

## Minimum Parking Review: Supplemental Documents

### Review of Best Practices (Montréal and Toronto)

This review included a scan of minimum parking requirements in other Canadian cities. Historically North American cities have relied on such reviews to set their own parking requirements; one study found that nearly half (45%) of surveyed planners in the United States identified “survey nearby cities” as the most important basis for establishing minimum parking requirements for workplaces<sup>1</sup>.

This is an approach that, while common, must be approached with caution, and with due regard for urban context. One of the criticisms of this approach is that “the underlying assumptions used in drafting parking requirements are unknown; copying other cities' parking requirements may simply repeat someone else's mistakes (and) many communities have created parking standards that require developments to build parking spaces far in excess of demand.”<sup>2</sup>

Nonetheless, a review of other cities' rules may provide insight, particularly where those cities are pursuing planning goals similar to Ottawa's (or are farther along in achieving them.) While all cities surveyed continue to require a minimum amount of parking to be provided in much of their jurisdictions, a number of alternate approaches were found that may be useful in Ottawa's context.

- Exempting the predominant low-rise housing forms from minimum parking requirements (most Montréal boroughs)
- Exempting non-residential uses below a certain size threshold from minimum parking requirements. (Toronto)
- Where the total floor area of all non-residential uses in a single building is below a certain threshold, exempting all of those uses from minimum parking requirements (most Montréal boroughs)
- Where parking is required, lower minimum parking ratios than Ottawa relative to floor area (Toronto; most Montréal boroughs)
- 50% reductions in the amount of parking required for non-residential development close to a rapid-transit station (Boroughs of Ville-Marie and Le Sud-Ouest, Montréal)
- Exempting certain uses from minimum parking requirements in the inner urban area and along major urban arteries (Toronto)

<sup>1</sup> Willson, Richard. “Reading between the Regulations: Parking Requirements, Planners' Perspectives, and Transit.” *Journal of Public Transportation* volume 3, number 1: 111-128. Quoted in “The High Cost of Free Parking,” by Donald Shoup (2011), p. 26.

<sup>2</sup> Quotes from periodic AICP Planning Advisory Service surveys (1964-2002) of minimum parking requirements in American cities; quoted in Shoup 2011, p.27.

- Allowing bicycle parking spaces to be substituted for vehicle parking spaces on a one-for-one basis in the central or inner urban area (Toronto)
- Complete exemption of all development from minimum parking requirements in the central area and CBD (Moncton; Winnipeg)
- Complete exemption of all development from minimum parking requirements in areas other than the central area and CBD (Borough of Plateau Mont-Royal, Montréal)

A more detailed review concentrates on Montréal and Toronto, two large cities with innovative approaches to minimum parking, and whose climate, scale, context and planning goals are similar enough to Ottawa's to warrant meaningful points of comparison.

## Parking Requirements and Exemptions in Montréal Boroughs

The City of Montréal comprises 19 individual boroughs (arrondissements), each of which has a great deal of autonomy in planning matters. In particular, the boroughs are empowered to develop and adopt their own Zoning By-laws (Règlements d'urbanisme.)

This document will summarize some of the parking requirements in the Zoning By-laws of several central, urban Montréal boroughs, with a particular eye for examples of reductions and exemptions from minimum parking requirements.<sup>3</sup>

The boroughs considered in this document are:

- Côte-Des-Neiges-Notre-Dame-De-Grâce (CDN-NDG)
- Mercier-Hochelaga-Maisonneuve
- Le Plateau Mont-Royal
- Rosemont-Petite-Patrie
- Le Sud-Ouest
- Ville-Marie

These boroughs are essentially urban in character. Although each sees considerable diversity within its boundaries, some broad generalizations can be made:

- Ville-Marie is the most central of Montréal's boroughs and comprises the central business district, along with the historic Old Port and the modern Port of Montréal, three of the city's major university campuses, and Mount Royal Park.
- The boroughs of Mercier-Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, Rosemont-Petite-Patrie and Le Plateau Mont-Royal are old urban residential neighbourhoods, threaded with major commercial streets and some industrial areas. Their original working-class character and population has given way in recent years to gentrification, particularly the Plateau Mont-Royal.

