Region of Peel

Health Background Study

TERMS OF REFERENCE & USER GUIDE

May 27, 2011

Prepared by The Planning Partnership

In Association With:

Region of Peel Working for you

Toronto Public Health

CLASP Coalitions Linking Action & Science for Prevention — An initiative of: Canadian Partnership Against Cancer / Partenariat canadien contre le cancer

HEALTHY CANADA by design

Health Background Study Framework for the Region of Peel and the City of Toronto

TERMS OF REFERENCE

May 27, 2011

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TERMS OF REFERENCE

1.0 PREAMBLE

1.1 Purpose:

The purpose of the Health Background Study is to ensure that new development and re-development promotes and supports healthy and active communities. These Terms of Reference are designed to create a standardized method for development interests (applicants) to demonstrate their achievement of key healthy community design elements and, in tern, for municipalities to evaluate development proposals based on key community health objectives as specified by the municipality.

The concept of healthy communities is intrinsically tied to the Provincial planning policy's promotion of complete communities. Complete communities meet people's needs for daily living by providing convenient access to an appropriate mix of jobs, local services, a full rage of housing, opportunities for aging in place, and accessible community infrastructure including schools, recreation and open space for their residents. Convenient access to public transportation and options for safe, non-motorized travel is also provided. These considerations have been integrated into these Terms of Reference.

The Health Background Study is intended to serve as a 'checklist' to evaluate the success of new developments in achieving minimum standards of community health and a forum to encourage applicants to justify their development decisions. It should not be applied alone as a means for approving or rejecting private development proposals, but rather as an informative tool in the application evaluation process.

There are many factors that influence the health of a community. The Health Background Study reflects six of the seven inter-related Core Elements as identified through the research and design of the Peel Healthy Development Evaluation Tool, which include:

1. Density
2. Service Proximity
3. Land Use Mix
4. Street Connectivity
5. Streetscape Characteristics
6. Parking

The seventh Core Element, Aesthetics and Human Scale, has been excluded due to its overlap with existing urban design policies and guidelines. The Health Background Study standards outlined in this Terms of Reference have further been shaped by the expert opinions of planners and urban designers. All developments should comply with local urban design standards.

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1.2 How to use this Terms of Reference:

This Terms of Reference is divided into six main sections that correspond with the six Core Elements as described above. Each section is divided into the following components:

- **Rationale:** Description of the Core Element and why it is important from a community health perspective.

- **Objective:** Statement of desired development objective.

- **Standards:** Associated minimum development standards to be achieved by the proposed development. The application and achievement of standards will depend on the site-specific context and scale of the proposed development, and should not be considered as absolutes.

- **Key Questions:** List of key questions that the applicant should consider in the planning and preparation of their proposed development. These questions are intended to initiate dialogue within the development team and with the municipality on strategies/approaches to meet desired outcomes.

- **Reporting/Content Requirements:** Description of the minimum reporting requirements to demonstrate compliance/achievement of the Objectives/Standards.

1.3 Disclaimer:

It should be noted that the evaluation of a development proposal based on specific Core Elements may vary depending on the scale of the proposed development as well as the overriding planning policies in place at the time the development application is made. The Core Elements are evaluated separately in these Terms of Reference, however it is recognized that overlap does occur between elements and that all Core Elements should be considered holistically when evaluating a development proposal. Consider the question “How is this contributing to healthy communities” throughout the reading of these Terms of Reference.

It is at the discretion of the local municipality to determine the applicability of each Core Element and the precise evaluation parameters for a specific development proposal. This will occur during the pre-application phase.

Further, participating municipalities shall continue to update their Official Plan policies and other land use/development policies to reflect the important linkage between community design and community health to ensure that new development contributes to the achievement of key health objectives as the understanding of this linkage evolves over time.

