



May 21, 2026

Toronto Parking Authority Board
Toronto City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON

Re: Willowdale On-Street Parking Rate Increases – May 29, 2026 Board Meeting

Dear Chair and Members of the Toronto Parking Authority Board,

I am writing regarding the proposed on-street parking rate increases in Willowdale that are scheduled to be considered at the May 29, 2026 Board meeting.

I respectfully request that all parking rate increases in Willowdale be capped at the 2026 citywide baseline increase of \$0.25 per hour, and that any proposed increases beyond \$0.25 be removed from consideration at the upcoming meeting.

While Willowdale experiences high parking utilization in certain areas, our neighbourhood cannot reasonably be compared to the downtown core. Willowdale businesses operate in a uniquely competitive environment due to the close proximity of businesses with abundant free suburban parking immediately north of Steeles Avenue. In many cases, drivers can access many competing businesses with free parking options within a five- to seven-minute drive of our commercial areas. This creates a fundamentally different market reality than the downtown core and should be reflected in the Toronto Parking Authority's rate-setting approach. We have recently seen several business closures and are concerned of the impact of further increases to the cost of parking.

During our recent meeting, Mayor Olivia Chow expressed support for ensuring that Willowdale parking increases do not exceed the baseline \$0.25 increase in recognition of these local economic conditions.

Local businesses in Willowdale continue to face significant economic pressures. I met recently with a restaurant owner today who shared that their business has struggled considerably over the past year due to changing immigration patterns, global economic instability, and declining consumer spending on dining out. The additional cost of parking further discourages lunchtime and casual dining visits at a time when many restaurants are already operating under severe financial strain.

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"Alone we can do so little. Together, we can do so much." – Helen Keller



Recent reporting has highlighted the broader challenges facing the restaurant sector across Canada, including reduced customer traffic and rising operating costs. A recent CBC article discussing these industry-wide struggles can be found here:

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/business/restaurants-struggling-financially-9.7086668>

Within Willowdale specifically, we are already seeing increased restaurant turnover and continued commercial vacancies at street level. Given these realities, I ask the Board to consider whether freezing parking rates in Willowdale this year would be more appropriate than proceeding with increases beyond the standard citywide adjustment.

I would also welcome further discussion with the Toronto Parking Authority regarding potential parking relief or incentive programs that could support local businesses and encourage lunchtime activity in neighbourhood commercial areas where free parking alternatives are readily accessible north of Steeles Avenue.

Thank you for your kind consideration of this request and for your continued work supporting Toronto's neighbourhood main streets and local economies.

Sincerely,

Councillor Lily Cheng
Toronto City Councillor
Willowdale Ward 18