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**DRAFT STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS REPORT 4**

**NEW COMPREHENSIVE ZONING BY-LAW: ZONING FOR PARKING AND LOADING**



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## Executive Summary

This report is the second of a series of Strategic Directions Reports designed to outline the proposed intent, design, and implementation of new zoning regulations for the City of Richmond Hill under a new comprehensive zoning by-law (CZBL). The CZBL is to be implemented in phases that follow the batches of amendments to the City of Richmond Hill Official Plan (RHOP). The new Comprehensive Zoning By-law (CZBL) is an opportunity to better regulate land use planning in the City of Richmond Hill. The purpose of the Project is to review, consolidate and update the City's Zoning By-laws into a single comprehensive Zoning By-law that implements the policies and vision of the Plan. Key objectives of the Project include creating a comprehensive Zoning By-law that is:

- user-friendly and easy to understand, administer and enforce;
- reflective of current and emerging planning and development practices and trends; and,
- fully accessible online

This draft Strategic Directions Report introduces the relevant land use planning and development framework for, and recommended CZBL approaches to parking and loading.

The report recommends how the CZBL may address and implement Official Plan policies related to parking and loading, as well as best practices based on the draft Parking and Transportation Demand Management Strategy completed by HDR and scans of other municipalities. In doing so, the report details relevant planning objectives and policies and makes recommendations for how to address those elements in the CZBL. Additionally, the City is undertaking several other studies and strategies which may influence how parking and loading is addressed in the CZBL, including a Municipal Parking Strategy, a Micromobility Strategy, a Community Improvement Plan focused on Affordable Housing and Sustainable Design, and further policy amendments to the RHOP. These will be considered to the extent possible and that the timing aligns with the CZBL project. These include.

The report sets out 13 recommendations, along with certain sub-recommendations, consolidated in the last section of the Report. Unlike the other Strategic Directions Report, a foundation for recommendations related to parking and loading is the draft Parking and Transportation Demand Management Strategy which is referred to in Appendix 1 to this Report and is being consulted on with the public through the CZBL public engagement. Included in the recommendations are proposed regulations for tiered parking rates for different strategy areas across the city; implementation minimum and maximum parking rates; implementation of Transportation Demand Management requirements (e.g. covered bicycle parking, bicycle parking, priority carpool/carshare spaces, etc.); introduction of regulations for loading areas, and specification of location of parking areas.

Input from the public is encouraged to shape the recommended strategic directions for the CZBL. An Open House is scheduled for Monday, June 24, 2024 on this draft Strategic Directions Report as well as others. Draft Strategic Directions Reports will be finalized based on comments received



and will be brought forward to the Committee of the Whole and Council in Richmond Hill in September 2024.



## 1 Introduction

The new comprehensive zoning by-law (CZBL) is an opportunity to better regulate land use planning in the City of Richmond Hill. The purpose of the Project is to review, consolidate and update the City's Zoning By-laws into a single comprehensive Zoning By-law that implements the policies and vision of the Plan. Key objectives of the Project include creating a comprehensive Zoning By-law that is:

- user-friendly and easy to understand, administer and enforce;
- reflective of current and emerging planning and development practices and trends; and,
- fully accessible online

The City of Richmond Hill has engaged a consultant team lead by R.E. Millward and Associates to develop the new CZBL. Over the past few years, background research, technical papers, and studies focusing on specific planning issues has been completed. This work will inform the development of a series of Strategic Directions Reports (SDRs) which will guide the drafting of the first phases(s) of the CZBL that will be drafted and are expected to be approved in 2025, as outlined below:

1. **SDR 1:** Framework, Design, Phasing, and Implementation of the CZBL;
2. **SDR 2:** Zoning for the City of Richmond Hill's Neighbourhoods;
3. **SDR 3:** Zoning for the Yonge Street and Carrville/16<sup>th</sup> Avenue Key Development Area, Village Local Centre, Oak Ridges Local Centre, and Newkirk Local Centre; and
4. **SDR 4:** Parking and Loading based on the reports prepared by HDR Transportation Consultants.

These draft SDRs will be available on the Zone Richmond Hill webpage for public review and presented at a public open house on June 24, 2024. After incorporating public comments, the four (4) SDRs will be presented to City Council for consideration and endorsement in September 2024. A consultation strategy will be presented to City Council at the same time with the four SDRs.

