

**Supplemental Information Regarding the Report on the Commercial Parking Study**  
**Planning Services Division**  
**June 15, 2020**

**BACKGROUND**

In June 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 (See Reference 1). Staff presented the Report on the Commercial Parking Study on February 19, 2020. Planning Committee deferred a decision to early Q3 and requested additional information on the following matters:

1. The complete elimination of minimum parking requirements across the City
2. Elimination of Minimum Parking Requirements Along Nodes and Corridors in parallel with DC reduction
3. The introduction of maximum parking requirements
4. The harmonization of ratios across commercial uses found in the City's Zoning By-law

This memo provides additional information on these matters, and is meant to be read in conjunction with the Commercial Parking Standards Study (See Reference 2). The information is based on a review of best practices and conversations with planners from municipal jurisdictions across North America that have recently amended, or are in the process of amending, their parking standards(See also Attachment A).

**Elimination of Minimum Parking Requirements across the City**

Parking minimums are a tool used by municipalities to ensure there are sufficient off-street parking spaces for each development, typically based on the building use and size. The City of Greater Sudbury establishes minimum parking requirements in Part 5 of its Zoning By-law. During the review, staff found that the complete elimination of minimum parking requirements is not common in North America, with only a handful of municipalities taking this approach (See Section 6.11 of the Commercial Parking Study).

The City of Edmonton is currently considering the elimination of minimum parking standards and would be the first major City in Canada (and the 8<sup>th</sup> in North America, including Mexico City, San Francisco CA, Buffalo NY, Hartford CT,

Mount Pleasant MI, High River AB, Branson MO, and Ashland WI) to eliminate minimum parking requirements (See Reference 3).

Edmonton's proposed change does not mean the elimination of parking on a site; rather, it means that the market is left to decide how much parking is needed ("Open Option Parking"). The City of Edmonton states that the "Open Option Parking" allows for "better City building" (See Reference 3). Edmonton also indicated that public feedback received during the process included a general distrust that the free market will reliably supply residential and non-residential developments with adequate parking.

Edmonton notes that eliminating off-street minimum parking requirements may lead to further regulating on-street parking, and over time, additional resources may be required to manage these on-street resources (e.g meters, collection, enforcement, residential parking zones, etc – See Reference 3).

Edmonton is also looking at different ways to complement the elimination of minimum parking standards, such as shared parking spaces, improving the design of parking lots, and considering Transportation Demand Management policy more broadly in City policy. Edmonton is considering these matters at a Public Hearing on June 23, 2020 (See Reference 4).

Seabrook, New Hampshire, also recently eliminated minimum parking standards throughout the municipality (See Attachment A). Seabrook is located along an interstate in a no-sales-tax state, adjacent to higher-tax Massachusetts; hence, they have extensive commercial development and a lot of space allocated for parking. In a phone interview conducted with City staff, they noted that an unanticipated benefit of eliminating minimum parking standards is that it facilitated the installation of EV chargers. As these installations typically require a transformer in the parking lot, the removal of parking spaces to install these chargers is typically prohibited due to minimum parking requirements.

Section 6.13 of the Commercial Parking Study notes that the "total elimination of minimum parking requirements is still relatively new, and may be worth revisiting once those municipalities that have implemented the strategy have had experience reviewing and approving development. This strategy should be monitored as it does appear to have merit for consideration." Staff, through the supplemental review, also found that the complete removal of minimum parking standards was uncommon and untested throughout North America.

## **Elimination of Minimum Parking Requirements Along Nodes and Corridors in parallel with DC reduction**

The elimination or reduction of Minimum Parking Requirements along transit routes or other locational factors is discussed in Sections 6.1 and 6.3 of the Commercial Parking Standards Study. Municipalities that have eliminated minimum parking requirements have mostly done so in a step-by-step process. Like the City of Greater Sudbury, municipalities that were contacted have removed parking requirements in their traditional downtowns first. This includes Cincinnati, OH, and Minneapolis, MN.

In 2015, Minneapolis modified their parking standards for residential uses along high frequency transit corridors (i.e. corridors with a 15 minute headway). There is no parking required for residential development of 3 or more units that is within 350 ft (approx. 105m) of a high-frequency corridor. For developments with greater than 50 units and within 400 metres of a bus stop or 800 metres of a rail stop, the City requires one parking space per two units.