<sup>3</sup> Montreal's borough Zoning By-laws can be found through the city's Règlements municipaux portal at [http://ville.montreal.qc.ca/portal/page?\\_pageid=3619,4034063&\\_dad=portal&\\_schema=PORTAL](http://ville.montreal.qc.ca/portal/page?_pageid=3619,4034063&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL)

- Le Sud-Ouest is bisected by the Lachine Canal and has more industrial and brownfield sites in its land use mix.
- CDN-NDG ranges from being an urban neighbourhood at its east end, transitioning to a more inner-ring suburban form at its western extremity.

### Plateau Mont-Royal: A unique approach to parking

The Borough of Plateau Mont-Royal has at once the simplest and the most dramatic approach to parking requirements: ***its current zoning by-law imposes no minimum vehicular parking requirements for any land uses, regardless of scale.*** Vehicular parking supply is completely optional, subject to specified maximum permitted parking ratios.<sup>4,5</sup>

### Parking regulations common to all boroughs (other than Plateau Mont-Royal)

Although Montréal boroughs each adopt their own Zoning By-law, in practice Le Plateau Mont-Royal is the only one of the six surveyed boroughs that has adopted a significantly different document from the others.

The remaining five boroughs all have By-laws that are based on a common document, adopted by the former City of Montréal just prior to amalgamation in 2002, with some small variations depending on the borough and on amendments undertaken since amalgamation.

### Similarities in minimum- and maximum parking ratios

Although it is not the intent to detail all the parking requirements in the five documents, some general points are worth noting.

- The By-laws generally use a very simple classification of land uses for purposes of determining these parking ratios; as a result the table specifying minimum- and maximum parking ratios fits on a single page. The borough Zoning By-laws adopted at amalgamation define five residential, three commercial, one industrial, and four institutional/public facility categories for the purposes of parking ratios. For instance, the land-use category C2 covers a wide range of urban commercial uses including retail sales, restaurants, offices, billiard halls and funeral homes, all of which are treated as the same use for purposes of parking ratios.
- All five By-laws include minimum-required and maximum-permitted parking ratios for various categories of land use, generally based on gross floor area or number of dwelling units.

<sup>4</sup> Règlement d'urbanisme de l'arrondissement du Plateau-Mont-Royal.

<sup>5</sup> Jean-Francois Morin, Arrondissement du Sud-Ouest. Personal communication, February 22 2013.

- The minimum required parking ratios are quite low compared to other cities. For instance:
  - » Commercial uses generally require one parking space per 200m<sup>2</sup> (2152 sq.ft.) of gross floor area, except in Ville-Marie, where one parking space per 350m<sup>2</sup> (3766 sq.ft.) GFA is required. (Compare this to Ottawa, where the minimum parking rate for a retail store in most of the urban area is 2.5 spaces per 100m<sup>2</sup> (1076 sq.ft.) or 5 spaces per 200m<sup>2</sup>--five to times higher than in Montréal!)
  - » Hotels require one parking space per three rooms, except for Ville-Marie, where one space per five rooms is required.
  - » Industrial uses require one parking space per 200m<sup>2</sup> (2152 sq.ft.) GFA, except for Ville-Marie, where one space per 350m<sup>2</sup> (3766 sq.ft.) GFA is required.
  - » Residential uses generally require one parking stall per dwelling unit for one- or two-unit dwellings. Dwellings of three or more require either one stall per two dwelling units or one per four dwelling units.
- Maximum permitted parking ratios vary more widely. For instance, commercial uses generally are allowed up to one parking stall per 75m<sup>2</sup> (807 sq.ft.), 100m<sup>2</sup> (1076 sq.ft.) or 150m<sup>2</sup> (1614 sq.ft.) GFA, depending on the borough.

