

- 3. REVISION TO ZONING BY-LAW 2008-250 TO AMEND PERMITTED RESIDENTIAL DRIVEWAY WIDTHS IN OUTER SUBURBAN COMMUNITIES AND TO CLARIFY ZONING LANGUAGE**
- RÉVISION DU RÈGLEMENT DE ZONAGE 2008-250 VISANT À MODIFIER LA LARGEUR PERMISE DES VOIES D'ACCÈS DES RÉSIDENCES DANS LES ZONES SUBURBAINES EXTERNES ET À CLARIFIER LE LIBELLÉ DU ZONAGE**

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AS AMENDED

That Council:

1. Approve an amendment to Zoning By-law 2008-250 as shown in Document 1 and detailed in Document 2;
2. Authorize staff to bring updates to the boundaries of the outer suburban area shown in Document 1, as needed, as technical amendments through periodic Anomaly or Omnibus Zoning reports; and;
3. Approve that staff prepare an amendment to the Private Approach By-law that will have the effect of limiting curb cuts to that which would be permitted with the zoning in place today.

RECOMMANDATIONS MODIFIÉES DU COMITÉ

Que le Conseil :

1. approuve la modification au Règlement de zonage 2008-250 illustrée dans le document 1 et décrite dans le document 2;
2. autorise le personnel à mettre à jour, au besoin et sous forme de modifications techniques dans le cadre des rapports périodiques sur les anomalies et les modifications omnibus au Règlement de zonage, les limites de la banlieue éloignée indiquée dans le document 1; et,
3. demande au personnel de préparer une modification au Règlement municipal sur les voies d'accès privées qui aura pour effet de limiter les bateaux de trottoir à ce qui est présentement permis par le règlement de zonage actuel.

DOCUMENTATION / DOCUMENTATION

1. Deputy City Manager's report, Planning and Infrastructure, dated 8 January 2014 (ACS2014-PAI-PGM-0002).

Rapport de la directrice municipale adjointe, Urbanisme et Infrastructure, daté le 8 janvier 2014 (ACS2014-PAI-PGM-0002).

2. Extract of Draft Minute, 28 January 2014.

Extrait de l'ébauche du procès-verbal, le 28 janvier 2014.

Report to/Rapport au :

Planning Committee
Comité de l'urbanisme

and Council / et au Conseil

January 8, 2014
8 janvier 2014

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SOUTH (23) / KANATA-SUD (23)

Ref N°: ACS2014-PAI-PGM-0002

SUBJECT: REVISION TO ZONING BY-LAW 2008-250 TO AMEND PERMITTED
RESIDENTIAL DRIVEWAY WIDTHS IN OUTER SUBURBAN
COMMUNITIES AND TO CLARIFY ZONING LANGUAGE

OBJET : RÉVISION DU RÈGLEMENT DE ZONAGE 2008-250 VISANT À
MODIFIER LA LARGEUR PERMISE DES VOIES D'ACCÈS DES
RÉSIDENCES DANS LES ZONES SUBURBAINES EXTERNES ET À
CLARIFIER LE LIBELLÉ DU ZONAGE

REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

That Planning Committee recommend Council:

1. Approve an amendment to Zoning By-law 2008-250 as shown in Document 1 and detailed in Document 2; and

2. **Authorize staff to bring updates to the boundaries of the outer suburban area shown in Document 1, as needed, as technical amendments through periodic Anomaly or Omnibus Zoning reports.**

RECOMMANDATIONS DU RAPPORT

Que le Comité de l'urbanisme recommande au Conseil :

1. **D'approuver la modification au Règlement de zonage 2008-250 illustrée dans le document 1 et décrite dans le document 2;**
2. **D'autoriser le personnel à mettre à jour, au besoin et sous forme de modifications techniques dans le cadre des rapports périodiques sur les anomalies et les modifications omnibus au Règlement de zonage, les limites de la banlieue éloignée indiquée dans le document 1.**

BACKGROUND

This study emerged from concerns voiced by residents of Stittsville and Barrhaven over the past several years, directed at their Ward Councillors. The concerns highlighted the restrictiveness of driveway regulations in the Zoning By-law as it relates to suburban houses in the relatively new communities outside the Greenbelt. In particular, two-car households found that parking became problematic on lots with single-car garages and shallow setbacks, with additional cars tending to park on the street. Residents wishing to widen their driveways to allow two cars to park side by side found that the zoning rules governing the location and area of driveways prevented them from lawfully doing so. The Zoning Consistency Team was asked to look into the issue and produce recommendations on possible amendments to the Zoning By-law that would rest on a new balance between parking and other concerns in the suburban communities outside the Greenbelt.