Subsequent SDRs will be developed later to deal with those portions of the CZBL that will be considered by City Council following completion of the Official Plan Update.



## 1.1 Purpose of this Report

The purpose of this report is to set out the types of zoning regulations that pertain to parking and loading for the City of Richmond Hill. The report will identify the existing land use planning objectives and policies, as well as recommendations from the draft Parking and Transportation Demand Management Strategy, prepared by HDR, and give initial direction on how these should be addressed and implemented by the CZBL.

The CZBL is to be implemented in phases to correspond to adopted and in force Official Plan land use policies. This pertains to applicable policies in the *York Region Official Plan (YROP)*, the *Richmond Hill Official Plan (RHOP)*, and any amendments that may involve secondary plans, tertiary plans, or exceptions to specific areas or properties (official plan amendments). The *YROP*, *RHOP*, official plan amendments, and CZBL regulations must not conflict with in-place Provincial policies and legislation, which include the:

- *Planning Act*;
- *Ontario Heritage Act*;
- *Municipal Act*;
- *Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act*;
- *Provincial Policy Statement*; and,
- *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (Growth Plan)*.

Emerging legislation to these Provincial acts and policies under Bills 97, 108, 109, 23, 185 (received Royal Assent) are also considered in the development of the CZBL. Please refer to Report 1 Framework, Design, Phasing, and Implementation of the new CZBL for details on the existing zoning by-laws, the recent and emerging Provincial and Federal policies, the *YROP*, the *RHOP*, and emerging planning issues. Additionally, the city is undertaking several studies which may influence how parking and loading is addressed in the CZBL.

## 1.2 Limited Scope of Report

The proposed strategic directions contained in Section 4 of this Report may change as a result of and as required in relation to any legislative changes, as well as the outcome of the Official Plan Update as it pertains to areas of the City which have not yet been reviewed through the City's Update (e.g. employment lands, additional centres and corridors), and forthcoming studies or strategies undertaken by the City. The latest proposed legislative changes through Bill 185, for example, propose to eliminate minimum parking requirements in major transit station areas. Should this change be enacted into legislation, this will have implications for the City's approach to parking in the CZBL.

Additionally, the City has retained Gladki and Associates for the Housing Accelerator Fund project. As part of this project, a further analysis has been undertaken by TYLin about parking requirements for accessory residential units. The CZBL will implement whatever direction comes from this project and other related studies as they evolve and as directed by Richmond Hill Council.



### **1.3 Background Research for Parking and Loading Zoning Strategic Directions**

Zoning is just one tool of many that can be used by the City of Richmond Hill to manage parking on private properties and establish regulations to ensure adequate loading areas are provided and do not result in adverse impacts. Other tools related to parking that can be used by the City to address parking in relation to land uses are through measures such as collection of cash-in-lieu of parking whereby the City can accept money instead of parking spaces which can be used for purposes such as toward the establishment of public parking facilities, on-street parking, or for transportation demand management measures to support alternative modes of travel to the private automobile. This approach can provide additional revenue streams for the City and limit the provision of parking in areas that are well served by transit and a mix of land uses to encourage the use of transit and active transportation modes.

As part of Phase 1 of the CZBL, the City of Richmond Hill retained Gladki Planning Associates, Meridian Planning and DTAH to undertake studies on specific zoning issues and topics to help inform the drafting of the Comprehensive Zoning By-law (CZBL) and the Official Plan Update. The findings of the studies were summarized in a total of 11 technical papers and two building typology studies. Additionally, in 2019, the City retained HDR to prepare a Parking and Transportation Demand Management Strategy. Details related to the preparation of that strategy are contained in Appendix 1 to this report.

The Phase 1 Technical Paper on Residential Parking and Landscape Requirements, prepared by Meridian Planning Consultants; the Home-based Occupations Technical Paper, prepared by Meridian Planning Consultants; the two building typology studies, prepared by DTAH and Gladki Planning Associates; and the draft Parking and Transportation Demand Management Strategy, prepared by HDR, have all been considered in the development of the strategic directions recommended in this report and will be consulted in the drafting of the CZBL, where appropriate and where the content is still applicable, given the evolving policy and legislative context.



