

Clause embodied in Report No. 12 of the Planning and Transportation Committee, as adopted by the Council of the City of Toronto at its meeting held on November 6, 7 and 8, 2001.

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Review of Parking Requirements for Rental Apartment Buildings

(City Council on November 6, 7 and 8, 2001, amended this Clause by adding thereto the following:

“It is further recommended that there be an additional provision that there be no relaxation of present City standards for visitor parking at rental buildings.”)

The Planning and Transportation Committee recommends that:

- (1) the report (September 21, 2001) from the Commissioner of Urban Development Services be adopted; and**
- (2) the Federation of Metro Tenants Associations, and other tenant associations, be kept informed of this matter.**

The Committee reports, for the information of Council, having forwarded the report (September 21, 2001) to the Tenant Defence Sub-Committee.

The Planning and Transportation Committee submits the following report (September 21, 2001) from the Commissioner of Urban Development Services:

Purpose:

This report is in follow-up to the recommendation for a review of parking requirements in rental apartment buildings contained in the Rental Action Plan entitled: “Unlocking the Opportunity for New Rental Housing: A Call to Action” and endorsed by City Council in July 2001 . This report identifies a number of steps that can be taken to help the City address on-going concerns over the provision of parking in new rental apartment buildings while awaiting the completion of the wider Zoning By-law review process.

Financial Implications and Impact Statement:

There are no financial implications stemming from this report.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that:

- (1) the Commissioner of Urban Development Services:
 - (a) approach the private rental industry, through the Urban Development Roundtable – Rental Working Group, to provide information related to parking demand in private rental buildings;
 - (b) approach provincial officials to assist in the review of parking demand in rental buildings by providing information on car ownership levels; and
 - (c) approach the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation to assist in the review of parking demand in rental buildings by providing technical assistance and making available any relevant data sources;
- (2) the Commissioner of Urban Development Services and the Commissioner of Works and Emergency Services update the Planning and Transportation Committee on the findings of this work by providing a summary, status report in March 2002; and
- (3) the appropriate City Officials be authorized and directed to take the necessary actions to give effect thereto.

The Commissioner of Works and Emergency Services was consulted in the preparation of this report and concurs with its recommendations.

Background:

At its meeting on July 24, 25 and 26, 2001, City Council endorsed the Rental Action Plan, developed by the Urban Development Roundtable – Rental Working Group, entitled: *“Unlocking the Opportunity for New Rental Housing: A Call to Action”*, and adopted the recommendations of a covering report from the Commissioner of Urban Development Services (June 19, 2001).

The Rental Action Plan identifies sixteen actions to be implemented by the federal and provincial governments, as well as the City of Toronto, in order to stimulate a healthy rental housing market. One of the actions to be undertaken by the City is a parking survey, in consultation with the rental industry, to determine rates of automobile ownership among tenants to assist in establishing appropriate parking requirements for new rental buildings.

This action to review parking requirements was recommended for two main reasons. Firstly, underground parking spaces are a significant cost factor for new rental buildings. Each space can cost as much as \$25,000 to \$30,000 to construct and, in some cases, this can be equivalent to the land cost per apartment unit. Secondly, private sector landlords have reported much lower rates of parking occupancy in their existing rental buildings than the current multi-residential (condominium /conventional rental) parking standards provide for.

In the context of the proposed review of rental parking requirements, City Council also adopted a recommendation from the Planning and Transportation Committee (PTC) that the Commissioner of Urban Development Services report back further to the September 11, 2001 PTC meeting on the following two issues: “(a) areas of the City, such as developments connected to a subway station, where parking requirements could be significantly reduced, and (b) a critical path which would review of City-wide parking requirements, recognizing that there are varying standards still in existence within the City”.

This report is in response to the direction of City Council.

Comments:

(1) Rental Parking Demand: A Preliminary Overview

Car ownership rates are an important consideration in determining parking standards. Whether a car is used frequently or infrequently, there must be a space to park it. Levels of car ownership, and by extension parking demand, vary considerably across the City. One of the contributing factors is that renter households generally own fewer cars.

The following discussion takes a closer look at information from surveys which have examined car ownership levels by housing type and housing tenure, including comparisons of: (i) condominium buildings and conventional rental buildings, and (ii) socially-assisted rental buildings.

Housing Type:

Information about differences in levels of car ownership across the City is available from the 1996 Transportation Tomorrow Survey (TTS). The TTS collected information on car ownership rates for different housing types, by traffic zones, across the City. The TTS, unfortunately, did not distinguish between owner-occupied and rented units.

The results of the TTS showed that the average 1996 rate of car ownership for all city households was 1.07 cars/hh. A breakdown of the data by house type showed the following: single-detached and semi-detached houses – 1.39 cars/hh; row and townhouses – 1.17 cars/hh, and apartments - 0.72 cars/hh.

Housing Tenure:

Condominium Buildings and Conventional Apartment Buildings:

Information on the differences in car ownership is also available through travel surveys which have been conducted in four specific areas of the City: North York City Centre (1986); Yonge/Davisville (1994); Kipling/Islington (1994); and the Etobicoke Motel Strip (2000). These travel surveys confirm that rental tenure is a factor in explaining differences in car ownership. A significant gap between condominium buildings and conventional rental buildings was found - 1.2 cars per unit in condominium buildings and 0.8 cars per unit in conventional rental units, overall.