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CORE ELEMENT 1: DENSITY

a) Rationale:

Optimal development densities support and facilitate walkability. Interacting closely with other Core Elements such as service proximity and land use mix, density influences the concentration and distribution of people and destinations within the built environment. Higher development densities, both residential and non-residential, are better able to support a variety of services, employment opportunities, transit and other community destinations/facilities within walking distance of where people live, work, play and learn. Achieving higher densities also contributes to a more efficient use of land, and encourages the protection of agricultural lands and natural areas that serve important ecological functions that benefit human health both directly and indirectly.

b) Objective

To achieve effective and high quality density that supports walkable access to/from housing, employment, transit, schools and community services and facilities.

c) Minimum Standards:

- ☐ All development on Designated Greenfield Areas shall achieve a minimum overall density target of 50 people and jobs per hectare.

- ☐ All development in designated Urban Growth Centres in the Region of Peel (including downtown Brampton and Mississauga City Centre) shall achieve a minimum overall density target of 200 people and jobs per hectare.

- ☐ Notwithstanding the above standards, where the local municipality has established higher density targets than those established by The Growth Plan, the higher density target should apply.

d) Key Questions:

What are the current density permissions for the subject lands?

Does the surrounding context reflect high quality and context appropriate density? Should this context be emulated?

Is the density of the proposed development compatible with the surrounding context?

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What areas of the site have the opportunity to increase density?
What are the current and projected number of residents and jobs, and how will this influence future transit and service provision?

Based on the proximity of employment opportunities, transit, schools and community services and facilities, will the density of the proposed development support walkable communities and complete streets?

Have the specific additional needs of the elderly been considered?

e) Reporting / Content Requirements:

Greenfield Development – Density calculations that demonstrate unit counts, the type of units and unit size (residential), gross floor area (non residential), land area and achieved density in relation to Provincial policy.

Redevelopment – Density calculations that demonstrate unit counts, the type of units and unit size (residential), gross floor area (non- residential), land area and achieved density in relation to existing development on the subject site or lands.

A short written description of achieved density and how it complies with objectives and minimum standards.

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CORE ELEMENT 2: SERVICE PROXIMITY

a) Rationale:

Like density, proximity to services, employment opportunities and green space facilitates walking. Also, interacting closely with land use mix, proximity to services provides people with a feasible alternative to automobile use, and makes the community more inclusive for those who cannot drive (especially children or seniors).

While some people are willing to walk long distances, setting maximums ensures that a high incentive to walk is maintained through all seasons and weather conditions, and across a reasonable range of physical abilities.

Standard measures for proximity to transit have been well researched. The standard for proximity to continuous high-order transit (subway/light rail) is a 5-minute walk. For lower-order continuous transit (bus), the standard measure is a 2.5 minute walk. The standard measures for appropriate proximity include:

- A 2.5 minute walk (no more than 200 m), appropriate for very frequent, or spontaneous trips, such as access to transit.
- A 5-minute walk (no more than 400 m), appropriate for frequent trips, such as access to basic retail, grocery or community facilities, or transit in some cases.
- A 10 minute walk (800 m), appropriate for longer, more deliberate trips to a wider range of retail or community facilities.
- A 15 minute walk (1.2 km) or a half an hour walk (2.4 km), appropriate for substantial trips to major destinations, such as schools or nearby employment clusters.

Distances must be calculated based on the shortest potential walking path of a pedestrian (network distance), as opposed to a straight line (Euclidean distance or ‘as the crow flies’).

b) Objective

To achieve a reasonable proximity and cluster of uses, based on walking distance, of key services and employment opportunities to residences and transport nodes. This level of proximity promotes physical activity (walking or cycling), improves mental health by stimulating greater community interaction, and creates a feasible alternative to automobile use, while at the same time reducing greenhouse gas emissions. At the appropriate scale, a community should have a fully array of uses.

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c) Minimum Standards

Transit

- The distance between at least 50% of the projected population of the development and a low-order transit stop shall be no more than 200 m. The transit service proposed should provide a direct route to a Regional Urban Node, Intensification Corridor, or smaller higher-density, mixed-use transit supportive activity centre with a maximum transit trip of 30 minutes.

- Where a high-order transit route bisects the development area, 75% of the projected population should be within 400 m of it.

- Ensure design quality of both transit stops and the journey to the stop. Transit stops should, where appropriate, provide shelter from the sun and inclement weather and seating. High-order transit stops/stations should also include secure bicycle parking facilities.

