



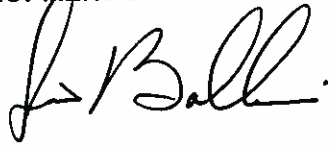
TO: GENERAL COMMITTEE

SUBJECT: FRONT YARD PARKING AND LANDSCAPED OPEN SPACE

PREPARED BY AND KEY CONTACT: C. TERRY, SENIOR PLANNER
EXT. 4430

SUBMITTED BY: S. NAYLOR, MES, M.C.I.P., R.P.P.
DIRECTOR OF PLANNING SERVICES 

GENERAL MANAGER APPROVAL: R. FORWARD, MBA, M.Sc., P. ENG.
GENERAL MANAGER OF INFRASTRUCTURE, DEVELOPMENT & CULTURE 

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER APPROVAL: JON M. BABULIC, CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER 

RECOMMENDED MOTIONS

That an Open House and Public Meeting be scheduled to consider the following revisions to Zoning By-law 85-95 and Comprehensive Zoning By-law 2009-141 to amend the maximum Front Yard Parking Coverage permitted for residential development.

- a) That the fourth bullet of Section 5.3.7.8 in Zoning By-law 85-95 be deleted and replaced as follows:

5.3.7.8 Off-Street Parking in Front Yards

- That the driveway and/or parking space that is located in the front yard of a property accessed by a public street cannot exceed the maximum percentage of the front yard as follows:

Zone	Front Yard Parking Coverage
R1, R2, R3	50%
R4	60%
RM1, RM1-SS	60%
RM2, RM2-TH	60%

- That the portion of the front yard remaining after installation of a driveway and/or parking space as permitted by this section shall be landscaped open space.
 - That the front yard driveway and/or parking space is not permitted to encroach on the required landscaped open space.
- b) That Section 5.3.6.1 of Comprehensive Zoning By-law 2009-141 be deleted and replaced as follows:

5.3.6 Parking Standards

5.3.6.1 Parking in Front Yards

- a) That the driveway and/or parking space that is located in the front yard of a property accessed by a public street cannot exceed the maximum percentage of the front yard as follows:

Zone	Front Yard Parking Coverage
R1, R2, R3	50%
R4	60%
RM1, RM1-SS	60%
RM2, RM2-TH	60%

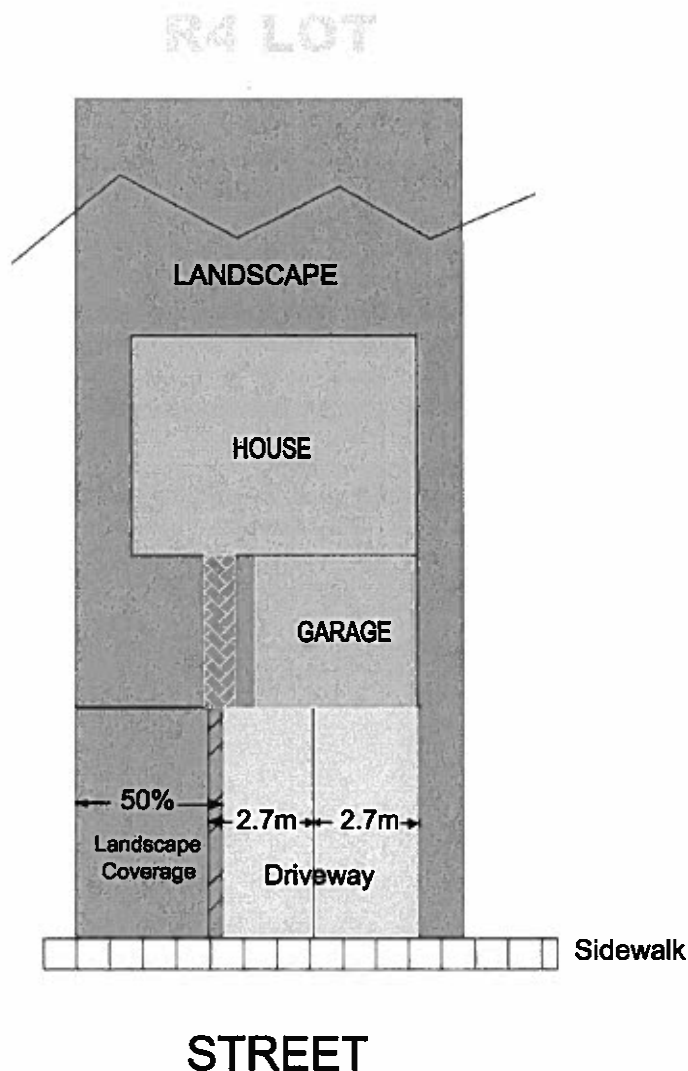
- b) That the portion of the front yard remaining after installation of a driveway and/or parking space as permitted by 5.3.6.1 a) shall be landscaped open space.
- c) That the front yard driveway and/or parking space is not permitted to encroach on the required landscaped open space.