Minneapolis followed up in 2016 with similar changes related to non-residential uses. Along selected corridors in South Minneapolis, non-residential uses shall not be required to provide accessory off-street parking. In 2017, Minneapolis placed new limits on parking garages related to the amount of parking frontage on any floor facing public streets.

Minneapolis' phased approach to reducing parking requirements along its corridors is similar to the approach that was contemplated in the February Commercial Parking report. Through the supplemental review, staff have observed that a phased approach to reducing parking requirements is more common, with removing the requirements in the core areas first, followed by a reduction along transit corridors where there are more transportation options.

## **The Introduction of Maximum Parking Requirements**

Parking maximums are discussed in Section 6.4 of the Commercial Parking Study. They are a tool used by municipalities to limit the amount of land that is required for parking spaces. They are often used in high growth areas and in historical areas to ensure built form and density are maintained. These are often expressed by a number of maximum spaces per use, or by a certain percentage relative to the minimum required (e.g. 10% or 50% more than the minimum), while some municipalities have used their former minimum standards to create new maximum standards. Some municipalities have introduced the requirement to have pervious parking surfaces once the maximum parking requirement has been exceeded.

Minneapolis adopted maximum parking requirements in 1999. They are currently reviewing the maximum parking requirements in order to 'better align with the City goals'. Many of their commercial maximums are set at 1 space per 200 sq feet of gross floor area (or 1 per 18.58 sq m). Minneapolis staff commented that there is an implication that the maximums would be reduced from current standards. There is a concern from Minneapolis staff about going too far with strict maximums, as doing so may require more time processing variance requests for these lowered standards.

The City of Edmonton considered maximum parking as part of their recent parking reforms. Maximum parking requirements currently apply to residential development in proximity to transit and for commercial and residential development in the downtown. Edmonton was of the opinion that, compared to Open Option Parking discussed above, maximum parking requirements supports walking but limits driving, and provides homeowners and businesses with fewer choices.

Cincinnati has maximum parking requirements in place for approximately 1% of their total land area (phone interview, June 4, 2020). These requirements are in place to protect built form and some of the City's historic neighbourhoods.

The City of Asheville, NC, has maximum parking standards by use. The number of parking spaces can only be exceeded if a pervious paving system is used. Additional landscaping must also be provided in these circumstances.

The City of Seabrook, New Hampshire also has parking maximums. When the City abolished minimum parking requirements in January, 2019, the City took their previous 'minimum' parking requirements and made them into their 'maximum' parking requirements.

Section 6.4 of the Commercial Parking Study notes that that in areas where land may be more readily available, and/or at lower land values, parking maximums may be regarded as an imposition, rather than a benefit to developers. This observation was echoed through staff's supplemental review other North American municipalities.

### **The harmonization of ratios across commercial uses found in the City's Zoning By-law**

Section 7.0 of the Commercial Parking 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. Staff was asked why

these uses were singled out and was asked about the harmonization of parking ratios across commercial uses found in the City's Zoning By-law.

Parking and Loading Provisions are found in Part 5 of the City's Zoning By-Law (See Reference 4). Table 5.4 establishes non-residential parking requirements for all zones (except the C6 Zone). For example, while a retail store is permitted in a few zones, its parking requirements remain the same at 1/20 sq metres of net floor area. For Council's convenience, staff has reorganized the table in a way to highlight which parking ratios are similar (note that not all uses are represented in the following table (see Table 5.4. for all uses). Only some of the more 'common' commercial uses and some of the more 'common' parking ratios are included here. A + sign indicates additional provisions apply):

<b>1/10 sq. m</b>	<b>1/20 sq. m</b>	<b>1/30 sq. m</b>	<b>Study Recommendations</b>
Adult Entertainment Parlours	Audio/Visual Studio (+)	Automotive Use	Restaurant (1/12.5 sq. m)
Bus Terminal	Commercial School	Business Office	Retail Store (1/33 sq. m)
Restaurant(+)	Convenience Store	Financial Institution	Convenience Store (1/33 sq. m)
Tavern (+)	Dry Cleaning Establishment	Fuel Depot	Personal Service Shop (1/33 sq. m)
	Funeral Home	Home Improvement Centre	Shopping Centre (1/25 sq. m)
	Garden Nursery	Stockyard	
	Institutional Uses (unless otherwise defined)	Wayside Pit or Quarry (+)	
	Laundromat		
	Mobile Home Dealership		
	Museum		
	Personal Service Shop		
	Place of Amusement		
	Private Club		