Staff undertook a Visual Preference Survey over the summer, illustrating the possible outcomes of several zoning changes that would alter the width and location of driveways permissible under the zoning. Respondents were offered a list of responses on which to indicate the one that best represents their opinion on each option. A text box was also available for respondents to write their own comments. Over a thousand responses were received, including over 500 written responses. The survey found a majority of respondents supportive of removing obstacles to widening driveways for detached dwellings, provided the maximum width of driveways remains 50 per cent of the frontage.

DISCUSSION

The proposed Zoning By-law amendment introduces changes that should make it easier for suburban homeowners outside the Greenbelt to widen their driveways where this can be done without unduly affecting drainage, green space and esthetics.

The amendment also re-writes and restructures part of the Zoning By-law to make it clearer and easier to follow, but without introducing substantial changes beyond those mentioned above. This was undertaken to improve service delivery to builders and residents by making the rules easier to understand and follow.

Several areas for further study were identified, which are outside the scope of the present zoning study and report. These areas are summarized in Document 4 and referred to the Building Better Suburbs Technical Working Group for that group's consideration in advance of its report in June 6, 2014.

Proposed Changes to the Comprehensive Zoning By-law

The zoning study was undertaken in response to concerns in suburban communities outside the Greenbelt. The material zoning changes that staff are recommending would apply to that part of the urban area from the inner boundary of the Greenbelt to the boundary between the urban and rural areas, shown in Document 1 and referred to hereafter, for the purposes of this report only, as the outer suburban area.

1. Increased flexibility for location of driveways in the outer suburban area

Under the current zoning, in residential zones:

- Motor vehicles generally may not be parked in the front yard.
- However, vehicles may be parked in a driveway in front of a garage or leading to a parking space that is not located in the front yard, provided that said driveway does not extend in front of the house itself (what the zoning calls "the front wall of the residential use building").
- There have been differing interpretations as to whether and under what circumstances a driveway is allowed to encroach into the extension of the interior side yard into the front yard of the house. Clarification on this point is in order.
- Subject to these provisions, a driveway may occupy up to 50 per cent of the width of the lot.

One difficulty that has arisen from these provisions is that even if the proposed driveway was of a width 50 per cent or less of the front yard, in practice the prohibition on extending it in front of the main part of the house and/or into the side yard often makes getting this 50 per cent driveway impossible. So, even for a house on a 10.4 metres wide lot, the driveway in many cases cannot be widened to the 5.2 metres that would allow the owner to park two vehicles side by side.

The proposed zoning change would apply to the outer suburban area and would eliminate the absolute prohibition on extending the driveway in front of the main part of the dwelling or into the front side yard. As a result, a suburban household will actually be able to expand its driveway to 50 per cent of the yard, instead of being blocked by these prohibitions on location.

It is not proposed to increase maximum permitted driveway width beyond 50 per cent of the front yard.

The details of this change include:

Allowing driveways to extend up to 1.8 metres in front of the main part of the house. The part of the total driveway width that may be located in front of the main part of the house will be limited to 1.8 metres, to ensure that driveways are located mostly to the side or in front of the garage or carport.

Providing that the combined width of walkways and that part of any driveway located in front of the main part of the house cannot exceed 1.8 metres. This rule would ensure that when someone extends their driveway 1.8 metres in front of the house, they cannot then add another 1.8 metres as a walkway for a total of 3.6 metres of width in front of the house.

Allowing driveways to be located in that part of the front yard that is directly in front of the interior side yard. (In zoning terms, "the extension of the interior side yard into the front yard.") This will be allowed even if the driveway in that yard does not lead directly to a parking space in the side yard.

Mitigating the visual impact of wider driveways through alternate paving materials. While allowing driveways to extend partially in front of the main wall of the house, some steps are recommended to prevent the excessive spread of asphalt. Where permitted (i.e. in the outer suburban area) any part of the driveway or walkway that is located in front of the main wall of the house will be required to be finished in "hard landscaping" materials i.e. non-vegetative materials such as brick, pavers, rock, stone, concrete, tile and wood, and excluding monolithic concrete and asphalt. (The Zoning By-law actually defines hard landscaping as excluding any area used for parking; however, in this case, it is understood that that part of the driveway located in front of the house may be parked on--it is just that the material must be one that would meet the definition of "hard landscaping.")