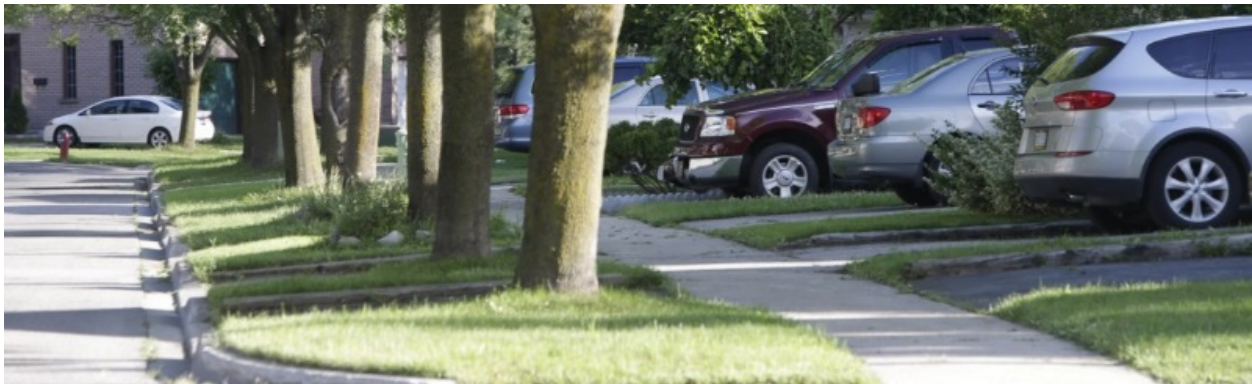
## 2 Policy Direction

### 2.1 Richmond Hill Official Plan Update

The *Richmond Hill Official Plan* has been in place since 2010 and is based on Provincial and Regional policy direction merged with local community input and technical expertise. The Official Plan provides an urban structure framework to direct growth and determine land use spatially throughout Richmond Hill and guide future land use planning decisions. The Official Plan is currently at various stages in the review process, to conform with Provincial policies and regulations made since 2010, including accommodating additional population and employment growth to 2051. The *Richmond Hill Official Plan* must also conform with the *York Region Official Plan*, adopted in 2021, which will become a local planning responsibility in July 2024 upon the Province’s dissolution of regional planning responsibilities.

An over-arching theme of the *Richmond Hill Official Plan* is “building a new kind of urban”, which is giving direction to the CZBL review process. This vision, as described in section 2.1 of the Official Plan, creates complete, vibrant, and connected communities by reinforcing connections between the natural and built environment, protecting, and planning for a range of economic opportunities, and promoting a place-based approach to housing and intensification.

#### 2.1.1 Parking and Loading



*Figure 1: Photograph of front yard parking in a Richmond Hill neighbourhood<sup>1</sup>*

General Policies in the RHOP related to parking and loading include:

- Major office development shall be encouraged to provide underground parking or, where not feasible due to high water table or other constraints, structured parking to the rear or side of the *development* site or incorporated within the base of a building (policy 3.4.1.48).

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<sup>1</sup> Photo source: <https://www.richmondhill.ca/en/find-or-learn-about/Parking-Front-Yard-Parking.aspx>





- Surface parking should be minimized wherever possible. Where surface parking is provided, it shall wherever possible be located at the rear or side of a *development* site and shall include substantial landscaping and screening within and along the perimeter of parking areas (policy 3.4.1. 49).
- Safe, comfortable, continuous, and barrier-free pedestrian connections between the *development* and surface parking areas shall be provided (policy 3.4.1. 50).
- Shared parking between complementary uses is encouraged to be explored and implemented wherever feasible and appropriate (policy 3.4.1. 52).
- Pedestrian access to parking facilities shall be appropriately signed, designed, and integrated into the façade so as not to appear as a dominant element (policy 3.4.1. 53).
- In general, parking facilities and loading areas should be located in a manner that has a minimal physical impact on sidewalks and accessible open spaces. (policy 3.4.1. 54).
- Within the Key Development Areas, parking for new *major retail development* will be required to locate below grade or in structured parking integrated at the rear or side of a building (policy 4.4.2. 2).
- Structured parking is encouraged for the development of the GO Station lands within the Newkirk Employment Area (policy 4.8.2.2.5).
- New neighbourhood commercial sites are required to provide adequate on-site parking, access and circulation and are to be designed to (policy 4.9.1.3.5).
- Parking is permitted within the Utility Corridor designation (policy 4.11.1. F).
- Within Residential Mixed Use designated areas, as well as Medium and High Density Residential areas, underground or structured parking is required for any buildings more than four storeys (policy 8.6.2.4. E).
- Neighbourhood commercial *developments* shall be designed to address the street and include a comprehensive and unified streetscape and landscape plan to minimize the visual impact of surface parking (policy 8.6.3. G).
- Home Based Businesses: the business does not generate traffic on a daily or routine basis which exceeds the residential parking standard (policy 9.6.2.4.4. iii).