	Recreation Vehicle Sale and Service Establishment		
	Service Shop		
	Service Trade		
	Shopping Centre		
	Any other use not specified by table 5.4.		

Further harmonization of commercial and industrial parking ratios could be considered as part of the Employment Lands Strategy Study process.

**SUMMARY**

Planning Committee deferred the February 19, 2020 Commercial Parking Standards Review report pending additional information on four items. This report provides supplemental information on harmonized, minimum and maximum parking standards. In conducting research for this report, Staff contacted municipalities across North America that have had experience with the elimination of parking standards and/or parking maximums.

This additional review has found:

- That the elimination of minimum parking standards is uncommon in North America and only one major Canadian municipality (Edmonton) is currently considering this policy approach;
- That the imposition of maximum parking standards is also somewhat uncommon, with the review uncovering that determining the correct maximum is problematic and could lead to many requests for variances, and
- That the path that many municipalities take to reducing parking requirements is a phased approach that sees the elimination of parking in the core areas first, followed by the reduction of parking requirements along major transit corridors.

The findings above align with the path that the City of Greater Sudbury is currently on with respect to parking. Minimum parking requirements have not existed in Downtown Sudbury for several decades. The review and adoption of Greater Sudbury’s Zoning By-law in 2010 further reduced parking requirements for key uses (e.g. shopping centres: from 1 parking space per 18.5 sq metres in the 1995 By-law to 1 parking space per 20 sq metres in the 2010 By-law). In 2018,

the City introduced a 25% parking reduction for units that are subject to an affordable housing agreement with the City.

The City then took the next step on the path by undertaking a Commercial Parking Study last year that found there are additional opportunities to reduce minimum parking requirements for certain commercial uses and along the GOVA mainlines in addition to other changes to the parking framework. Implementing the recommendations of the Commercial Parking Study would see the City continuing on the path that other North American cities have taken.

## RESOURCES CITED

1. "LaSalle Boulevard Corridor Plan and Strategy – Proposed Official Plan Amendment", report presented at June 24 2019 Planning Committee Meeting <https://agendasonline.greatersudbury.ca/index.cfm?pg=feed&action=file&agenda=report&itemid=7&id=1317>
2. "Best Practices Review: Commercial Parking Requirements" <https://agendasonline.greatersudbury.ca/index.cfm?pg=feed&action=file&attachment=28604.pdf>
3. City of Edmonton Website with links to various reports and findings throughout their 4-phase review [https://www.edmonton.ca/city\\_government/urban\\_planning\\_and\\_design/comprehensive-parking-review.aspx#:~:text=Open%20Option%20Parking%20will%20remove,item%203.22%20for%20a%20decision.](https://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/urban_planning_and_design/comprehensive-parking-review.aspx#:~:text=Open%20Option%20Parking%20will%20remove,item%203.22%20for%20a%20decision.)
4. City of Edmonton Staff Report for June 23, 2020 Public Hearing on Zoning Amendments related to Open Option Parking  
  
<http://sirepub.edmonton.ca/sirepub/cache/2/ilcnoxroi4ypovmeiskeovvm/93702306112020072751931.PDF>
5. City of Greater Sudbury Zoning By-law <https://www.greatersudbury.ca/do-business/zoning/zoning-by-law-2010-100z/>
6. Nodes and Corridors Strategy <https://agendasonline.greatersudbury.ca/index.cfm?pg=agenda&action=navigator&lang=en&id=992&itemid=11977>

7. LaSalle Boulevard Corridor Plan and Strategy

<https://agendasonline.greatersudbury.ca/index.cfm?pg=feed&action=file&agenda=report&itemid=8&id=1227>

## **Attachment**

A. Supplemental Jurisdictional Scan