2. Townhouses and narrow lots.

The above-noted changes will eliminate obstacles to wider driveways in the outer suburban area on lots over a certain width; in general, lots 10.4 metres wide or more should be able to comfortably establish a double-wide (5.2 metres wide) driveway. The Visual Preference Survey found this approach to be broadly acceptable, and maintaining the 50 per cent limit is consistent with the current zoning. Meanwhile, a majority of respondents objected to increasing the width limit to 2/3 (66.7 per cent) of the lot width.

A more challenging question is what to do with houses on narrower lots. Townhouse lots in particular are often as narrow as 5.5 metres (18 feet) wide. Allowing homeowners on narrow lots to widen their driveways to 5.2 metres would put their driveways at well

over 50 per cent of the width of the lot, and in extreme cases would occupy almost the entire front yard.

The visual preference survey found respondents divided on the question of whether to allow townhouses to widen their driveways to 6 metre, regardless of the width of the lot. About half the respondents felt that it should not be allowed in any case, while the other half felt that it should be allowed everywhere.

Staff's recommendation on this point is founded largely on technical considerations that arise when allowing a driveway to occupy most or all of a unit's frontage. These issues were articulated during meetings with City's engineering, public works and operations staff, and include:

- inadequate space for winter snow storage;
- drainage issues resulting from the loss of permeable surface (which otherwise would have absorbed runoff from the roof but, if paved, not only fails to do so, but adds more runoff to the total);
- location of infrastructure such as street lamps, fire hydrants and transformer boxes;
- the costs involved in substantially redesigning catch basins where a wider curb cut means a curb drain must be replaced with a surface drain;
- hydrological changes affecting marine clay soils; and
- placement of garbage for curbside pickup.

These considerations, together with the concerns around esthetics and loss of green space expressed by nearly half of respondents, lead staff to recommend that the 50 per cent limit on driveways be maintained even on narrow lots and townhouse lots. To do otherwise would, while fixing a parking problem, cause more serious engineering and operational problems.

3. Rationalizing the structure of the Zoning By-law

The current Section 109, which governs the location of parking, is the result of several amendments, and the resulting text can be difficult to follow and interpret. In addition to the material changes described above, the amendment proposes to improve the readability and usability of the by-law through some essentially structural changes. These include:

- Changing the wording around location of driveways to reflect that it is primarily the location of the driveway that the zoning is concerned about. (Currently the zoning actually says that one is not allowed to park on a driveway that is located in front of the main wall of the residential use building. In practice this has made little difference, since the reason people want to widen their driveways is to be able to park on it. Strictly speaking, however, the intent should be to regulate where the driveway itself goes, and then to allow cars to park on whatever driveway is allowed.)

- Moving driveway provisions of Section 109 (Location of Parking) to Section 107 (Aisle and Driveway Provisions) and cross-referencing the relevant lines, so that rules for driveways are found under the more obvious section heading.
4. Future amendments to the outer suburban area boundary to reflect suburban growth.

The area shown on Document 1 represents the current boundary between suburban communities and the rural area. Over time, further suburban growth may expand beyond this boundary, and it is intended that the proposed driveway rules apply to newly-created suburban communities as well. Staff would undertake to update the boundaries of the outer suburban area as shown on Document 1 from time to time through periodic Zoning Anomalies or Zoning Omnibus Amendments.

RURAL IMPLICATIONS

The present study and recommended Zoning By-law amendment apply only to the suburban area outside the inner boundary of the Greenbelt, and does not relate to the rural area. There are therefore no rural implications.

CONSULTATION

Public consultation was undertaken via a web page and online survey on Ottawa.ca. The survey was available from June 1st through August 16th, 2013. Dedicated e-mail boxes were established and visitors to the website were invited to send comments by e-mail. Formal circulation of the proposed changes was undertaken between November 1st and December 3rd, 2013. A summary of consultation results is attached as Document 3.

Public Notification was undertaken in accordance with the City's Public Notification and Consultation Policy.

COMMENTS BY THE WARD COUNCILLORS

The Ward Councillors are aware of this report.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal impediments to implementing the recommendations in this report.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no risk implications.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications.

ACCESSIBILITY IMPACTS

This report has no accessibility impacts.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct environmental impacts.

TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS

Information Technology approved this report without comment.