These policies will be implemented through the CZBL and have been considered in the draft PTDMS and proposed strategic directions.



### 3 Proposed Strategic Directions

Unlike the other SDRs, the basis for most of the proposed strategic directions comes from the draft Parking and Transportation Demand Management Strategy (PTDMS). A detailed discussion on most of these matters is included within the draft PTDMS Report in Appendix 1. A summary of recommended strategic directions is contained in Section 4 of this Report and should be read in conjunction with the draft PTDMS Report.

Additionally, the PTDMS recommends a toolkit approach be investigated for Transportation Demand Management (TDM) (refer to Appendix 1). Reduced rate calculations in exchange for the provision of transportation demand management measures may be challenging to implement into the CZBL as a Zoning By-law provides a legal and a precise way of managing land use. The reduced rate calculations through TDM may be too ambiguous to be implemented into a By-law and may need to be considered separately as part of the development review process. Typically, this type of approach is implemented through the Site Planning process, particularly to align with the City's Sustainability Metrics program. However, opportunities for an innovative approach to TDM in the CZBL will be explored as a priority.

Additional proposed strategic directions related to parking and loading are also addressed, as applicable, in the other Strategic Directions Reports in this Phase of the CZBL project:

- SDR 1: Framework, Design, Phasing, and Implementation of the CZBL;
- SDR 2: Zoning for the City of Richmond Hill's Neighbourhoods; and,
- SDR 3: Zoning for the Yonge Street and Carrville/16<sup>th</sup> Avenue Key Development Area, Village Local Centre, Oak Ridges Local Centre, and Newkirk Local Centre.



## 4 Summary of the Recommendations

This report, read in conjunction with the draft Parking and Transportation Demand Management Strategy (refer to Appendix 1) have provided a background and discussion on parking and loading.

The following are the strategic direction recommendations for parking and loading, in addition to recommendations that that been proposed in other SDR reports released to date.

1. It is recommended that the Comprehensive Zoning By-Law establish an overall reduction of vehicular parking requirements within the City in accordance with Official Plan direction and provincial direction to reduce reliance on the private automobile, transportation mode shifts, as well as reflect a general trend of municipalities moving in this direction for a number of reasons including sustainability, improving housing affordability, limiting the amount of land on a property that is dedicated to parking to ensure other priorities are met (e.g. allowing for additional housing units, amenity space, and landscaping for aesthetics and stormwater management).
2. It is recommended that the Comprehensive Zoning By-Law reduce and minimize surface parking and its adverse impacts, in accordance with the Official Plan, through:
  - a. Requiring underground parking, wherever possible for higher density developments;
  - b. Requiring that surface parking be located at the rear or side buildings and not located in the front yard, wherever possible; and,
  - c. Requiring, wherever appropriate, landscaping requirements to screen parking.
3. It is recommended that the Comprehensive Zoning By-Law consider and implement, as appropriate, tiered parking rates for different areas of the City as set out in the draft PTDMS (see Table 14 & 15 in Appendix 1). Tiers have been established with the unique conditions of each area of the City such as establishing lesser parking requirements for areas which are well served by transit, and greater requirements or permissions for automobile parking in areas which have less access to transit/are less walkable, notwithstanding the recommendations within the draft PTDMS for minimum parking requirements, the recent proclamation of Bill 185, which directs that parking minimums be eliminated in certain areas in proximity to higher order transit stations (e.g. Protected Major Transit Station Areas). This direction will be further reviewed and implemented through the CZBL.
4. It is recommended that the Comprehensive Zoning By-Law consider establishing minimum and maximum parking rates in accordance with the recommendations of the draft PTDMS (refer to Tables 14, 15, and 16 in Appendix 1).
5. It is recommended that the Comprehensive Zoning By-Law investigate opportunities to require transportation demand management measures (e.g. provision of covered bicycle parking/shower facilities, priority carpooling or carshare parking spaces, remote work facilities, etc.) (refer to Section 5.1 of Appendix 1), particularly within the City's centres and corridors which are well served by existing or planned higher order transit and active



