force to work is by driving (as a driver and passenger)
- According to the TTS:
 - Uptown Node has the highest percentage of drivers and passengers at 79%
 - Downtown Fairview has the lowest percentage of drivers and passengers at 67%

Alternative Modes of Transportation (Transit, Cycle, Walking)

- According to the TTS:
 - About 25% of residents along the future LRT already use transit and active transportation for their daily commute (for all activities, including work, school, errands, and appointments)
 - About 24% of residents along the future LRT use transit, walking or cycling to commute to work
 - 30% of residents in the Downtown Hospital area along the future LRT use transit, walking or cycling
 - 19% of trips to work by residents are made by transit, and 5% are made by walking and cycling

A holistic look at all of the policy factors that help increase the rate of driving and achieve a more sustainable transportation mode share is important in contemplating an end to minimum parking requirements. Furthermore, in order to expedite the shift to transit and active transportation, the City and other levels of government will need to prioritize investments in transit and cycling infrastructure. The City will need to create a robust local transit system that offers increased connectivity and reduced waiting times.

Benefits of Reduced Parking Standards

Significantly reducing or eliminating the minimum per residential unit parking requirements would:

- **Enable the City to leverage investments made to the LRT and accelerate the shift to non-vehicular modes:** Currently, 53% of trips in the Downtown Core that are less than five kilometres are made by driving, which indicates an auto-centric modal split but also an opportunity for reductions on car reliance for short trips. With more people living and/or working beside or in close proximity to the LRT corridor, they would drive less and take transit more often once the LRT is in operation. This percentage would be further reduced with the LRT Loop through the Downtown Core.

- **Help lower housing construction costs while reducing construction timelines:** Reducing or eliminating minimum resident per unit parking requirements would likely decrease the size of the structured parking garage. Construction cost is estimated to be \$80,000 to 120,000 per parking space depending on the site's complexities, while reducing overall maintenance costs of parking structures over time. Any savings passed onto buyers and tenants from overbuilding the parking structure would remain at the discretion of developers.
- **Advance the goals of the Climate Change Action Plan, Downtown Movement Plan, and the Transportation Master Plan:** Building underground parking is not only expensive, but also carbon intensive due to the materials required, and residents who do not own a vehicle are more likely to use transit and active transportation options for trips.
- **Improved site designs:** smaller underground parking garages will reduce requests for parking to be located under roadways.

Challenges of Reduced Parking Standards

Staff recognize that most areas along the LRT, particularly the Downtown Core and Cooksville, have a mix of land uses allowing daily errands to be made by walking, cycling, or taking transit. However, the impacts of further reducing or eliminating minimum resident parking requirement for the entire corridor in a municipality where still most trips are made by vehicle and where a network of rapid transit is still in the early stages of development, need to be considered.

One of the biggest challenges of reduced rates is that unit purchasers who are committed to owning a vehicle but do not buy parking spot at the time of unit purchase. In some cases they may be able to rent a spot in the building, but if none are available they will likely have to look at parking elsewhere. In some cases, this supply can be accommodated in other privately owned lots that rent spaces (e.g. as part of office buildings) but the availability of these options varies by area and it is not as secure over the long term. Public on-street parking should not be viewed by high rise apartment purchasers as an option as future on-street parking permits are best used to advance neighborhood gentle density objectives. City staff will be reporting to council on a potential on-street permit program later in 2023.

Resident parking supply also needs to be considered in the context of visitor parking. If resident parking rates are significantly reduced or eliminated, appropriate visitor parking - which is shared with non-residential uses in mixed use developments - would ensure residents without private parking can park rental/car share vehicles, have ample spaces for visitors and deliveries, and to accommodate the anticipated higher use of ride-share. Further, ensuring sufficient number of visitor parking spaces minimizes conflicts between residential and non-residential uses in shared parking arrangements in mixed use buildings. Staff's initial analysis indicates that the existing by-law visitor rates (0.15 spaces per unit in the Downtown Core, 0.2 spaces per unit elsewhere on the corridor) is likely adequate for a modest resident rate reduction, but additional study will be needed to determine any changes to the existing visitor requirements.

