

Report on the Commercial Parking Study

Planning Services Division

January 27, 2020

BACKGROUND

The City of Greater Sudbury adopted a Nodes and Corridors Strategy in September 2016 (See Reference 1). This Nodes and Corridors Strategy is intended to help revitalize and better connect our Downtown, the Town Centres, strategic core areas and corridors of the City. The strategy will also help create new and distinctive corridors and town centres, all featuring mixed uses, public realm improvements and public transit.

The LaSalle Boulevard Corridor Plan and Strategy (the "LBCPS") was endorsed by the City in July, 2018 (See Reference 2). It introduces policy recommendations to standardize land uses and zoning, to provide additional amenities for transit, cycling and walking, and to enhance the street through landscaping, bringing buildings closer to the street and creating distinct nodes of activity.

In July 2019, Staff presented draft amendment no. 102 (OPA 102) that would incorporate the LBCPS' land use planning recommendations into the City's Official Plan. At that time, Council directed staff to commence public consultation on draft OPA 102, and to hold a Public Hearing at Planning Committee in Q4 2019. This Public Hearing was held on December 9, 2019 (See Reference 3).

Council was advised that the proposed changes to the Official Plan would guide more detailed changes to the City's Zoning By-law, and that background work had started on these potential zoning changes. As part of this process (and based on feedback from the City's Development Liaison Advisory Panel), staff had commissioned a study that would examine best practices for commercial parking ratios. The study would identify opportunities to change existing parking standards to encourage and facilitate investment and redevelopment along the LaSalle corridor and other commercial zones. The study was being undertaken to complement the LBCPS, the Transportation Master Plan, the Transit Action Plan, the Complete Streets Policy and other Active Transportation initiatives. Staff was directed to return with the findings of this commercial parking ratio study in the fourth quarter of 2019.

Study Findings

The City commissioned the study entitled “Best Practice Review: Commercial Parking Requirements” (the “Study” - See Attachment A). The Study provides an overview of the types of policy frameworks and zoning regulations related to commercial parking requirements. The Study:

- compares Greater Sudbury’s parking standards to comparator municipalities; b) examines Sudbury’s experience with parking;
- considers Greater Sudbury’s recent initiatives regarding active transportation and the Transit Action Plan;
- outlines parking strategies used elsewhere; and,
- provides parking management strategies for the City’s consideration.

The Study finds that Greater Sudbury’s requirements for commercial parking spaces are generally higher than the requirements in comparator municipalities, particularly for retail uses, take-out restaurants personal service shops and shopping malls (see Table 1 on page 5 of the Study).

The research included a number of interviews with several stakeholders to gain a better understanding of the retail and commercial parking experience in Greater Sudbury. Section 4.0 of the Study outlines the following:

- parking is a deciding factor in development potential;
- current parking requirements are generally too high and inflexible;
- maximum parking requirements are not necessary;
- parking could be shared for overlapping uses (e.g shopping centre visitors tend to visit more than one store per visit);
- while there are opportunities to reduce parking requirements near transit and active transportation, not all retailers seek that proximity;
- some parking should be located at the front of the building due to costs associated with having multiple entrances to a building; and,
- snow is often stored in required parking spaces.

The Study considers recent City-led initiatives regarding the Transportation Master Plan (the “TMP” - see Reference 4), Active Transportation and Transit. The TMP recommended the development of both the Transit Action Plan (the “TAP” – see Reference 5), and the Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Plan (See Reference 6). The TMP also recommended the adoption and implementation of an Active Transportation network implementation plan (See Reference 4).

The TAP would leverage both the TMP and the active transportation plans, while the TDM would help increase the mobility and accessibility for all members of the community. All of these initiatives work together to support a reduction of commercial parking requirements.

Section 6.0 (as summarized in Table 2 on page 14 of the Study) outlines a number of parking management strategies used by Greater Sudbury and comparator municipalities. The study recommends that the City maintain those strategies currently in use by Greater Sudbury, including the reduction of spaces for underground spaces, the provision of parking spaces on another lot, and cash-in-lieu of parking.

Several strategies merit further consideration by Greater Sudbury. These include:

- reducing the number of vehicular parking spaces when a bus lay-by or bicycle parking are provided;
- allowing reductions based on study; and,
- including shared parking provisions which takes into consideration the mixed use and multiple use nature of sites (e.g. shopping mall example).

These strategies will have to be balanced with the current zoning requirements (e.g. zoning currently requires bicycle parking in certain circumstances) and operational considerations (e.g. bus lay by on City or on private property?; impact of additional on-street parking, etc).

Section 7.0 of the study recommends new parking rates for the following uses: Convenience Store; Personal Service Shop; Restaurant; Retail Store; and, Shopping Centre. The study outlines that these new parking rates would be more consistent with comparator municipalities and would reflect the feedback received as part of the stakeholder interviews.

In addition to the above, staff is also recommending that the City consider a 10% percent reduction of parking for properties fronting onto Routes 1 and 2 (the Main Line and Barry Downe – Cambrian, respectively) (See Reference 7).

These recommendations are consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement, 2014 (2014 PPS) which states that land use patterns within settlement areas shall be based on densities and a mix of land uses which efficiently use land and resources, support active transportation and are transit-supportive. The 2014 PPS also promotes public streets that meet the needs of pedestrians and facilitate active transportation. A reduction of commercial parking standards would also promote the use of active transportation and transit in and between residential, employment and institutional uses (See also Section 2.1 on page 1 of the Study).

CONCLUSION/NEXT STEPS

In July 2019, Council directed staff to return with the findings of the Commercial Parking Standards Study (the “Study”) to inform potential zoning by-law amendments associated with the LaSalle Boulevard Corridor Plan and Strategy.

The Study finds that Greater Sudbury’s requirements for commercial parking spaces are generally higher than the requirements in comparator municipalities, particularly for retail uses, take-out restaurants personal service shops and shopping malls. It recommends new parking standards for these types of uses.

The study also recommends new parking management strategies such as reducing parking requirements when a bus lay-by or bicycle parking is provided; reducing parking requirements along a transit main line; allowing reductions on a property-specific basis at the site plan stage based on a parking needs study; and, including shared parking provisions which take into consideration the mixed use and multiple use nature of sites.

Staff is generally supportive of the findings and recommends initiating a zoning by-law amendment for Council’s consideration.

RESOURCES CITED

1. Nodes and Corridors Strategy
<https://agendasonline.greatersudbury.ca/index.cfm?pg=agenda&action=navigator&lang=en&id=992&itemid=11977>
2. LaSalle Boulevard Corridor Plan and Strategy
<https://agendasonline.greatersudbury.ca/index.cfm?pg=feed&action=file&agenda=report&itemid=8&id=1227>
3. Official Plan Amendment No. 102
<https://agendasonline.greatersudbury.ca/index.cfm?pg=feed&action=file&agenda=report&itemid=2&id=1388>
4. Transportation Master Plan
<https://www.greatersudbury.ca/live/transportation-parking-and-roads/road-plans-and-studies/transportation-master-plan/>
5. Transit Action Plan
<https://agendasonline.greatersudbury.ca/index.cfm?pg=feed&action=file&attachment=25484.pdf>
6. Transportation Demand Management Plan

<https://www.greatersudbury.ca/live/transportation-parking-and-roads/road-plans-and-studies/transportation-demand-management/>

7. GOVA Routes and Schedules – Frequent Lines 1 2 3

<https://www.greatersudbury.ca/live/transit/gova-routes-and-schedules/frequent-lines-1-2-3/>

Attachment

- A. Commercial Standards Parking Study