Neighbourhood Community and Retail Services

- The distance between at least 75% of the projected population and three or more of the following amenities and services must be no more than 800 m:

  Childcare facility, community garden, park, hospital or health clinic, public library, places of worship, adult/senior care facility, social service facility, performance or cultural space, post office or recreation centre. (Multiple services of the same type may be counted.)

- The distance between at least 25% of the projected population and a minimum of 5,000 m2 of mixed service commercial and retail space shall be no more than 800 m.

- The distance between at least 75% of the projected population and a minimum of 150 m2 of mixed service commercial retail space shall be no more than 800 m.

- The distance between at least 90% of the projected population and a playing field, park, square or natural open space should be no more than 400 m.

- The distance between 100% of the projected population and a planned elementary school shall be no more than 1.2 km.

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- The distance between 100% of the projected population and a planned secondary school shall be no more than 2.4 km.

- Where appropriate, a new community should provide mixed service commercial retail facilities that can be used by adjacent communities.

Employment

- The development should be within reasonable proximity to an existing or planned employment centre or urban centre. Specifically, the distance should be no more than 10 km.

d) Key Questions:

What are the current zoning permissions, and land use designations (Secondary Plan and Official Plan) for the subject lands and their surroundings?

What is the existing service context of the subject lands? Are sufficient transit, employment and public and retail servicing available or planned?

Based on the proximity of employment opportunities, transit and community services and facilities, will the development support walkability and cycling access?

Have the specific additional needs of the elderly been considered?

e) Reporting / Content Requirements:

Site plans demonstrating the location of residential units within the surrounding context, including: transit stops (indicating higher or lower order), community and retail services (indicating types and Gross Floor Area, respectively), parks, schools (indicating elementary or secondary), and employment or urban centres.

A short written description of the achieved proximity, and how the development complies with the objectives and minimum standards.

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CORE ELEMENT 3: LAND USE MIX

a) Rationale:

An equitable mix of household sizes and incomes contributes to a community's overall well being and quality of life in residential neighbourhoods. Providing a range of housing options also allows residents to remain with their community as their needs change; from living alone, to as a couple, to as a family, to without children, to as seniors. Proximity of these housing options allows extended families to remain close.

Furthermore, a range and mix of uses within a community, as well as within buildings themselves, provides the opportunity to support walkable communities. Locating employment, institutional and industrial uses in close proximity allows for the development of a more compact urban form, which supports the provision of public transit nodes, walkable neighbourhoods and safer communities. More specifically the location of these uses, such as the provision of retail uses on the ground floor should be encouraged.

Certain commercial uses that discourage walking, such as drive-throughs, are also dealt with in this Core Element.

b) Objective

Recognizing that land use mix is closely associated with service proximity and the surrounding context, the primary objective of this element is to promote a broad mix of land uses, with a particular focus on housing mix.

c) Minimum Standards:

- Where the scale of the residential community is large enough, a range of uses should be provided, as follows:

  - for communities of 5,000 people or more, provide neighbourhood-scale retail and services (such as corner stores, elementary school, library, etc.)
  - for communities of 10,000 people or more, provide a full-range of uses, including larger-scale retail, services, and employment opportunities.

- Where the scale of employment lands is large enough, small scale commercial retail and services should be encouraged, where appropriate.

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- Where the scale of the community permits, it should include dwelling structures from all three of the following housing type groups, with no group making up more than 50% or fewer than 10% of total units:

    i. Single detached, semi-detached, and duplex.
    ii. Townhouses and multiplex.
    iii. Apartment building

- Special housing types, such as group homes or seniors' residences, should be encouraged.

- Secondary suites should be encouraged where appropriate.

- Live-work units should be encouraged where appropriate.

- Site design of auto-oriented developments, such as uses which include drive through facilities, gas bars and related uses shall make pedestrian access a priority and contribute to high quality public realm and streetscapes.

- The location of retail uses on the ground floor of multi-unit and mixed use buildings should be encouraged.

d) Key Questions:

What are the current zoning permissions and land use designations (Official Plan and Secondary Plan) for the subject lands?