These common approaches also include significant reductions and exemptions to the required parking supply under certain circumstances. Some of these exemptions are so broad that they make the minimum parking requirements moot for small-scale development.

### Street-oriented "plex" dwellings up to six units exempt from minimum parking requirements

Although the five boroughs do specify a minimum parking ratio for residential uses, a significant exemption is made for narrow-fronted, small-scale apartment buildings that are built close to the street. The following identical wording is found in all five Zoning By-laws <sup>6</sup>:

*"No parking space is required for a building of six residential units or fewer that fulfills the following conditions:*

- a) It is built contiguous with the lot lines;*
- b) The width of its façade is eight metres or less;*
- c) Only the front yard is accessible from a public right of way;*
- d) The distance between the building facade and the edge of the public right-of-way is less than six metres." <sup>7</sup>*

<sup>6</sup> By-law sections by borough: Ville-Marie, s.608; Mercier-Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, s.564; Rosemont-Petite-Patrie, s.569; CDN-NDG, s.563; Le Sud-Ouest, s.579.

<sup>7</sup> Original French: "Aucune unité de stationnement n'est exigée pour un bâtiment de 6 logements et moins qui remplit les conditions suivantes :

- 1) il est construit en contiguïté avec les limites du terrain;
- 2) la largeur de sa façade est égale ou inférieure à 8 m;
- 3) seule la cour avant est accessible par une voie publique;
- 4) la distance entre la façade du bâtiment et l'emprise de la voie publique est inférieure à 6m."

In practice, this provision allows the archetypal Montréal housing form--the three-unit stacked townhouse or "plex" building with a shallow front yard--to be built throughout these boroughs without regard for parking. 'Plex dwellings of between two and five units account for 38.5% of Montréal's housing stock<sup>8</sup> and allow for very high residential densities, exceeding 100 dwellings per net residential hectare in some areas.

### **Non-residential uses up to 500m<sup>2</sup> (5380 sq.ft.) in a building exempt from minimum parking requirements**

The five boroughs' Zoning By-laws each contain the following provision <sup>9</sup>:

*"Where in a building, the total floor area of uses in the commercial category, industrial category or institutional and public facilities category is less than 500m<sup>2</sup>, these uses are not subject to the minimum parking requirements of the present By-law." <sup>10</sup>*

### **Parking requirements for non-residential uses reduced by half when close to a Métro station**

The five boroughs have the following provision in the original versions of their Zoning By-laws (i.e. following amalgamation in 2002) with regards to parking for buildings containing non-residential buildings<sup>11</sup>:

*"The required minimum number of parking spaces may be reduced by 50% where a building containing non-residential uses is located within 150m of a Métro [subway system] entrance open during the Métro's opening hours."<sup>12</sup>*

However, subsequent amendments by some boroughs have increased the scope of this provision:

#### **Ville-Marie**

Ville-Marie has subsequently amended its by-law to expand the specified radius from 150m to 500m, while also reducing the maximum permitted parking ratio within that radius.

*"607. The minimum number of parking spaces required is reduced by 50% and the maximum number of parking spaces permitted is reduced by 5% where a building containing non-residential uses is located within 500m of a Métro station."<sup>13</sup>*

<sup>8</sup> Statistical Profile of Housing in the City of Montreal. (Profil statistique en habitation de la ville de Montréal.) City of Montreal. 2009. [http://ville.montreal.qc.ca/pls/portal/docs/page/habiter\\_v2\\_fr/media/documents/Profil\\_Ville\\_Montreal\\_Mai\\_2009.pdf](http://ville.montreal.qc.ca/pls/portal/docs/page/habiter_v2_fr/media/documents/Profil_Ville_Montreal_Mai_2009.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> By-law sections by borough: Ville-Marie, s.604; Mercier-Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, s.560; Rosemont-Petite-Patrie, s.565; CDN-NDG, s.559; Le Sud-Ouest, s.575.