PURPOSE & BACKGROUND

2. The purpose of this staff report is to review the concerns of Council associated with vehicles parking on the required front yard landscaped open space. Council motions 05-G-555, 06-G-432 and 07-G-537, included as Appendix A to this report, are closely related and therefore collectively reviewed.
3. In general, the motions request that the Planning Services Department:
- a) Evaluate ways to discourage the overflow of front yard parking onto the required 50% landscaped open space through zoning revisions and/or enforcement measures;
 - b) Evaluate the definition of landscaped open space with specific reference to permissions for walkways adjacent driveways; and
 - c) Evaluate the percentage of landscaped open space required in the front yard of residential areas.
4. Two of the three motions were raised in response to situations in the Georgian College, Ardagh, Ferndale and Hawthorne neighbourhoods. However, it is reasonable to assume that the incidence of vehicles parking on front yards occur in other parts of the City as well. The proposed amendments to both Zoning By-law 85-95 and Comprehensive Zoning By-law 2009-141 will be considered City wide.
5. Concurrent to this recommendation, the Building Services Department has committed to investigating alternative enforcement measures that can be implemented to discourage parking on the landscape open space portion of front yards.

ANALYSIS

6. The current standards for front yard parking require 50% of the front yard to be landscaped open space. A standard parking space is 2.7m wide by 5.5m in length. All vehicles need to be accommodated within the garage, or the permitted driveway. The societal trend for multiple vehicles in one household has made it common for many residential lots to have more vehicles than the number of parking spaces required by the City's Zoning By-law.
7. On smaller residential lots the parking for numerous vehicles was not contemplated in site design. The Residential Single Dwelling R4 Zone for example, has a permitted minimum frontage of 10 metres. The standard width for two parking spaces is 5.4 metres. The 10 metre property frontage does not permit two side by side vehicle spaces without encroaching on the current 50% front yard landscaped open space requirement, as depicted in the following sketch:



8. In addition to the general increase in the number of vehicles at an average residence, some factors that could contribute to vehicles being parked on the landscape open space portion of the front yard are:
- a) The City does not permit overnight on-street parking during the winter months (November to April) due to snow removal;
 - b) Vehicles are prohibited from parking on sidewalks and boulevards to maintain an accessible pedestrian pathway; and
 - c) Many residential garages, which count as a parking space, are not available for vehicles as they are being used for storage.
9. The practice of some property owners to install hard landscaping such as paths or walkways directly adjacent to the driveway, and subsequently use all or a portion of these areas to park vehicles has also raised concern. As part of this review, staff examined the definition of "landscaped open space" and do not feel that a change in the definition would prevent parking on hard landscaped areas. Parking is prohibited on the landscape open space portion of the front yard, regardless of the landscape treatment.