transportation infrastructure, to balance reduced parking requirements and support a reduced reliance on the private automobile.

6. It is recommended that the Comprehensive Zoning By-Law establish bicycle parking rates as set out in the draft PTDMS (refer to Table 17 in Appendix 1), along with associated amenities for short- and long-term parking and other amenities for the purpose of supporting non-auto modes of travel and reduced parking minimums. Accessory building and structure requirements in the CZBL shall address accessory structures that would be constructed for the purpose of providing weather protection for short-term bicycle parking spaces.
7. It is recommended that the Comprehensive Zoning By-Law adopt sizing dimensions for parking spaces based on latest general standards, as well as ensuring compliance with Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, as set out in the draft PTDMS (refer to Table 18 in Appendix 1). This would include:
  - a. Updates to various loading and parking spaces including perpendicular, parallel, tandem, stacked, compact car spaces, and bicycle parking spaces;
  - b. Updates to minimum aisle widths; and,
  - c. Defining obstructions to parking spaces and establishing an increase in parking space dimensions where obstructions exist.
8. It is recommended that the Comprehensive Zoning By-Law establish new definitions and parking rates for non-residential uses, considering the rates and uses established in the draft PTDMS (refer to Table 15 in Appendix 1). As defined terms in the CZBL may differ from the uses as defined in the draft PTDMS, or be consolidated for ease of implementation, attempts will be made to align as closely as possible with rates established within the draft PTDMS for comparable types of uses.
9. It is recommended that the Comprehensive Zoning By-Law explore opportunities for shared parking requirements between different/complementary uses on a site, for example where users access the site at different times of the day (time-of-day, weekday/weekend, and monthly basis) as set out in the draft PTDMS (Refer to Section 5.3 in Appendix 1). Introducing shared parking requirements helps to reduce the overall number of parking spaces for properties which have more than one use. Additionally, alternatives may be explored, such as “blended rates” which entails requiring parking spaces on the basis of non-residential GFA rather than tied to specific uses as often non-residential uses change and ideally, the need for zoning amendments for parking rates tied to specific uses, can be reduced by creating a more flexible by-law. Land use combinations not captured in the “blended” parking rates would be evaluated on a case-by-case basis through the development approvals process.
10. It is recommended that where parking supplies are shared between residential-visitors and commercial uses, the CZBL should require that the shared parking supply remains available to the uses (e.g., underground parking shall not be blocked off from the commercial uses).
11. It is recommended that the Comprehensive Zoning By-Law establish Electric Vehicle (including e-bike) parking rates and requirements in consideration of the recommendation in the draft PTDMS (refer to Table 24 in Appendix 1) to implement



standards based on a data-driven approach and scan undertaken of other municipal best practices. Should the City's EV Strategy be completed within the time horizon of the CZBL, any further recommendations related to zoning resulting from that strategy as appropriate will be considered.

12. It is recommended that the Comprehensive Zoning By-Law consider and implement car sharing development standards identified in the draft PTDMS for Parking Strategy Areas 1 & 2, as appropriate, and based on feedback from the industry (Refer to Section 5.5.1 in Appendix 1).
13. It is recommended that the Comprehensive Zoning By-Law implement loading and delivery development standards in accordance with the recommendations from the draft PTDMS (refer to Table 21 in Appendix 1). The CZBL will also specify where loading areas are to be located on properties and ensure the recommended rates and requirements adequately address an increase in e-commerce and on-demand deliveries and vehicles, and do not conflict with fire routes or pedestrian facilities.



## **Appendix 1 Draft Parking and Transportation Demand Management Strategy**

Available under separate cover.