<sup>10</sup> Original French: "Lorsque dans un bâtiment la superficie totale des usages de la famille commerce, de la famille industrie ou de la famille équipements collectifs et institutionnels est inférieure à 500 m<sup>2</sup>, ces usages ne sont pas soumis aux exigences relatives au nombre minimal d'unités requis par le présent règlement."

<sup>11</sup> By-law sections by borough: Ville-Marie, s.607; Mercier-Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, s.563; Rosemont-Petite-Patrie, s.568; CDN-NDG, s.562; Le Sud-Ouest, s.578.

<sup>12</sup> Original French: "Le nombre minimal d'unités de stationnement exigé peut être réduit de 50 % lorsqu'un bâtiment occupé par des usages autres que ceux de la famille habitation est situé dans un rayon de 150 m ou moins d'un accès au métro ouvert durant les heures d'ouverture du métro."

## **Le Sud-Ouest**

A 2012 amendment <sup>14</sup> to the Sud-Ouest Zoning By-law expands the radius from 150m to 500m by replacing the relevant section with:

*"578. The minimum number of parking spaces required by the present chapter is reduced by 50% for a non-residential use where a site is located within 500m of a Métro entrance open during the Métro's opening hours."<sup>15</sup>*

The same amendment also introduced a reduction in the minimum parking requirement for residential uses near Metro stations:

*"578.1 The minimum number of parking spaces required by the present chapter is reduced by 25% for a residential use where a site is located within 200m of a Métro entrance open during the Métro's opening hours."<sup>16</sup>*

## **City of Toronto's Zoning By-law 569-2013**

The City of Toronto Zoning By-law 569-2013 includes numerous provisions aimed at reducing the amount of mandatory parking to be provided in developments. The following is an analysis of the most significant parking-reduction provisions in the By-law. <sup>17</sup>

### **No parking required for certain commercial uses under 200m<sup>2</sup>, city-wide**

The ZBL exempts certain commercial uses from having to provide any parking, provided the uses are under 200 square metres (2152 sq.ft.) in floor area and are not grouped together in the same building and on the same lot. [Table 200.5.10.1.] This exemption applies to the following uses throughout the City of Toronto:

- Amusement Arcade
- Artist Studio
- Cabaret
- Eating Establishment (i.e. restaurants)
- Grocery Store

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<sup>13</sup> Original French: "607. Le nombre minimal d'unités de stationnement exigé est réduit de 50 % et le nombre maximal d'unités de stationnement autorisé est réduit de 5 % lorsqu'un bâtiment occupé par des usages autres que ceux de la famille habitation est situé dans un rayon de 500 m ou moins d'une station de métro.119, a. 42."

<sup>14</sup> RÈGLEMENT NO RCA12 22002 - Règlement modifiant le Règlement d'urbanisme de l'arrondissement Sud-Ouest (01- 280) et abrogeant le Règlement sur les clôtures (R.R.V.M. c. C-5) sur le territoire de l'arrondissement du Sud-Ouest

<sup>15</sup> Original French: "Le nombre minimal d'unités de stationnement exigé par le présent chapitre est réduit de 50 % pour un usage autre que ceux de la famille habitation lorsqu'un terrain est situé dans un rayon de 500 m ou moins d'un accès au métro ouvert durant les heures d'ouverture du métro."

<sup>16</sup> Original French: "578.1. Le nombre minimal d'unités de stationnement exigé par le présent chapitre est réduit de 25 % pour un usage de la famille habitation lorsqu'un terrain est situé dans un rayon de 200 m ou moins d'un accès au métro ouvert durant les heures d'ouverture du métro."

<sup>17</sup> Unless otherwise noted, references to the City of Toronto By-law are to the online consolidation dated August 19, 2014 and accessed on April 20, 2016.