Proposed Revision

10. The proposed revision to the front yard parking standards suggests a sliding scale for smaller single dwellings lots and multiple unit street front development such as semi-detached and link dwellings. By increasing the percentage of the front yard parking coverage from 50% to 60% for smaller lots, slightly more driveway can be provided. Larger residential properties (R1, R2, and R3) will remain at the 50% coverage permissions because adequate driveway widths can be provided within those frontages.
11. Using the previous example of an R4 Residential lot, the 60% driveway permissions would allow for a 6 metre driveway width, rather than the 5 metre width currently permitted with the 50% front yard parking coverage. This would allow two vehicles to fit side by side on a defined driveway surface.

Summary

12. As part of the planning process the City works to integrate the practical needs of residents with elements of site design. The societal shift towards multiple cars in a household has created a challenge for providing adequate parking in some neighbourhoods. The proposed amendment will grant existing, and new property owners, the option of additional parking on smaller lots where parking on the landscape portion of the front yard has become an issue. The additional driveway width should not significantly impact the appearance of the property and will ensure that the range of housing types encouraged throughout the City is maintained.
13. In addition, staff are confident that a proactive approach to parking in front yards will provide residents with the opportunity to comply with the zoning by-law without specifically restricting the location of hard landscape features, such as walkways, as that could limit accessibility options for the residence.
14. It should be recognized however that an increase in the permitted driveway width will not prevent residents from parking multiple vehicles on the landscape open space portion of the front yard. In these instances, the residents are clearly in contravention of the Zoning By-law and will be subject to the By-law enforcement process.

ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

15. The minor alteration to the amount of landscape open space required in the various residential zones should not have a significant impact on the amount of stormwater infiltration. The zoning change could potentially improve the situation as vehicles should be parked on a driveway surface rather than the landscape open space portion of the property where oil leaks and spills could cause contamination.

ALTERNATIVES

16. There is one alternative available for consideration by General Committee:

Alternative #1

General Committee could determine that the current provisions outlined in the Zoning By-laws address the Council motions and that no further amendments or investigation is required.

This alternative is not recommended as it does not proactively address the City's issue with front yard parking or provide opportunity for future development projects to initiate site design improvements to incorporate more flexible front yard parking requirements.

FINANCIAL

17. There are no direct financial implications for the Corporation resulting from the proposed recommendations.

LINKAGE TO COUNCIL STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

18. The 2010-2014 Council's Strategic Priorities include increasing opportunities for public input on City initiatives. The recommendation to involve the public through an open house and public meeting regarding the issue of front yard parking is consistent with this goal.

Attachment: Appendix A Council Motions

APPENDIX A

Council Motions

The purpose of this staff report is to review permissions for front yard parking in response to three Council motions:

- a) On October 24, 2005, City Council adopted motion 05-G-555 regarding the parking of motor vehicles on front lawns of residential properties as follows:

"That in response to concerns of permanent residents in the areas surrounding Georgian College, staff in the Building Services and Planning Services Departments review and report back to General Committee, as part of staffs' comprehensive review of By-law 85-95, regarding options for regulatory measures, including potential amendments to the City's Zoning By-law and changes to the City's enforcement policies, to discourage the parking of motor vehicles on the lawn portion of front yards of residential properties."

- b) On September 11, 2006, City Council adopted motion 06-G-432 regarding an amendment to the Zoning By-law to clarify the definition of landscaping as follows:

"That staff in the Planning Services and Building Services Departments investigate the feasibility of amending the Zoning By-law 85-95 to clarify the definition of landscaping as it relates to paths and walkways adjacent to driveways and report back to General Committee."

- c) On October 15, 2007, City Council adopted motion 07-G-537 regarding an investigation of the proportion of landscaping to driveways in the Ardagh, Ferndale and Hawthorne neighbourhoods as follows:

"That staff in the Planning Department investigate the proportion of landscaping to driveways in the Ardagh, Ferndale and Hawthorne neighbourhoods, including a possible reduction in the Zoning By-law requirement for 50% of the front yard to be landscaped, and report back to General Committee."