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# Memorandum

<b>To/Attention</b>	Robin King	<b>Date</b>	October 13, 2009
<b>From</b>	Don Drackley/Brian Hollingworth	<b>Project No</b>	20927
<b>cc</b>		<b>Steno</b>	d
<b>Subject</b>	CBD vs. Overall Municipal Parking Provisions for Office/Business Land Use		

## Introduction and Background

At the present time, the current zoning by-law does not require new developments in the downtown to provide any on-site parking. This exemption was implemented many years ago to stimulate development and to protect heritage buildings. The lack of any minimum parking standards in the downtown has advantages and disadvantages. The primary advantage is that small development can be constructed on infill sites without parking in a manner that is consistent with the historic nature of the downtown while at the same time promoting reduced reliance on auto travel. However, the lack of a formal off-street parking by-law is a disadvantage in that the City has less control over how much parking is provided. This is a disadvantage in that a development constructed without parking could place additional demand on the parking system which the City would then need to make up, a difficult task given the lack of available land for public parking and the fact that cash-in-lieu is not applicable in the CBD given zero parking requirements. It is also a disadvantage in that a development could provide too much parking, which detracts from the urban environment.

Furthermore, the recently completed St. John's Downtown Parking Study has concluded that:

*"The planned/proposed downtown projects offer the potential to ensure an adequate supply of parking for their clients likely through permits, but the current latent demand for off-street parking in the downtown will not be fully addressed by these projects. Furthermore, if these projects are not implemented, or are exempted from providing an increased parking supply, the latent demand for off-street parking in the downtown will continue to grow."*

In light of this parking Study finding, the purpose of this memo is to provide some insights into the appropriate range of parking standards that might be applicable for downtown St. John's. Further research and consultation will be required before the recommendations can be finalized.

## Review of Practices Elsewhere

We have assembled a comparison of various zoning bylaw provisions for off-street parking in Central Business Districts (CBD) compared to other locations in these cities. These are specifically for Office/Business land use, and are described as the number of parking stalls required per gross or net floor area. Note that the CBD requirements average about 1/3 to 1/2 the requirement in other areas for Office/Business land use:

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**Exhibit 1: Comparison of Downtown and City-wide Parking Standards – Office/Business**

CITY	CBD	CITY-WIDE EXCLUDING CBD
<b>St. John's</b>	<b>Exempt</b>	<b>1/30 m2</b>
Saint John	1/95 m2	1/57 m2
Moncton	Exempt**	1/50 m2
Dartmouth	1/93 m2	1/56 m2
Halifax Mainland	Exempt*	1/31 m2
Ottawa	1/135 m2	1/50 m2
Regina	1/100 m2	1/60 m2
Calgary	1/90 – 1/140 m2	1/46 m2
Edmonton	1/100 m2	1/30 m2
Kitchener	1/69 m2	1/28 m2
Brantford	Exempt**	1/30 m2
Cambridge	Exempt**	1/40 m2

\* HRM recently completed a parking strategy and in doing so decided to maintain the exemption for the Capital District Area (Halifax and Dartmouth CBD)

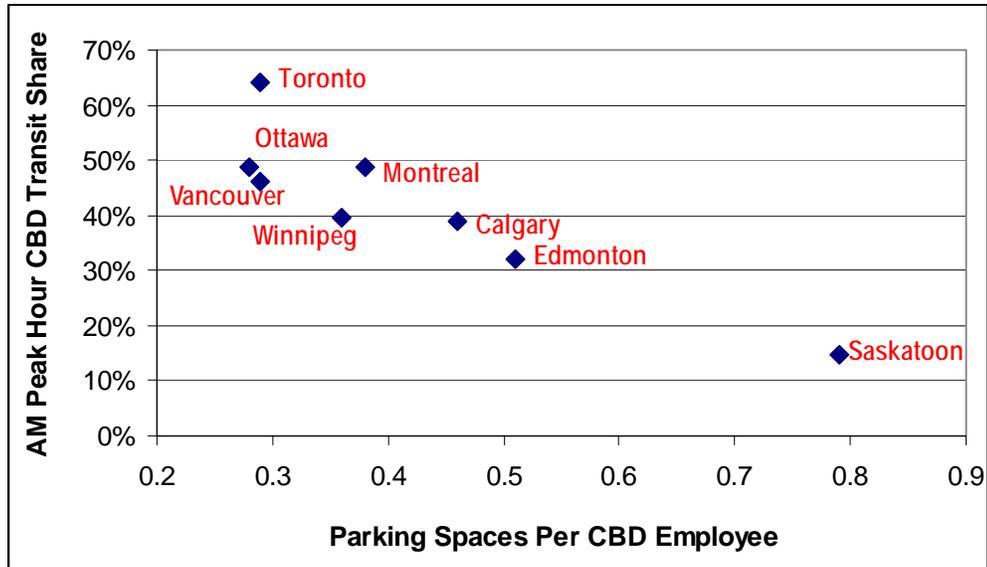
\* Brantford, Cambridge and Moncton recently completed parking strategies and each have recommended revisiting the Downtown parking exemptions with the objective of setting minimum and maximum parking ratios.

**Modal Split Considerations**

In addition to urban design and heritage considerations, modal split objectives are an important consideration in setting parking standards for a downtown area. There is a direct link between parking supply, parking price and transit use. As shown in the graph below, cities that have a high amount of downtown parking per employee tend to have low transit use. St. John's has already established a policy of minimizing excess parking so as to promote the use of transit.

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**Exhibit 2: Parking Supply vs. Transit Mode Split**



Source: Adapted from Morral and Bolger (1996)

**Suggested Ratios for St. John’s (For Discussion Purposes Only)**

Exhibit 3 provides some suggested parking ratios for general land use categories. These ratios take into account practices in other cities, as well as the need to set a standard that is low enough that it does not make downtown development impractical (financially or physically), yet high enough that the City has the opportunity to collect enough revenues from cash-in-lieu to provide a sufficient level of public parking.

The standards would need to be refined through further study and based on discussions with stakeholders, and further consultation and refinement would be required prior to their adoption as guidelines or future inclusion in the zoning by-law. It is also noted that standards could vary by different areas of the Downtown, and also include exemptions for heritage buildings.

**Exhibit 3: Suggested Downtown Parking Ratio Guidelines**

General Land Use Category	Suggested Parking Ratios	
	Minimum	Maximum
General Office	1/100 m2	1/50 m2
Retail	1/100 m2*	1/30 m2
Residential (spaces per unit)**	0.5	1.5

\* Retail uses less than XX m<sup>2</sup> would be exempt from providing parking

\*\* Includes visitor parking