



Report to: Development Services Committee

Meeting Date: May 30, 2023

SUBJECT: Citywide Parking Strategy – Policy Framework and Progress Update #1

PREPARED BY: Samson Wat, Senior Program Engineer, Ext. 2077
Loy Cheah, Senior Manager, Transportation, Ext. 4838

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1) That the report titled “Citywide Parking Strategy – Policy Framework and Progress Update #1” be received; and,
- 2) That Council endorse the draft vision, guiding principles and parking zone criteria as the policy framework of the Citywide Parking Strategy Study; and
- 3) That staff conduct a workshop with Council to help refine the parking zone criteria and guidelines; and further,
- 4) That staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

PURPOSE:

This report provides an update on the Citywide Parking Strategy (CWPS) Study, initiated in September 2022, and seeks Council endorsement of the draft vision, guiding principles and parking zone criteria for the study.

BACKGROUND:

The City of Markham is expected to experience significant population and employment growth. In 2016, Markham had a population of 340,000, and by 2021, Markham’s population was at 354,000. By 2051, the City population is forecasted to reach 619,200 people, almost doubling over 30 years. In 2016, approximately 85 percent of all peak-hour trips occurred by car, and the average number of vehicles per household was 1.77. If this level of vehicle ownership continues, it could result in an additional 145,000 vehicular trips on the roads during the morning peak hour by 2051, leading to increased parking demand, congestion, pollution and other negative impacts.

The planning and management of parking have implications for travel mode choices, development density, affordability, economic development, and equity. Remaining status quo will not be sustainable in the long term and may hinder the City's growth and planning goals. Therefore, there is an opportunity and a need for the City to update its approach to parking to better align with its growth and city-building objectives.

A CWPS is a comprehensive plan that aims to develop policies and strategies that guide how the City should plan, manage and optimize parking resources to balance the needs of various stakeholders while advancing its strategic goals on sustainability, equity, and economic development. The CWPS study Terms of Reference were endorsed by Council on March 29, 2022, and is summarized as follows:

-
1. Review the City's current practices and how they compare to best practices from other comparable municipalities with respect to policy, planning, standards, finance, operations and enforcement perspectives.
 2. Determine emerging trends and innovations, including technological advances, and their impact on parking demand and provision
 3. Develop parking needs assessment to determine existing and future parking needs across the City.
 4. Establish an overarching vision and guiding principles for the CWPS in consultation with internal and external stakeholders.
 5. Develop strategic parking policies that align with the Regional and City's planning and transportation policies and strategic goals.
 6. Develop specific parking strategies to guide the evolution of parking in Markham, including assessing strategies such as:
 - a. On-street Parking Strategy – review and develop recommendations on temporary residential parking and on-street parking permit program.
 - b. Curbside Management Strategy – review and develop recommendations on techniques and practices to allocate curb use effectively, including transit stops, pick-up and drop-off (PUDO) areas for goods and parcel deliveries, parking, etc. The curbside management strategy will also review the use of boulevard space to accommodate parking options for future micro-mobility devices.
 - c. Bicycle, E-bicycle and Micro-mobility Parking Strategy – Review and develop recommendations to support the adoption of personal electric travel devices as a first and last-kilometer solution.
 - d. Trails Parking Strategy – review and develop recommendations that address current and future parking needs along the Rouge Valley Trail system, the Lake-to-Lake Route/trail, and the new Markham Centre Trail system.
 - e. New and Emerging Technology Parking Strategy – review the impact of electric, autonomous and connected vehicles on planning and designing parking facilities. The study will also review and identify parking technologies to improve parking management, operation and enforcement efficiency, and user experience.
 - f. Land Development related Parking Strategy – review and develop recommendations for parking standard requirements, transportation demand management requirements for land use planning, shared-parking policy, privately paid parking program, payment-in-lieu parking policy, etc.
 7. Undertake an organization and business model assessment for parking management in Markham. The review will identify opportunities to improve customer service efficiency and establish governance, roles and responsibilities of various City departments for day-to-day operations and decision-making around parking. The review will also undertake the necessary financial analysis.
 8. Develop an implementation and monitoring plan that will include a priority action plan with corresponding timeline and resource requirements. A funding strategy and a preliminary budget will be identified to facilitate the implementation of the CWPS recommendations.