Evidence from Social Housing:

Information on parking occupancy rates (June 2001) from the Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC), for the former Cityhome and the Metro Toronto Housing Company Ltd. buildings, suggests even lower levels of car ownership in social housing. Excluding buildings occupied largely by seniors (which typically have very low levels of car ownership), on average, the family buildings have roughly 0.3 cars per household.

The parking demands of renter households living in multi-unit residential buildings, based on the available evidence, are measurably lower than those of similar owner-occupier households. These findings support the recommendation of the Rental Action Plan that the City should review the parking requirements for rental apartment buildings to ensure that appropriate standards are in place.

(2) Parking Standards for Multi-Unit Residential Buildings Vary Across the City

The current parking standards for multi-unit residential buildings (condominium/conventional rental) vary considerably among the zoning by-laws and guidelines of the City's former area municipalities.

Parking standards vary according to a number of factors, including: the size of the building; the number of required spaces/unit for occupant and visitor parking; the base which is applied (e.g. size of units, GFA); visitor parking as a separate component; locational considerations (e.g. close to rapid transit); tenure; mixed-use; and parking space geometrics (e.g. dimensions, aisle widths).

(3) Maintaining the Momentum for Rental Housing

Ultimately the review and harmonization of parking standards for all land uses across the City will be undertaken as part of the comprehensive Zoning By-law review process. A report entitled: *The New Zoning By-law Project: Scope and Work Plan*, will shortly be before the Planning and Transportation Committee for its endorsement. This report will set out timelines and funding requirements for harmonizing the Zoning By-law and will propose that a full review of parking standards across the City be initiated in the Summer of 2002.

The work proposed in this report seeks to maintain the momentum of the Rental Action Plan and to accomplish much of the advance work related to the review of parking requirements for rental buildings. The advantage of this approach is that it will allow the City:

- to systematically review and, possibly, update or expand upon existing City studies and data bases related to the demand for parking in rental housing;
- to work with representatives of the rental housing industry to better understand their concerns about the parking issue and to seek their assistance in collecting information on demand; and

- to liaise with senior government officials to determine potential information sources (e.g. Ministry of Transportation data on car ownership) and other in-kind technical assistance.

The intention is to report back on the findings of this work to the Planning and Transportation Committee by producing a summary, status report by March of next year. Such updated findings, although of an interim nature, would provide valuable assistance to the City in addressing rental parking standard issues as they arise through the Committee of Adjustment and Zoning By-law review processes. This will enable the City to continue to address the rental housing issue in a progressive manner while awaiting the final outcome of the larger Zoning By-law review process.

(4) Review of Parking Requirements: Next Steps and Timelines

Owing to the complexity of the issues, the review and development of consistent parking standards for multi-unit residential developments will be a major undertaking. However, with respect to the review of parking requirements for rental apartment buildings, there are, as noted above, a number of steps that can be taken immediately which will assist the New Zoning By-law Project.

The following are the key next steps and associated timelines:

(a) consult with private sector landlords in the City:

- to seek information on parking occupancy in rental apartment buildings; and
- to consult on the factors affecting rental parking supply and demand.

Proposed timeline: October – December 2001

(b) liaise with senior government officials to determine potential information sources (e.g. Ministry of Transportation data on car ownership) and other in-kind assistance.

Proposed timeline: October – December 2001

(c) complete review of relevant City transportation studies and data bases related to the demand for parking in rental housing.

Proposed timeline: Ongoing with completion in November 2001

(d) update on findings to the Planning and Transportation Committee and a scoping of the City-wide approach to developing revised parking standards for multi-unit residential housing through the Zoning By-law review process.

Proposed timeline: as information becomes available and with the aim of producing a summary, status report by March 2002.

Finally, it should be noted that there remains the outstanding issue of the City's ability to distinguish between condominium buildings and conventional rental buildings in the Zoning By-law with respect to such matters as parking standards. One of the recommendations contained in the Rental Action Plan is that the province provide municipalities in Ontario with the legal authority to distinguish by tenure as an incentive tool. It is expected that this issue will be addressed through the consultation with provincial staff and, ultimately, the Zoning By-law review process.

Conclusion:

This report is in follow-up to the recommendation for a review of parking requirements in rental apartment buildings contained in the Rental Action Plan: "Unlocking the Opportunity for New Rental Housing: A Call to Action" and endorsed by City Council in July 2001. The review of parking requirements was recommended for two main reasons. Firstly, underground parking spaces are a significant cost factor for new rental buildings (\$25,000-\$30,000/underground space). Secondly, private sector landlords have reported much lower rates of parking occupancy in their existing rental buildings than the current multi-residential (condominium /conventional rental) parking standards require.

This report has identified two important issues: (i) the available evidence suggests that parking demand by renter households is measurably lower than that for owner-occupier households; and (ii) the parking standards for multi-unit residential developments vary across the City according to a wide range of factors.

The New Zoning By-law Project is the vehicle through which the City will address the task of integrating the various existing zoning requirements such as parking. However, there are a number of steps which can be undertaken to initiate the process of reviewing the parking requirements for rental apartment buildings. These interim findings will help the City address on-going concerns over the provision of parking in new rental apartment buildings, particularly when part of the Committee of Adjustment or Zoning By-law amendment processes. This report has outlined the necessary steps and identifies the timelines for their achievement.

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