



Proposal to Rezone Land Proximate to Baseline Station

The City is proposing to rezone the minimum parking requirements for land, not just proximate to Baseline Station, but for a wide swath of properties across the city. We have been told that the objective is to encourage intensification, by limiting the supply of parking near transit stations. This will allow the city to avoid building more private vehicle infrastructure, by converting land set aside for parking to residential and commercial/retail structures.

The process being followed is seriously flawed, and as a consequence the likelihood of getting the right solution is severely compromised.

The project has been separated into two pieces, one to reset the minimum number of parking spaces to zero, with a follow on study to reset the maximums. According to the City Planner, this makes it easier for him and his department to manage. Getting the wrong solution using fewer resources is not efficiency, it is just getting the wrong solution, which means that all of the resources committed to getting the wrong solution have been wasted.

The process is focused on developing a single solution (in two steps), to a wide range of properties, each of which has unique existing characteristics and opportunities. Just as "one size fits all" was a fashion lie, so too is the planning equivalent. One size fits all was a manufacturing strategy, one that allowed clothing manufacturers to minimize production of lower demand sizes, and thus reduce the waste associated with product that no one would buy. What it resulted in was a large quantity of product that no one bought, which actually increased the losses. Retailers no longer stock "one size fits all" because, in fact, "one size" fit no one, except by exception. It was a failed strategy a few decades ago, and it remains a failed strategy today.

The proposal inadequately addresses the need to ensure that every facet of managing the need to reduce the reliance on private vehicle use. Unless the overall demand for parking spaces is reduced in lock step with the reduction in supply of parking spaces, all that will happen is that the vehicles that cannot be parked on site, will be parked nearby. This just shifts the cost of supplying the parking on to others.

Phase II of the LRT is not scheduled to reach Baseline Station, Bayshore, or Orleans until about 2023 – some seven years hence. As such, ***time is not of the essence***. There actually is quite a lot of time to prepare a comprehensive, coherent proposal, one that fits each of the areas at issue, and actually achieves the goal of reducing the reliance on private vehicles in the city.

Situation Analysis

The land around Baseline Station is characterized by large sections of vacant land, with pockets of commercial and institutional development.

The City has two large buildings, with about 1,200 parking spaces for about 2,900 city employees. No one in the City Planning department could tell us what the city was planning on doing to reduce the reliance on private vehicle usage by city employees in Centrepointe.

The current plan for Phase II of the LRT will see the tracks leave Baseline Station to the south, through the existing OC Transpo Park and Ride lot of some 260+ parking spaces, and on to the proposed maintenance yard between Woodroffe Avenue and Merivale Road. No one in the City Planning department could tell us if OC Transpo was planning on relocating these parking spaces, and if so, to where.

There are significant existing problems with spill over parking. These will only be exacerbated unless the City gets the right solution for the area proximate to Baseline Station.

The existing problems with unauthorized parking encountered by the following commercial properties was dismissed as being their problem, rather than one that the city had a hand in creating:

- Uniform Developments has a recurring problem with people parking in their lot on Centrepointe (Royal Bank and Thales), and leaving their cars there for extended periods;
- Centrepointe Chambers, the freehold commercial townhomes located on Centrepointe Drive, experiences significant problems with people parking in spaces reserved for others, and leaving their vehicles there for the day;
- College Square has the same problem;
- the City has three people monitoring its parking lots for 100 Constellation and Ben Franklin Place, to ensure that only vehicles with permits are parked.

The mid-density residential condominium development at Paseo Private (across from Ben Franklin Place) has 262 parking spaces, with existing residents needing about 30% more spaces. This a prima facie example of a planning failure (too few spaces) which contributes to spill over parking that impacts surrounding properties. Some people with reserved parking spaces have returned home during the day, only to find that their space is occupied. Telling them to call By-Law Services is an abdication of responsibility by the city for a problem created, in part, by the city.

Meridian Place is the road that leads south from Ben Franklin Place to Tallwood. Both sides are filled with cars every working day, creating a hazard for the pedestrians, school buses, and drivers, especially during the winter months, when adequate snow removal has been compromised by the parked cars.

Conclusion

The City is setting not only itself up, but also the residents, business owners, and their employees in all affected areas, for a massive failure unless it produces a plan that every city department (e.g. By-Law Enforcement) or organization (e.g. OC Transpo) agrees with, has a comprehensive, coherent plan ready to introduce on a timely basis to support the overall objective, with the necessary funding committed to. Please, take the time to get it right, because the errors made by the planning department are cast in concrete.