- Industrial Sales and Service
- Personal Service Shop (e.g. dry cleaners and hair salons)
- Pet Services (i.e. dog grooming)
- Retail Service
- Retail Store
- Service Shop
- Wholesaling Use

### Existing parking supply on a lot deemed to meet By-law requirements, certain zones and uses

Several provisions effectively grandfather existing buildings with respect to parking supply, i.e. the existing or original number of parking stalls is deemed to meet the requirements of the ZBL.

#### *Commercial Residential zone*

Under certain circumstances (Development Standard Set 2 or "SS2") if a building built before March 1994 in the Commercial Residential zone covers more than three-quarters of the lot, a change of non-residential uses is required without having to add any parking; however, neither are the number of existing parking spaces allowed to be reduced.<sup>18</sup>

### Reduced parking requirements and exemptions by Policy Area

The proposed ZBL defines several "Policy Area" overlay zones within which different parking requirements (both minimum required and maximum permitted parking) and exemptions apply.

- Policy Area 1 covers Downtown Toronto and is described in more detail below.
- Policy Area 2 covers a smaller area near Canada Square, around Eglinton Avenue.
- Policy Areas 3 and 4 line both sides of several major arteries and rapid-transit routes throughout Toronto. [City of Toronto online interactive zoning map. Accessed April 20, 2016.]

Generally speaking, Policy Areas 1, 2 3 and 4 have lower minimum parking requirements for any given use than the city as a whole. Additionally, these Policy Areas benefit from a number of exemptions and provisions for reduced parking.

<sup>18</sup> "If a lot in the CR zone subject to Development Standard Set 2 (SS2) has a building constructed pursuant to a building permit issued on or before March 1, 1994, and the building covers a minimum of 75% of the lot area, for a change of non-residential uses in that building: (A) no additional parking spaces are required for a non-residential use with a higher parking space requirement; and (B) the number of parking spaces existing on the lot on March 1, 1994 may not be reduced for a non-residential use with a lower parking space requirement." [200.5.200.40(3)]

## All Policy Areas

### ***Shared parking provisions in PA1 - PA4***

The four "Policy Areas" all provide for reduced parking on mixed-use sites, by assuming an occupancy rate for various time periods. The resulting calculations can result in a significant reduction in the total amount of parking required when, for instance, a use that requires parking primarily during the day is coupled with a use that requires parking primarily at night. [200.5.10.1(6), Table 200.5.10.1.]

### ***Eating Establishments in PA1 - PA4***

Eating establishments are not required to provide any parking in Policy Area 1, 2, 3 or 4. The use "cabaret" enjoys the same exemption, by reference to the eating establishment requirement. [Table 200.5.10.1]

### ***Hotel/Motel parking in PA1 - PA4***

Parking spaces for hotels in PA1, PA2, PA3 and PA4 are required at a rate of 0.2 per 100 square metres of gross floor area. This is a significant reduction relative to the rest of the city where 1.0 spaces are required for every guest room; as a rough estimate, if there are two guest rooms for every 100 square metres of gross floor area, the effective rate in PA1 - PA4 is something like one parking space for every ten (10) guest rooms. [Table 200.5.10.1]

## Policy Area 1 (Downtown)

The largest of these Policy Areas, and the most significant from a parking policy standpoint, is Policy Area 1 (PA1), which corresponds to Downtown Toronto. Within Policy Area 1, parking requirements are generally lower than elsewhere in the city. As well, in some zones within PA1, some uses are completely exempt from having to provide any parking at all.

PA1 covers approximately twelve square kilometers, between the Don Valley Parkway, Front Street, Dupont Street and Rosedale Valley Road, and Bathurst Street. It encompasses among other neighbourhoods Downtown, the Entertainment and Fashion Districts, the Financial District, Cabbagetown, Chinatown, Kensington Market, The Annex, Yorkville, St. James Town, Upper Jarvis, Church and Wellesley, the Distillery District and St. Lawrence.<sup>19</sup>

Parking exemptions in Policy Area 1 include:

### ***Commercial Residential Zone in PA1, certain commercial uses exempt up to 1.0 FAR***

In the Commercial Residential zone within Policy Area 1 (which includes most of the major commercial streets downtown) there is an apparent intent to allow certain commercial uses to occupy floor area up to 1.0 times the area of the lot without having to provide parking.<sup>20</sup> This effectively allows any combination of these uses to occupy the entire ground floor (or several floors, depending on the lot coverage) without being subject to minimum parking requirements. The uses are as follows:

<sup>19</sup> City of Toronto online interactive zoning map. Accessed April 20, 2016. Neighbourhood names taken from Google Maps.