Is there sufficient diversity of housing and unit types in the community to accommodate households of varying income, size and needs? Can the community accommodate a full life-cycle of housing needs for persons with varying physical abilities?

How can infill development contribute to ensuring a diversity of housing types?

How can a mix of uses be integrated into the development/redevelopment?

Have the specific additional needs of the elderly been considered?

d) Reporting / Content Requirements:

A count of proposed units and their types. A short written description of achieved mix and how the development complies with objectives and minimum standards.

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CORE ELEMENT 4: STREET CONNECTIVITY

a) Rationale:

A connected street network is essential for encouraging active transportation. When a dense grid/connector network is achieved, pedestrians have access to the greatest freedom of movement and the most direct routes to their destinations. Connectivity is evaluated through the avoidance of certain street types (such as cul-de-sacs) and through block size. For infill development the ability to influence street layout is limited. In this case, proposed infill development should strive to ensure a better street environment for pedestrians through attention paid to design details.

b) Objective:

To promote a highly connected network of streets and active transit nodes to support opportunities for active transportation.

c) Minimum Standards:

- ☐ Infill development should identify opportunities to increase street connectivity.
- ☐ Street networks and off-road paths in greenfields should always :
  - provide the maximum choice for how people will make trips; take full account of the kinds of movement a development will generate; and
  - make clear connections to existing routes and facilities.
- ☐ Cul-de-sacs are not permitted unless required for technical reasons.
- ☐ Crescent streets, reverse frontage lots, and loop roads must not constitute more than 20% of total street frontage and should be discouraged.
- ☐ Blocks in the proposed development must not exceed 80 m x 150 m in size. Exceptions are made for blocks consisting solely of Parkland or of Employment uses.
- ☐ Intersections should be frequent, with street blocks decreasing in size as density increases.
- ☐ Sidewalks, bike lanes and multi-use paths should connect to street networks, major destinations and transport nodes.

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d) Key Questions:

Does the proposed development have a sufficient density of intersections and sufficiently small block size to encourage active transportation?

How can infill development contribute to a higher level of street connectivity on the site and beyond?

How is the layout of parks and open spaces used to improve the directness and freedom of pedestrian and bicycle travel?

Has the proposed plan set out direct routes through a permeable and linked road and pedestrian network including trails, to ensure that short walking distances can be achieved?

Have the specific additional needs of the elderly been considered?

e) Reporting / Content Requirements:

Site plans demonstrating the number of intersections and block sizes within the proposed development, and a brief summary showing how it complies with the requirements.

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CORE ELEMENT 5: STREETSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS

a) Rationale:

In order to encourage walking and cycling activity, streets must provide appropriate facilities for pedestrians and cyclists. While walking and cycling may be possible without specific amenities, a certain level of comfort and prioritization should be offered through design to create inviting public spaces and promote injury prevention. Core Element 5 includes minimum standards for sidewalks and bicycle lanes, adequate shading, various traffic calming devices, and sufficient lighting for pedestrian safety. Additionally, recognition and integration with cycling and trails facilities will ensure continuous links to key transport nodes and areas of interest.

b) Objective:

To promote active transportation through street and sidewalk design.

c) Minimum Standards:

Sidewalk Amenities

- All streets must have sidewalks on each side that are at least 1.5 m wide in low-density residential areas, and at least 2 m wide in medium- density residential neighbourhoods, high-density residential neighbourhoods, mixed use areas, and commercial areas.

- A variety of street trees that are hardy, resilient, and low maintenance should be planted at regular intervals (as specified by the municipality)' adjacent to all streets.

- Transit shelters and other street furniture should be provided, especially on major pedestrian routes. Other street furniture may include benches, waste receptacles, newspaper outlets, community information boards, water fountains, public washrooms, bicycle parking, and bicycle sharing system components.

Cycling Amenities

- A connected and destination-oriented bikeway network should be provided throughout the community, including a variety of on- and off-street bikeway facilities that provide an appropriate degree of separation from motorized traffic, given the speed and volume of traffic on the street. These on-street bikeway facilities may include (but are not limited to) bicycle lanes, cycle tracks, sharrows, signed routes, bicycle boulevards, and multi-use paths on the boulevard.

