

## City Council Consideration

PH18.3

Recommended Parking Requirements for New Development - Accessible, Bicycle, Visitor  
February 3rd, 2025

Dear Council,

We agree that the decline of visitor parking is worth exploring further. Our comments focus on the monitoring program and its consideration of supply and demand for visitor parking, and to work across divisions to identify ways to increase the availability of parking for visitors throughout the city.

One councillor made a recent offhand comment in a committee meeting of “after all, what’s so bad about having parking deserts? Well I guess visitors need parking.”

Yes, visitors DO need parking.

The Monitoring Program needs to not only consider the need for available day and overnight visitor parking in new developments, but also in low-rise neighbourhoods abutting these developments that do not have designated visitor parking at all, or have lost parking amenities due to city planning oversight.

The city in its planning seems to forget that this city is the most visited city in Canada. A large number of those visitors use motor vehicles to get here, to sightsee, to visit loved ones and to park near transit hubs so they don’t have to contend with the intimidating downtown traffic and angry drivers. It has forgotten that our businesses rely on tourism and visitors from other parts of town. It has forgotten that visitors to the residents in this city drive economic, social and mental wellbeing of the millions of people who live and work here.

City planners need to think hard and long about the ramifications of the requirements and policies that they implement. They need to ask themselves, who is moving to these places? Who is visiting these places? Do we have alternatives in place? How can we best serve the communities that we want to live here or continue living here?

Many people’s families and friends do not live in Toronto. They come from far and wide to visit and tour this wonderful city. They rent cars when they fly in, they park beside transit to take the streetcar or the GoTrain or the Subway, then are free to experience all this city offers.

And now? There’s nowhere for them to do that.

This is the most important of all the agenda items that I have seen come up this term. Why? Because it is one that FINALLY identifies that it’s not just people who live in Toronto that come to Toronto!

Now, the city has realized that yes, putting up barriers that hinder social connection and lead to isolation has devastating consequences. Our neighbourhood of St.Clair Gardens in the near future will have to contend with an influx of new high-rises and developments, the likes of which have never been seen in this area before.

The city is looking into alternatives for visitor parking for new developments exactly like the ones approved, and the ones to be approved in the future along Avenues such as our St.Clair Avenue West. The city HAD an alternative, and in their short sightedness is continuing to take away amenities that residents are begging for.

Our community unfortunately knows this first hand. On November 11th, 2023 without public consultation or advance notice, the City approved the demolition our neighbourhood's 37 spot parking lot. Not for affordable housing or a new transit station, but for grass which our neighbourhood St.Clair Gardens has an abundance of. This lot served our entire neighbourhood's residents and their visitors for 50 years over many generations.

This amenity was fully functioning and desperately needed in this struggling community. This loss of visitor parking has been staggering and devastating to our community. It was a designated carshare lot, also the only overnight permit lot in our neighbourhood, provided the only parking for our BIPOC churches, overflow parking for the funeral home a black away and provided loading and unloading access to our struggling small businesses.

During the busy holiday season, families and friends, shoppers and faith worshippers were all vying for any legal and non-legal place to park. Friends had to walk from 1km away in -20 degree weather just to visit. The ones with mobility issues, had to play musical cars with family members to jostle for a space close enough to social gatherings. Neighbours were calling neighbours to see if they could park in each others garages, or in front of them, because there was no where else to go. Residents were offering to shuttle church members to their sanctuary from the parking lot a kilometre away just to help. To say that it was mayhem is an understatement.

We fully support and recommend that the city continue its consideration for visitor parking at alternate sites that will benefit all. We recommend that the Monitoring program look at qualitative and not just quantitative data when decision making. We recommend that the City also consider its initiatives that support economic and cultural needs and the ramifications of visitor parking within and without building developments. E.G Poverty reduction strategy and the amount of low-income earners who rely on vehicles for work. Small business initiatives to drive growth and promotion. CafeTO and off-street parking for spaces lost by seasonal initiatives.

So in conclusion, we urge Council to consider the best way forward and take the public, small businesses, accessibility and financial barriers, and our visitors needs into true consideration moving forward. Find alternative visitor parking that works in conjunction with other modes of transportation Carshare, EV charging, Park and ride, monthly permits. We urge council to work with their Corporations to invest in visitor parking hubs that are multifaceted and serve entire neighbourhoods.

We want you to keep in mind that not everyone has the physical capacity to bike, to walk, to lug around their tools or groceries or strollers or kids. Or has the capability to wait for the next streetcar that is coming in 18 minutes in frigid temperatures at a stop with no enclosure from the elements.

We also urge Council to in their search for alternative parking in our neighbourhood which will see unprecedented growth in the future. Our parking lot served our entire neighbourhood and we have lost it forever. We urge council to return our historic parking lot to a functioning lot, give us back our Carshare, EV charging, surface greening and loading access that the new approved developments are afforded. Our neighbourhood should also be afforded the same investments too and in doing so will benefit all.

Sincerely,  
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