

Overhauling Toronto's outdated parking regulations will cut housing costs: report

VAUGHAN (June 13, 2019) – The City of Toronto has not meaningfully updated its parking standards since 1986, says a new report by the Ryerson Urban Analytics Institute.

“Toronto’s parking standards haven’t been revised in three decades, and that’s a problem considering that affordability, stormwater capacity and travel behaviour are factors that need to be considered,” says professor Murtaza Haider of the Ryerson Urban Analytics Institute. He is the co-author of [“How Parking Regulations Need to Evolve for High-Rise Buildings.”](#)

The cost of constructing below-grade parking has increased rapidly over the past decade, often between \$80,000 and \$100,000 per parking space in downtown Toronto (p. 25). While the City of Toronto has made exceptions for certain projects near subway stations, there remains a strict adherence to minimum parking requirements which not only has an effect on development costs, but also hampers the ability of millennials and young families to afford new homes.

Regarding stormwater capacity (p. 26), the Institute says municipalities must prepare for severe rainfall, which causes chaos when it lands on areas with a high-water table and limited or aging pipes. Contrary to Toronto’s Buildings Design Guidelines, which states a preference for below-grade parking, above-grade parking alleviates pressure from the presence of groundwater, exacerbated by heavy rainfall.

In addition to transit options in urban areas, ride-sharing apps like Uber and Lyft continue to have an influence on the trend of declining car ownership (p. 20). With Uber boasting 45,000 patrons per day in Toronto alone in 2016, this trend is likely to see a decrease in vehicle ownership and therefore need for parking spots, Haider says.

The report recommends that the City of Toronto:

- 1) Undertake a review and overhaul minimum parking standards to reflect the significant changes over the last three decades in travel behaviour, technology and services.
- 2) Examine and encourage innovative above-ground parking options so that these structures can be repurposed for other potential uses in the future such as retail and residential (case studies starting on p. 32).
- 3) Consider implementing more flexible parking standards that assess local land uses, accessibility to public transit and travel behaviour, allowing for a nimble approach to emerging technologies and demographic patterns.

“We have to be forward-thinking in the way we plan new parking in urban centres in Toronto and across Canada,” says Andy Manahan, executive director of the Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario (RCCAO). “The consequences of building too much underground parking are multifold:



unnecessarily increasing construction costs, overloading our stormwater and sewer systems, and generating vast quantities of soil that must be transported and disposed of.”

[Click here for the report.](#)

WHAT IS THE RYERSON URBAN ANALYTICS INSTITUTE?

A leader in knowledge translation, mobilization and implementation of smart city solutions, the Institute’s mission is to use the state-of-the-art in analytics and data science to help discover and implement innovative solutions for urgent urban challenges. (www.urbananalyticsinstitute.com)

WHAT IS RCCAO?

This labour-management construction alliance has advocated for infrastructure investment for 13 years. This research marks RCCAO’s 50th independent, solutions-based report to help inform decision-makers.

-30-

Contact:

Aonghus Kealy, Director of Communications, RCCAO

W: 905-760-7777, x. 111 / C: 647-530-4855

kealy@rccao.com