<sup>20</sup> "In a CR zone in Policy Area 1, no parking spaces are required for the following uses, if the interior floor area of all these uses, does not exceed 1.0 times the area of the lot:" [200.5.200.40 (4)]



- Artist Studio
- Custom Workshop
- Financial Institution
- Funeral Home
- Office
- Performing Arts Studio
- Personal Service Shop
- Pet Services
- Retail Service
- Retail Store; and
- Service Shop

### ***Commercial Residential Employment zones***

In PA1 in Commercial Residential Employment zones, buildings built before 1983 and occupying more than 75% of the lot may change non-residential uses without having to add additional parking.<sup>21</sup> Unlike the similar provisions for Employment Industrial zones (see below) there is no requirement to provide additional parking if the building is expanded.

### ***Additional bicycle parking spaces may substitute for vehicle parking spaces in PA1***

In Policy Area 1, additional bicycle parking spaces (over and above those required by the By-law) may substitute for up to 20% of the required vehicular parking spaces. The exchange rate is five bicycle parking spaces for every one vehicular parking space.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup> "In a CRE zone in Policy Area 1 (PA1), if a change of non-residential use is proposed for a lawfully existing building or to a building that was erected pursuant to a building permit issued on or before March 7, 1983, and a minimum of 75% of the lot area is occupied by the building: (A) additional parking spaces are not required for a non-residential use; and (B) the number of lawful parking spaces on the lot may not be reduced." [200.5.200.50(1)]

<sup>22</sup> "In Policy Area 1 (PA1) the total minimum number of vehicle parking spaces required on a lot may be reduced at a rate of 1 vehicle parking space for each 5 bicycle parking spaces provided in excess of the minimum number of bicycle parking spaces required by Chapter 230 if the reduction of vehicle parking space is not greater than 20% of the total minimum vehicle parking spaces required." [200.5.10.1(12)]

## Appendix A: By-laws cited in this study

RÈGLEMENT D'URBANISME DE L'ARRONDISSEMENT DU PLATEAU-MONT-ROYAL (01-277) - Codification administrative. Accessed February 22, 2013.

RÈGLEMENT D'URBANISME DE L'ARRONDISSEMENT DE CÔTE-DES-NEIGES—NOTRE-DAME-DE-GRÂCE (01-276) - Codification Administrative. Consolidated to February 9, 2012. Accessed February 26, 2013.

CODIFICATION ADMINISTRATIVE DU RÈGLEMENT D'URBANISME DE L'ARRONDISSEMENT DE VILLE-MARIE (R.V.M. 01-282.) Consolidated to September 19, 2012. Accessed February 26, 2013.

RÈGLEMENT D'URBANISME DE L'ARRONDISSEMENT SUD-OUEST (01-280.) December 17, 2001. Accessed February 22, 2013.

RÈGLEMENT NO RCA12 22002 - Règlement modifiant le Règlement d'urbanisme de l'arrondissement Sud-Ouest (01- 280) et abrogeant le Règlement sur les clôtures (R.R.V.M. c. C-5) sur le territoire de l'arrondissement du Sud-Ouest. January 10, 2012. Accessed February 26, 2013.

REGLEMENT D'URBANISME DE L'ARRONDISSEMENT MERCIER-HOCHELAGA-MAISONNEUVE (01-275.) December 17, 2001. Accessed February 22, 2013.

City of Toronto Zoning By-law 569-2013. Online consolidation dated August 19, 2014. Accessed April 20, 2016.