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- ☐ Where there is a local Bicycle Plan, the bikeway network proposed in the Plan shall be implemented in the development area, and opportunities to enhance or connect to the proposed bikeway network should be identified.

- ☐ At a minimum, 100% of the population should be within 150 m of a continuous and connected bikeway facility.

Intersections

- ☐ All intersections should be designed to increase the visibility of cyclists and pedestrians, give them priority, reduce crossing distance, and provide adequate crossing time. Intersection design elements may include, but are not limited to:

    - Pavement treatments and markings for pedestrian crossings (e.g. brick paving, zebra/ladder markings)
    - Curb cuts/ramps
    - Raised crosswalk
    - Curb extension/bulb out
    - Centre Median or refuge island
    - Pedestrian scramble (a.k.a. Barnes dance)
    - Bicycle box
    - Conflict zone markings for bicycles (e.g. coloured lane, skip lines, chevrons, sharrows)
    - Audible pedestrian crossing signals
    - Countdown signals
    - Leading pedestrian and/or bicycle signals (advance walk/bike signal)
    - Pedestrian and/or bicycle actuated signals
    - Right-turn on red light prohibitions
    - Mid-block signalized crossings

Lighting

- ☐ All mixed-use streets must have an average luminance of 10 lux, with a minimum of 5 lux.

- ☐ Pedestrian-level street lamps of 4.6 m in height or less, spaced apart no more than 30 m, must be provided on all streets.

Wayfinding

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- A wayfinding system should be implemented on a community-wide basis to allow residents and visitors to determine their location; identify key destinations (parks, transit stations, community and cultural facilities, shopping centres, off road trails); and develop a plan to take them from their location to desired destination by walking or cycling. The wayfinding system may include maps, directional signs or other elements, and should be useful and easy to understand.

Traffic Calming

- In greenfield development, or where new streets are introduced through infill development, traffic calming will be achieved on neighbourhood streets by using:

  - Minimum traffic lane widths
  - Minimum number of traffic lanes in the roadway
  - Pedestrian-priority streets, woonerfs or home-zones (speed limit under 15 km/hr, vehicles must yield to pedestrians and cyclists)

- For infill development, traffic calming should be achieved on existing neighbourhood streets by using any of, but not limited to, the following elements:

  - Reduced/minimum traffic lane width
  - Reduced/minimum number of traffic lanes in the roadway
  - Pedestrian-priority streets, woonerfs or home-zones (speed limit under 15 km/hr, vehicles must yield to pedestrians and cyclists)
  - Speed humps
  - Bollards (short vertical posts)
  - Channelization islands (raised islands that force traffic to turn in a particular direction)
  - Chicane (curb bulges or planters or alternating sides, forcing motorists to slow down)
  - Choker (raised islands in parking zones that narrow a roadway)
  - Curb extension, planter, or centerline traffic island that narrows traffic lanes
  - Horizontal shift (a lane centerline that curves or shifts)
  - Rumble or warning strip
  - Semi-diverter or partial closure (restricts entry and limits traffic flow at intersections)
  - Signal timing to reduce traffic speeds
  - Radar trailer that shows drivers their current speed and the posted speed limit
  - Traffic circles or roundabouts
  - Speed table

- While increasing comfort and safety for pedestrians, the design of traffic calming elements should not create undue hazards or obstacles for cyclists.

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d) Key Questions:

What are the municipally-designated standards for sidewalk and bicycle lane dimensions and design? What are the standards for other amenities?

Is there a local Bicycle/Walking/Active Transportation Plan? If yes, what bicycle or pedestrian facilities are designated or recommended within the development site?

Does the proposed community provide sufficient pedestrian and bicycle amenities to encourage active transportation?

How can intersections been designed to increase safety and comfort for pedestrians and cyclists?

Which neighbourhood streets should be targeted for traffic calming? How will traffic calming be achieved on these streets?

Have the specific additional needs of the elderly been considered?

e) Reporting / Content Requirements:

A detailed and integrated plan of the entire proposed community, demonstrating widths of sidewalks, bikeways, street tree planting, intersection treatments, traffic calming measures, pedestrian priority streets, bicycle amenities and pedestrian lighting fixtures (including illuminance level).

