



September 17, 2020

Planning and Housing Committee
Nancy Martins
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100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Sent electronically

Re.: Motion PH16.12, Examining Parking Requirements for New Development Applications

The Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario (RCCAO) is writing in support of the motion to examine parking requirements for new development applications, which will be brought forward to the Planning and Housing Committee on September 22nd. Reviewing parking requirements in the City of Toronto is welcome given recent car ownership trends and overall travel patterns of Torontonians. In fact, RCCAO discussed possible directions with senior City management in late July and we were pleased by the priority placed on this issue.

A re-evaluation of parking requirements is a topic that the construction sector has taken a keen interest in. In 2019, RCCAO commissioned a report, entitled [“How Parking Regulations Need to Evolve for High-Rise Buildings”](#). The report found that there is a clear mobility shift in many urban areas owing to a wider array of mobility options. The pandemic has certainly accelerated certain trends such as telework which will result in decreased demand for office space. Among the report's findings, these are key points:

- While the City of Toronto has lowered parking requirements in parts of the City, often decisions are made on a case-by-case basis;
- The cost of constructing below-grade parking has increased rapidly over the last decade, often between \$80,000-\$100,000 per parking space in downtown Toronto;
- These additional costs negatively impact housing affordability and represent an unnecessary burden for certain demographic groups that are not interested in vehicle ownership; and
- Other jurisdictions are demonstrating greater flexibility with respect to parking standards and, in some cases, are allowing the market to determine whether minimum parking requirements are needed or not (this includes the provision of off-site parking).

Going deep underground for parking adds considerably to the construction time to complete high-rise buildings. As such, the report recommends that innovative above-ground parking options be considered as this would allow structures to be repurposed for other potential



uses in the future. Further, most municipalities must prepare for severe rainfall, which causes chaos when it lands on areas with a high-water table and limited storm sewer capacity. Currently, Toronto's Tall Buildings Design Guidelines states a preference for below-grade parking, perhaps because of perceived aesthetic concerns. This focus must change to recognize the environmental consequences of building more underground parking.

Although the report was developed prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and the full impacts of the pandemic remain unknown, we suspect that there will be a long-term trend of decreased vehicle ownership and a concurrent diminished need for parking space in many urban areas.

The committee's motion presents a good opportunity for the City to take a serious look at parking standards and how they can address the actual needs of Torontonians. This review would be most welcome, and we look forward to further dialogue to develop practical approaches to addressing parking requirements in the context of emerging technologies, demographic patterns and environmental imperatives.

Regards,

Andy Manahan
Executive Director

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