WSP Canada Inc. was retained to assist the City in undertaking the study and the development of a comprehensive CWPS.

OPTIONS/ DISCUSSION:

The CWPS is being developed through a multi-phase approach that includes:

1. Phase 1: Background Review
2. Phase 2: Policy Direction
3. Phase 3: Strategies, Implementation and Monitoring
4. Phase 4: Final Report

A detailed road map of the study is appended in **Attachment A**. The project team has completed Phase 1 and as part of Phase 2 has now developed the draft policy framework for the CWPS.

Phase 1 Background Review

The first phase of the CWPS study has been completed. This phase involved conducting a comprehensive review of the current parking conditions in Markham, as well as an analysis of best practices from other jurisdictions to gain insights into various parking topics (see [Phase 1 study report here](#)). With a thorough review and understanding of Markham's current parking policies, travel behaviour and challenges around parking, the key takeaways and opportunities identified in Phase 1 are:

Key Takeaways:

1. The City of Markham has a history of being very car dependent;
2. High-density locations near frequent transit services have lower vehicle ownership, whereas single-family homes have high ownership;
3. One-size parking does not fit all within the City;
4. Stakeholders concerns include:
 - City policies do exist to support a more balanced and sustainable mode of travel but lack implementation;
 - Markham lags behind other municipalities in the GTHA on parking policies;
 - Parking requirements do not support development, shared parking, or sustainability;
 - The City lacks public parking facilities, including on-street parking;
 - Key geographical areas should be considered for special policies.
5. Reference municipalities have parking policies specific to parking zones, parking maximums, and reduced minimum parking rates including areas with zero parking minimum.

Opportunities:

- To transform from a historically car-dependent city to create a sustainable and equitable multi-modal transportation system.
- To update parking policies to be more in line with peer municipalities' policies and the City's Strategic Plan objectives and Official Plan policies.

-
- To modernize parking requirements to promote sustainability and support future growth.
 - To address the issue of public parking facilities and explore innovative solutions.
 - Recognize that a one-size-fits-all approach may not be suitable for addressing the diverse parking needs within the city, and explore area-specific parking solutions.

Phase 1 Stakeholder Analysis

During Phase 1 of the CWPS, a stakeholder analysis was conducted to identify key stakeholders of Markham's parking policy and infrastructure. Telephone interviews were conducted with the key stakeholders, including representatives from Unionville Business Improvement Area (UBIA), Building Industry and Land Development (BILD) Association, Smart Commute Markham Richmond Hill, Cycling and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (CPAC), York Catholic District School Board (YCDSB), and York Region District School Board (YRDSB). The interviews aimed to introduce the project, provide information about the CWPS, and gather feedback around key themes such as technology, innovation, active transportation, micro-mobility, geographic areas, and case studies.

The summary of the feedback received is appended in **Attachment B**. Notable feedback includes the need to provide bicycle parking on private and public lands, consider parking for micro-mobility, implement paid parking operations, differentiating parking needs across the City like Downtown Markham, and using new technology to implement parking policies.

Phase 2 Vision Statement

Based on the comprehensive background review in Phase 1, an understanding of the City's strategic plan and objectives, and Official Plan policies, the following vision statement has been developed to guide the development of the CWPS:

"Markham's vision for parking is to create adaptive area-specific policies and standards that aligns with the City's commitment to creating an efficient, safe, equitable, reliable, and convenient transportation system for residents, visitors, and businesses in support of Markham's transformation into a more sustainable, multimodal and livable city."

This vision statement encapsulates the collective understanding of the desired outcomes and aspirations for the CWPS. It reflects the commitment to align effective parking management with the City's overarching and strategic goals and objectives.

Phase 2 Guiding Principles

The development of the CWPS will be guided by a set of principles that reflect the City's commitment to achieving the above vision statement. These principles serve as a framework to inform and guide the strategic direction of the CWPS, ensuring that it aligns with the City's goals and objectives and addresses the unique parking challenges and opportunities in Markham. The following draft guiding principles have been identified as the foundation for the CWPS and will serve as a guiding framework for the development of parking policies and strategies in Markham:

-
1. **Adapt to Local Mobility Contexts:**
 - a. **Tiered Parking Requirements:** apply higher and lower parking requirements depending on geographic context.
 2. **Support Sustainability and Climate-resilience:**
 - a. **Transit and Active Transportation Accessibility:** encourage and support increased transit service and active transportation across the City through parking policies and strategies.
 3. **Integrate Development and City-Building Objectives:**
 - a. **Priority of land/resources:** consider parking against other priorities when making decisions on the best use of land and best investment of resources.
 - b. **Transportation Demand Management (TDM):** adopt TDM measures for all land uses.
 4. **Improve Efficiency of Parking Infrastructure and Operations:**
 - a. **Shared/Public Parking:** allow sharing of parking facilities/supplies among adjacent or nearby land uses.
 - b. **Price Parking:** charge for parking and unbundle the sale of parking from residential units.
 - c. **Smart Parking Technology:** use appropriate technology to monitor, manage and operate parking as well as communicate parking and travel information.
 - d. **Parking Management:** apply parking management measures to minimize over- and undersupply of parking spaces.

Phase 2 Parking Zone Criteria and Guidelines

The concept of parking zones is a crucial element of the CWPS, as it enables the development of area-specific policies and solutions that align with the Official Plan City Structure, current trends in transit ridership and vehicle ownership, and future transportation networks. A comprehensive set of criteria and guidelines has been established to determine the parking zones, encompassing six key themes:

1. Transit Service;
2. Availability of Public Parking;
3. City Urban Structure;
4. Land Uses and Density;
5. Active Transportation Infrastructure and Facilities; and
6. Parking Management Measures.

The detailed criteria and guidelines appended in **Attachment C** serve as a framework for determining the boundaries of each parking zone.

A preliminary draft parking zone map, shown in **Attachment D**, demonstrates how the established criteria and guidelines can be applied to create a parking zone map for the City. Further refinement to the draft parking zone map is required and must be reviewed in detail with internal stakeholders and in consultation with the public and external stakeholders. The purpose of developing a parking zone map is to delineate the boundaries of each parking zone, facilitating the implementation of area-specific parking policies and solutions tailored to each zone's unique characteristics and demands. This

enables the City of Markham to effectively address parking issues and challenges and develop strategies responsive to the specific needs of different parts of the City.

Once the Parking Zones are in place, the parking zone criteria and guidelines will continue to be used by the City to evaluate site-specific applications for land development and assess the appropriateness of any proposed parking supply and TDM measures. In addition, as the City's mobility and demographic context evolves, the City will be able to review and evaluate the parking zone boundaries and determine the appropriateness of reclassifying the parking zones based on the parking zone criteria and guidelines.

Council endorsement of the CWPS policy framework is necessary to move forward

The next phase (Phase 3) of the CWPS involves developing detailed parking policies and strategies as well as the governance model for parking management in the City. For that work to proceed, Council endorsement of the CWPS draft vision, guiding principles and parking zone criteria and guidelines is necessary.

Next Steps

For the last step of the CWPS Phase 2, Council, the public and external stakeholders will be engaged to receive feedback to help refine the draft vision, guiding principles, and parking zone criteria. Council will be engaged through a workshop focusing primarily on the development of the parking zone criteria and guidelines. Unless significant feedback and changes to the policy framework results from the Phase 2 engagement, the project team will then proceed to conduct Phase 3 of the CWPS based on the refined vision, guiding principles and parking zone criteria. A second progress report to Council will be presented upon completion of Phase 3.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

There is no financial implication in adopting these recommendations.

HUMAN RESOURCES CONSIDERATIONS

Not applicable.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

The objective of developing a Citywide parking strategy that supports the City-building policies of the Official Plan and the continuing growth of the City of Markham aligns with the City's Strategic goal of building Safe, Sustainable and Complete Communities.

BUSINESS UNITS CONSULTED AND AFFECTED:

Planning & Urban Design, Policy & Research, By-Law, Operations, Finance, Economic Growth, Sustainability and Asset Management, and Recreation Services departments have been consulted through the Study Internal Advisory Committee engagements in Phases 1 and 2 of the study.

RECOMMENDED BY:

Frank Clarizio, P.Eng
Director of Engineering

Arvin Prasad, MPA, RPP, MCIP
Commissioner of Development Services

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A – CWPS Study Road Map

Attachment B – Summary of Phase 1 Engagement Feedback

Attachment C – Draft Parking Zone Criteria and Guidelines

Attachment D – Preliminary Draft Parking Zone Map