Unlike Toronto and in lesser extent Kitchener, where there is a robust municipal parking system with an extensive portfolio of municipal parking lots, Mississauga only has a handful of municipal parking lots, which are located mainly in Streetsville, Port Credit and the Downtown Core. Whereas in Toronto, where parking requirements have been eliminated, spillover parking can be accommodated through monthly passes in Green P parking lots. There are limited opportunities in Mississauga to implement such a system due to the limited quantity of municipal parking spaces. Furthermore, given the needed retrofits and expansions to older community centres and parks to respond to population growth, municipal parking lots associated with community centres and arenas are often reduced in order to open land to accommodate additional buildings and facilities.

In addition, there are complexities with providing adequate public parking in Port Credit as some development applications are proposing to eventually replace surface parking lots especially at or near the GO Station. Many of these parking spaces will not be replaced as part of the development application, which will create further stresses in municipal parking utilization in Port Credit.

Staff to Determine New Recommended Parking Requirement - Proposed Scope of Work

Staff's initial research has found that it is feasible to reduce resident parking requirements in parking precincts to be serviced by the LRT. Staff's proposed review would assess whether the amendments should be a LRT corridor-wide parking requirement for apartments or the requirement should vary across the corridor (to reflect the nuances of each Character Area).

Staff will utilize a set of criteria to determine the new recommended per unit parking requirements. The criteria would include:

- Recently supported variances and OLT decisions— recent requirements are in the range of 0.5-0.6 spaces per unit along LRT corridor (resident parking)
- Transit availability and service frequency, especially walking distance to Higher Order Transit stops
- Land uses that meets the daily and weekly needs of residents within walking distance
- Appropriate supply of onsite bike parking and availability of bike lanes nearby
- Acknowledgment that any future on-street parking permit program will not be made available to new apartment owners / tenants
- Presence of private (non-city) overnight parking that also offers long term monthly parking
- Adequate car share spaces are provided
- Adequate ride share pick-up/drop-off spaces provided

In addition, staff will review the appropriateness of existing visitor parking rate and will consider the benefits and risks of implementing parking maximums along the LRT corridor. Staff will present recommended amendments to the Zoning By-law in a subsequent report to the Planning and Development Committee in Q1 2024. It is proposed that other residential uses

such as townhouses, semi and detached units not be part of the scope since requests for parking variances for these uses has been less common along the corridor.

Strategic Plan

Potential updates to the City's vehicular parking regulations in the Zoning By-law are consistent with the Move, Connect and Green pillars of the Strategic Plan.

Reducing reliance on the automobile in the Urban Growth Centre (i.e., Downtowns), Uptown Node, and Port Credit Community Node along the LRT, has the potential to decrease pressures on the road network, limit additional traffic congestion and moderate the need for road infrastructure upgrades and widening of roads to accommodate more cars. Reducing parking requirements could also reduce embodied carbon during the construction of the parking lots.

Engagement and Consultation

Following direction from the Planning and Development Committee, the engagement program will seek input and comments on proposed amendments to the resident per unit parking rate. Events may include industry meetings including the Housing Panel, public meeting(s), and information sharing through the City's website, social media and other communication channels.

Financial Impact

There are no financial impacts resulting from the Recommendation in this report.

Conclusion

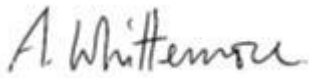
City staff were directed to investigate the feasibility of amending the minimum per unit residential parking requirements along the Hazel McCallion Line, including investigating an elimination of minimum parking requirements. Staff's initial review has found that it is feasible and see merit in lower rates for apartment buildings (condominium and rental) along the LRT.

Staff are requesting that Planning and Development Committee authorize staff to further review and potentially recommend reductions to resident parking requirements along the LRT from roughly Matheson Boulevard to Port Credit. Staff will also review the appropriateness of existing visitor parking requirements and the suitability of implementing maximum resident parking requirements along the LRT. Staff will present proposed draft Zoning By-law amendments in a future report to Planning and Development Committee in early 2024.

Attachments

Appendix 1: June 28, 2023 Council Item 15.2: feasibility of amending the residential parking requirements along the Hazel McCallion Line

Appendix 2: Benchmarked Cities



Andrew Whitemore, M.U.R.P., Commissioner of Planning & Building

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