

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

TO: City Planning Committee
FROM: Administration
DATE: August 20, 2024
RE: Zoning Amendment – Hyatt Place Hotel

ISSUE

An application to amend the zoning of 505, 507, 509, and 511 Main Street, from CC – Core Commercial to CCx – Core Commercial (modified), to reduce the number of required off-street parking spaces.

REFERENCE

- [Fees and Charges Bylaw 2024-24](#)
- [Whitehorse 2040 Official Community Plan](#)
- [2020 Trail Plan](#)
- [Zoning Bylaw 2012-20](#)
- [Zoning Bylaw Rewrite - Round 1 Engagement Summary](#)
- [2019 Downtown Parking Management Plan](#)
- [2024 Transportation Master Plan](#)
- Location Map (Attachment 1)
- Proposed Zoning Amendment Bylaw 2024-46 (Attachment 2)

HISTORY

An application was received to rezone the site of the Hyatt Place Hotel that is currently under construction, from CC – Core Commercial to CCx – Core Commercial (modified) to reduce the number of required off-street parking spaces. The applicant is seeking a special modification to reduce the parking requirement from one parking space per 150 m² to one parking space per 300 m².

The applicant received a development permit with conditions on July 14, 2023 for the Hyatt Place Hotel development. The permit requires a total of 72 off-street parking spaces, of which 47 parking spaces are for the Hyatt Place Hotel and 25 parking spaces are for the Best Western Gold Rush Inn. The Best Western Gold Rush Inn's parking spaces were removed in order to construct the new Hyatt Place Hotel and therefore those parking spaces must be replaced.

If Council were to approve this Zoning Bylaw amendment, and reduce the parking requirement from one parking space per 150 m² per Zoning Bylaw regulation 7.3.7 b) to one parking space per 300 m², a total of 48 parking spaces would be required for this development as opposed to 72 parking spaces (Table 1). As the developer intends to provide 43 off-street parking spaces, this would leave five outstanding parking spaces if this amendment were approved as opposed to 29.

Cash in-lieu can be paid for the outstanding parking spaces in accordance with section 7.3.7 c) of the Zoning Bylaw at the rate of \$18,706 per parking space. If this amendment were approved, it would reduce the cash in lieu cost by \$448,944.

On April 24, 2024, the zoning amendment application was reviewed by the Development Review Committee (DRC). DRC noted that snow removal operations are already difficult in the area due to on-street parking and that a reduction in off-street parking requirements for this development would likely exacerbate the issue.

The proposed schedule for the Zoning Bylaw amendment is:

Planning Committee:	August 20, 2024
First Reading:	August 26, 2024
Newspaper Ads:	October 18 and October 25, 2024
Public Hearing:	November 12, 2024
Report to Committee:	December 2, 2024
Second and Third Reading:	December 9, 2024

TABLE 1. Comparison of current parking requirements and proposed parking requirements.

	1 parking space per 150 m ²	1 parking space per 300 m ²
NUMBER OF PARKING SPACES REQUIRED *	72	48
NUMBER OF PARKING SPACES OUTSTANDING	29	5
TOTAL CASH IN LIEU	\$542,474	\$93,530
* Includes the 25 parking spaces required for the Best Western Gold Rush Inn		

*This schedule has been adjusted to push the public hearing past the municipal election so that the council holding the public hearing will be the same council that would consider approval of the amendment.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Proceed with the amendment under the bylaw process; or
2. Do not proceed with the amendment.

ANALYSIS

Site Context

The subject site is located on the southeast corner of Main Street and 6th Avenue in Downtown. The Hyatt Place Hotel is currently under construction on the subject site with an anticipated completion scheduled for early 2025. The area immediately to the east, west, and north of the subject site is also zoned CC, and the area to the south is zoned CM2x(h)-Mixed Use Commercial 2 (modified) and PS-Public Service.

Existing uses on surrounding properties include a Royal Canadian Mounted Police building to the south, a church to the west, residential and office uses to the northwest, and commercial uses to the north and east. Hotel use will likely increase overnight parking demand which is complimentary to the parking demand for the eating and drinking establishment and retail service uses on the other side of Main Street and the office use to the northwest, which typically have more day time parking demand. However the subject hotel will not be complimentary in terms of parking demand to the adjacent hotel use or the residential uses as they also create overnight parking demand.

2040 Official Community Plan

The subject site is designated as Mixed Use – Downtown Core in the OCP. The Mixed Use – Downtown Core area is intended to accommodate a range of live, work, learn, and play opportunities. Per OCP policy 8.35 i, the City will consider the reduction of parking requirements for developments located near active transportation and transit routes in order to facilitate the intensification of uses in the Downtown. Further more, personal vehicles are listed at the bottom of the hierarchy of transportation modes per OCP policy 11.2 and the City will encourage a shift towards increased use of active and shared transportation modes per OCP policy 11.7.

