



# *Development Approval Process Improvement Task Force - Minutes*

2E – Community Room B  
City Hall  
13450 - 104 Avenue  
Surrey, B.C.  
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2024  
Time: 9:08 a.m.

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**Present:**

Councillor Kooner, Chair  
Councillor Hepner, Vice-Chair  
S. Neuman, General Manager,  
Engineering  
R. Gill, Acting General Manager,  
Planning & Development  
R. Blackwell  
J. Gaglardi  
A. Johl  
S. Yusuf

**Absent:**

**Staff Present:**

L. Blake, Legislative Services Manager  
J. Searle, Assistant City Clerk

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Mayor Locke briefly joined the meeting at 9:15 a.m. to express gratitude to the Task Force for dedicating their time to this important work.

**A. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

**1. Bike Parking**

The Task Force discussed strategies to improve the City's bike parking policies. The following items were discussed:

- The City should review bike and car parking rates in their totality, rather than separately.
- Under the current bylaw, the required bike parking rate is 1.2 spaces per unit. Additionally, all bike parking must be located on P1 of underground parking and within 50 meters of an entrance.
- Bike parking is often underutilized and bike storage areas are often used for general storage instead of bike parking when built with security doors.
- Residents with high-value bikes often prefer to store them in their units rather than in underground storage due to theft concerns.
- Significant resources are allocated to bike storage, yet these spaces are frequently unused. For example, 350 square feet of bike storage costs between \$40,000 - \$60,000 to build and this cost is passed on to the home buyer.
- City Centre is more focused on cycling compared to other town centers. There was a suggestion to reduce bike parking requirements outside City Centre.

- Developers currently have the option to apply for variances to the bylaw, but the goal is to minimize the reliance on variances by providing greater flexibility within the bylaw itself.
- Inefficient bike parking requirements can lead to additional costs, such as requiring an extra level of underground parking.
- Applying condo bike parking policies to townhouse developments has proven ineffective.

The Task Force suggested the following areas for further exploration:

- Reducing bike parking requirements across the City.
- Allowing bike parking to be distributed throughout underground parking rather than only on P1.
- Increasing the exclusion from Floor Area Ration (FAR) for above-grade bike parking.

## **2. Commercial Parking**

The Task Force discussed strategies to modernize Surrey's parking bylaws to align with the evolving needs of a dense, connected, and walkable urban core. Key points of the discussion included:

- As Surrey evolves into a denser, more connected downtown, the reliance on car travel will decrease, and walkability will become a critical factor for accessing businesses.
- The current suburban parking model is outdated and misaligned with the needs of urban centers like City Centre.
- The bylaw should accommodate business turnover without requiring a new parking study or variance each time a tenant changes.
- A universal retail parking standard could simplify the process. The current process often delays tenancy transitions.
- There are existing requirements for trees and landscaping in parking lots. Flexibility in substituting features like charging stations for landscaping was suggested.
- Opportunities exist for shared parking arrangements between offsetting commercial uses, such as City Hall and the Civic Hotel, to optimize parking utilization during off-peak hours.

- There is increasing demand for short-term parking for delivery services (e.g., DoorDash) and ride-sharing drop-offs. The Task Force suggested creating 15-minute parking zones to accommodate these needs.
- Dedicated loading zones or lay-bys could also support delivery services and improve efficiency.
- In vibrant, mixed-use communities, street parking plays an integral role in accessibility. Enhancing on-street parking availability could support the City's vision for a live-work-play dynamic.

The Task Force suggested the following areas for further exploration:

- Reviewing volume requirements.
- Granting staff the authority to make parking-related decisions without requiring Council approval, to streamline processes and reduce delays.
- Staff will report back to the Task Force on how parking fits with the City's Accessibility Plan.

### **3. Industrial Parking**

The Task Force discussed current challenges and opportunities related to industrial parking requirements:

- Studies indicate that many industrial areas, such as Campbell Heights, have significant underutilization of parking spaces.
- Industrial parking requirements are quite prescriptive and frequently request variances due to parking requirements being perceived as excessive.
- Changes to how office space is categorized in 2017 effectively doubled the parking rate for many industrial developments. Office space in industrial developments was changed from ancillary use to regular office use, requiring parking rates of 2.5 spaces for office space, compared to 1 space for industrial use, including ancillary office use.
- The City currently applies an office parking requirement to industrial buildings, which may not align with actual usage needs.

The Task Force suggested the following areas for further exploration:

- Reassessing parking rates.
- Explore removing Newton from the equation when assessing industrial parking requirements, as its needs may differ from other areas.

#### 4. Outdoor Amenity Space Calculations

The Task Force discussed opportunities to enhance outdoor amenity spaces while balancing practical use and affordability:

- Current bylaw mandates 3m<sup>2</sup> of indoor and 3m<sup>2</sup> of outdoor amenity space per unit. However, these requirements haven't been updated in years.
- While staff currently do not support cash in lieu for outdoor spaces, developers suggest this could be a viable alternative in certain contexts.
- Consider allowing outdoor amenity spaces within setback areas, such as walking trails, to better use available land.
- Explore enabling adjacent townhouse projects to share outdoor amenities, which is currently not permitted.
- Consider land swaps or density transfers as part of developers' requirements to optimize land use.
- For large developments, required amenities may exceed what is practical or necessary, particularly in urban areas.
- Recognize that amenity needs vary across projects; a more flexible approach may be beneficial.

#### 5. Pre-Application Review Meeting

The Task Force discussed opportunities to optimize the pre-application review process.

- Significant staff time is spent on pre-app meetings for projects that often do not move forward, leading to inefficient use of resources.
- Developers want clear direction and certainty before committing substantial resources to a project. Early feedback from staff on key considerations helps developers make informed decisions.
- There was support for the City to create a formal pre-application review process where staff would identify key considerations and commit to providing feedback within a set timeline.
- The parameters of the pre-app meeting should be clearly stated and potential applicants should still be able to submit general inquiries at no cost.

- A pre-application fee could help offset costs while ensuring that only serious applicants proceed. The fee is not intended as a revenue generator, it would help safeguard staff resources.

**B. INFORMATION DISTRIBUTED**

1. Minutes – November 14, 2024

**C. NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Development Approval Process Improvement Task Force is scheduled for 9:00 a.m. on November 28, 2024 in 2E – Community Room B.

**D. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 10:43 a.m.