TERM OF COUNCIL PRIORITIES

- C1 Residents - "Contribute to the improvement of my quality of life."
- SE2 Improve operational performance.
- GP1 Improve the public's confidence in and satisfaction with how Council works.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

- Document 1 Location Map (Area where the material changes to zoning would apply)
- Document 2 Details of the recommended zoning
- Document 3 Consultation Details
- Document 4 Recommendations to the Building Better Suburbs Technical Working Group

DISPOSITION

Planning and Growth Management Department to draft a by-law amendment for Council's approval.

Planning and Growth Management Department to bring updates to the boundaries of the outer suburban area shown in Document 1, as needed, as technical amendments through periodic Anomaly or Omnibus Zoning reports.

The Building Better Suburbs Technical Working Group to receive the observations detailed in Document 4 for consideration in their work.

DETAILS OF RECOMMENDED ZONING

DOCUMENT 2

1. Amend Section 54 (Definitions) by adding the following definition:

"Corner side wall means the main exterior wall of a residential use building that is not a permitted projection or an attached garage or carport, which is located closest to the corner side lot line.

2. Delete subsections (3) and (4) of Section 109 (Location of Parking) and replace with provisions similar in effect to the following:

- (3) In the R1, R2, R3, R4 and R5 zones:

- (a) no parking space may be established and no person may park a motor vehicle:
 - (i) in a required and provided front yard;
 - (ii) in a required and provided corner side yard; or
 - (iii) in the extension of a required and provided corner side yard into a rear yard.
- (b) a walkway is permitted in any yard, provided that
 - (i) the walkway does not exceed 1.8m in width; and
 - (ii) the walkway consists of hard landscaping.
- (c) all portions of the front yard and the corner side yard not occupied by parking spaces, driveways, aisles, permitted projections or walkways must be landscaped with soft landscaping; and
- (d) all portions of any other yard not covered by parking spaces, driveways, aisles, permitted projections, permitted walkways, buildings or structures must be landscaped.

- (4) Despite subsection (3)(a), in the R1, R2, R3, R4 and R5 Zones, where the use of the lot is a Detached Dwelling, Semi-detached Dwelling, Linked-detached Dwelling, Duplex Dwelling, Townhouse Dwelling or Stacked Dwelling, a person may park a motor vehicle in a driveway permitted under S. 107.

3. Amend Section 109 by deleting subsection (11) and subsection (12).

4. Amend Section 107 (Aisle and Driveway Provisions) by replacing the existing subsection (2) with provisions similar in effect to the following:

- (2) A driveway providing access to parking spaces other than in a parking garage or parking lot must have a minimum width of 3 metres;

- (3) Despite (2), in the case of a driveway providing access to a permitted parking space for a Detached Dwelling, Semi-detached Dwelling, Linked-detached Dwelling, Duplex Dwelling, Townhouse Dwelling or Stacked Dwelling:
- (a) the driveway must have a minimum width of 2.6 metres.
 - (b) a driveway giving access to a permitted parking space located outside of the front yard and corner side yard may be located in a front yard, in a corner side yard, in the extension of an interior side yard into the front yard or in the extension of a corner side yard into a rear yard provided that:
 - (i) no part of the driveway is located between the front wall of the residential use building and the street nor, in the case of a corner lot, between the corner side wall of the residential use building and the street;
 - (ii) the area of the driveway does not exceed the greater of
 - (1) 50 per cent of the area of the yard in which it is located, or
 - (2) 2.6 metres times the depth of the yard in which it is located.
 - (c) Despite subsection (3)(b)(i), on a lot within the area shown as Area A on Schedule XXX, a driveway providing access to a permitted parking space may be widened in accordance with the following:
 - (i) a driveway's width may encroach into the extension of the interior side yard into the front yard;
 - (ii) a driveway's width may encroach up to 1.8m into the area between the front wall of the residential use building and the street, provided that the combined width of that part of the driveway extending in front of the front wall and any walkway does not exceed 1.8m;
 - (iii) in the case of a corner lot, a driveway's width may encroach up to 1.8m into the area between the corner side wall of the residential use building and the street, provided that the combined width of that part of the driveway extending in front of the corner side wall and any walkway does not exceed 1.8m;
 - (iv) any part of any driveway located between the front wall or corner side wall of the residential use building and the street must consist of non-vegetative materials such as brick, pavers, rock, stone, concrete, tile and wood, excluding monolithic concrete and asphalt.
5. Add the map shown as DOCUMENT 1 as Schedule XXX.