The subject site is located in close proximity to public transit routes. It is located approximately 200 m from the closest bus stop, which is serviced by Route 101 that goes to the Airport. Several other bus routes are available from City Hall which is approximately 500 m from the subject site. There are also several active transportation routes in close proximity to the subject site, including painted bicycle lanes along 4th Avenue and 6th Avenue, the Airport Perimeter Trail connected to Downtown by the Black Street Stairs, and the Riverfront Trail.

Administration considers the subject site to be in close proximity to active and public transportation modes and therefore a reduction in parking requirements can be considered per OCP policy 8.35 i. The subject development is anticipated to provide 15 class 1 bicycle parking stalls and 2 class 2 bicycle parking stalls which will support active transportation modes.

Zoning Bylaw

The purpose of the CC zone is to provide for core commercial activity that is vibrant and pedestrian-oriented with a mix of commercial, residential, and institutional uses. The principal uses in the CC zone are primarily open to the public and intended to generate high pedestrian traffic.

Commercial parking requirements for hotels are one space per 100 m². However per Zoning Bylaw regulation 7.3.7 b), in Downtown the minimum parking requirement for non-residential uses in several zones, including the CC zone, is one parking space per 150 m². Therefore the subject site is already benefiting from a reduced parking requirement due to its location in Downtown.

Furthermore, parking requirements are being reviewed as part of the Zoning Bylaw Rewrite project. A survey released in November 2023 as part of the project revealed that 45 per cent of respondents wanted off-street parking requirements reduced or removed in general, with many respondents noting Downtown as a specific area where requirements should be reduced or removed.

Additionally, 50 per cent of respondents said that the City should consider relaxing parking requirements if additional amenities, such as more bicycle parking, indoor bicycle parking, or electric vehicles chargers, are provided.

While there appears to be public support for a removal or reduction in minimum off-street parking requirements, to what extent and in what zones the requirements should be reduced is still being investigated through the Zoning Bylaw Rewrite project.

2019 Downtown Parking Management Plan and 2024 Transportation Master Plan

Parking should be managed to optimize supply with demand. Complimentary land uses, such as residential and office for example, may have net neutral impacts on the overall Downtown parking demand as their respective peak parking demand periods have limited overlap.

As part of the 2019 Downtown Parking Management Plan, on-street and off-street parking demand and supply data was collected to evaluate parking occupancy levels across Downtown. When data was collected in 2018, there was low on-street parking occupancy (0-49%) and moderate off-site parking occupancy (50%-84.9%) on the subject site block, including the portion of Main Street in front of the subject site.

Although on-street parking demand near the subject site is low, parking demand is anticipated to increase overall in Downtown as new developments occur. At the same time, reliance on personal vehicles is expected to change as more travel options become available to residents and visitors. While vehicular travel will likely continue to be the dominant travel mode, the successful implementation of various City strategies should decrease that modal share.

Parking Development Reserve Fund

The Parking Development Reserve Fund is the City fund that provides capital for parking-related infrastructure improvements. Cash-in-lieu of parking is deposited into this Fund. Cash in-lieu of parking contributions are a way to fund public parking facilities in order to alleviate parking demand potentially caused by not providing enough on-site parking spaces. A reduction in the on-site parking requirements will however result in a reduction of cash-in-lieu and will therefore potentially increase on-street parking demand while also restricting the City's ability to mitigate the impacts due to receiving less cash-in-lieu.

Snow and Ice Removal Pilot Project

In 2024, as approved by Council Transportation Services will begin a pilot project to temporarily ban overnight parking 1-2 times a week, as required on Main Street, 2nd avenue and 4th avenue. This will require on-street parking to be prohibited over night to allow crews to complete the removal. By allowing less off-street parking, even more people will park on the street, increasing the incidences where cars will need to be towed or worked around which increases the time for the snow removal to be completed and/or not completed if cars are not removed.

Other Parking Fees

The applicant is also subject to monthly parking fees related to the removal of on-street parking spaces on Main Street to facilitate the construction of the Hyatt Hotel development.

Conclusion

Encouraging the redevelopment of underutilized sites in the Downtown with high density developments and uses that support the vibrancy of Downtown has many benefits. However, the required number of parking spaces can restrict underutilized lots from being developed to their highest and best use.

The Zoning Bylaw does already provide a reduction in parking requirements for the subject site due to its location in Downtown. The Zoning Bylaw Rewrite project is an appropriate process to consider further parking requirement reductions which would apply to all properties within a zone or prescribed area. Allowing a reduction in parking requirements prior to the Zoning Bylaw Rewrite may be premature.

ADMINISTRATIVE RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council direct that Bylaw 2024-46, a bylaw to amend the zoning at 505, 507, 509, and 511 Main Street to reduce the number of required off-street parking spaces, not be brought forward for consideration under the bylaw process.