A short written description of road and sidewalk characteristics and how the development complies with objectives and minimum standards.

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CORE ELEMENT 6: PARKING

a) Rationale:

Historically, planning has been overly accommodating to automobiles by providing very high parking requirements. However, large surface parking lots, oversized garages and significant front yard parking harm the aesthetic of the public realm. Likewise, abundant low-cost parking provides little incentive for residents, employees and shoppers to use other means of transportation. Logically, frequent transit, cycling and walking opportunities should facilitate lower parking requirements.

b) Objective:

To discourage automobile use and promote alternative modes of transit through modified parking standards.

c) Minimum Standards:

Automobile Parking

- Reductions in parking requirements should be given to:
  - buildings and other facilities within 400 m of a transit stop; and
  - apartments/condominiums offering car share parking spaces (with each car share space equivalent to 10 regular spaces).

- On-street parking should be included on all streets except where inappropriate for technical or safety reasons.

- Efficient use of parking should be promoted by identifying systems for sharing parking spaces by two or more user groups at different times of the day or week (for example, office staff during weekdays and restaurant clientele in the evenings and on weekends), and by providing preferential parking for carpool vehicles.

- Where available, economic incentives should be identified and utilized to provide structured parking, rather than surface parking.

- Where surface parking is provided, it should be designed to minimize negative aesthetic and environmental impacts. This can be achieved by locating the parking lot away from the street frontage and by incorporating the following into the parking lot design:

  - Tree planting

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- Landscaping
- Stormwater management
- Porous/permeable surfaces
- Light-coloured materials (rather than black asphalt)
- Pedestrian access and circulation

Bicycle Parking

All new developments should meet or exceed the higher of: j

a) Local bicycle parking requirements (provided in local zoning by-laws, Bicycle Master Plans); or
b) The minimum bicycle parking standards outlined in Table 1.

Table 1. Minimum Bicycle Parking Standards, by Use and Type

Use	Minimum Spaces by Bicycle Parking Type	
	Occupant/Employee*	**Visitor****
Multi-unit Residential	0.7/unit	0.8/unit
Retail, Services, & Community Facilities	0.1/100 m2	3 + 0.25/100 m2
General Office	0.15/100 m2	3 + 0.25/100 m2
Medical Office	0.15/100 m2	3 + 0.1/100 m2
Hospital	0.06/100 m2	3+ 0.06/100 m2
Elementary/Secondary School	0.06/100 m2	3+ 0.06/100 m2
Post-Secondary School	0.06/100 m2	3 + 0.2/100 m2
Other non-residential (e.g. Industrial)	0.06/100 m2	0.1/100 m2
High-order Transit Station	*Complete a bicycle parking demand estimate for the station, for example using boardings, alightings and local bicycle mode share data.*	

*Occupant/Employee (A.K.A long-term) parking refers to secure, enclosed bicycle storage that is locked, weather protected and easily accessible to residents and/or workers. Signage indicating the location and information on use of these parking facilities should be provided.

**Visitor (A.K.A short-term) parking refers to outdoor, covered/un-covered bicycle racks.

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c) Key Questions:

Is infrastructure for transit in place, and what is the level of transit service currently provided?

Is the automobile parking for the proposed development sufficient, or excessive, given the planned level of transit service, and pedestrian and cycling facilities?

Can automobile parking be provided more efficiently through an unbundled or shared system?

Has paid parking been considered to reflect the cost of providing parking?

How are the environmental and aesthetic impacts of surface parking being minimized or mitigated?

Is there sufficient visitor and occupant bicycle parking provided in the proposed development?

Have the specific additional needs of the elderly been considered?

d) Reporting / Content Requirements:

A plan showing the number and distribution of bicycle (visitor and occupant) and automobile parking (private and on-street), along with the proposed uses and Gross Floor Area (for industrial and commercial buildings) or number of residential units.

The location of transit stops, to give context to numbers of bicycle and automobile parking spaces.

A short written description explaining how the automobile parking supply is being minimized and used more efficiently.

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