CONSULTATION DETAILS

DOCUMENT 3

NOTIFICATION AND CONSULTATION PROCESS

Notification and public consultation was undertaken in accordance with the Public Notification and Public Consultation Policy approved by City Council for Zoning By-law amendments. Additional consultation was undertaken through an online Visual Preference Survey illustrating the outcomes of several zoning changes under consideration; comments were also received by e-mail.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Consultation was undertaken through a visual preference survey on Ottawa.ca, which presented illustrations of driveway arrangements that would be allowed under the current rules as well as three alternatives. Two of these alternatives related to a detached house, while the third illustrated townhouses. Respondents were asked to indicate from a multiple-choice menu how they would feel if each alternative driveway arrangement began to appear or became prevalent in their neighbourhoods. The survey also offered a comment box in order to gather written responses to the various options.

The survey was available on Ottawa.ca from June 1st through August 16th.

Community associations in those Wards lying partly or entirely in the study area, i.e. Wards 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 19, 22 and 23, were sent an e-mail notifying them of the survey in late May.

Residents were informed of the survey through their ward councillors' e-newsletters in late June and early July. Residents were also reminded of the survey through newspaper ads, which were placed in community newspapers in the study area on July 6, 2013.

Several news items on the CBC, Radio-Canada and the Ottawa Sun in late July also drew attention to the study and to the opportunity to comment through the survey and by e-mail.

Public notice of the formal commentary period was published in Le Droit and the Ottawa Citizen on November 1, 2013, requesting that comments be sent by December 3, 2013. The circulation package went on November 1, 2013 to technical agencies as well as to the community associations. A summary of the proposed changes was posted on ottawa.ca.

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC INPUT

The visual preference survey resulted in 1,118 people completing the survey online, including 547 written comments. E-mails on the subject from 48 people were directed to the project e-mail addresses (driveways@ottawa.ca and voiesdaces@ottawa.ca) and to the file lead's e-mail. Feedback was also drawn from the comment threads following the news article on the Ottawa Sun's website.

A summary of survey responses and comments received is below.

Online survey: Responses to multiple-choice questions

Highlights of the three-question multiple-choice section of the visual preference survey include:

- Three out of five respondents had no issue with allowing driveways to project in front of detached houses, if the driveway widths continue to be limited to 50 per cent of the lot frontage. One in six (16 per cent) indicated that while they would accept some of their neighbours expanding their driveway in this way, they would not like it if all their neighbours did so. Nearly one respondent in four (23 per cent) indicated that they would be upset if any of their neighbours expanded their driveways in this manner.
- On the possibility of allowing detached house owners to expand their driveways to two-thirds (67 per cent) of the lot frontage, reactions were less supportive. Nearly half of respondents indicated that they would be upset if any of their neighbours were to do this.
- Finally, with respect to the proposal to allow townhouses to have double-wide driveways (up to 6m wide) without regard for the width of the lot: Responses to this illustration were highly polarized, with 46 per cent of respondents indicating that they would have no issue if all of their neighbours did this, while 41 per cent would be upset if any of their neighbours did so.

**Table 1 - Responses to multiple-choice questions in the Visual Preference Survey
Q1: Keep the 50%-frontage limit but allow driveways
to project in front of the house?**

Response	#	%
"It would not bother me if everybody on my block did this."	670	60%
"It would not bother me if a few of my neighbours did this, but I would be upset if everybody on my block did it."	180	16%
"It would bother me if anyone on my block did this."	258	23%
"No opinion."	10	1%
Total responses:	1118	100%

Q2: Increase the driveway width limit to 2/3 of frontage and allow driveways to project in front of the house?

Response	#	%
"It would not bother me if everybody on my block did this."	412	37%
"It would not bother me if a few of my neighbours did this, but I would be upset if everybody on my block did it."	154	14%
"It would bother me if anyone on my block did this."	544	49%
"No opinion."	8	1%
Total responses:	1118	100%

Q3: Allow double (6m wide) driveways in townhouses, regardless of frontage?

Response	#	%
"It would not bother me if everybody on my block did this."	513	46%
"It would not bother me if a few of my neighbours did this, but I would be upset if everybody on my block did it."	103	9%
"It would bother me if anyone on my block did this."	459	41%
"No opinion."	43	4%
Total responses:	1118	100%

Online survey: Write-in survey comments

The survey provided the opportunity to provide write-in comments in addition to the three multiple-choice questions. Of the 547 respondents who did so, written comments were evenly split between for and against. Thirty-nine per cent (213 comments) were interpreted to be generally in favour of the proposals to allow wider driveways, while 39 per cent (215 comments) appeared to be generally against.

The remaining 22 per cent (119 comments) did not indicate a clear enough stance for staff to count them for or against the proposals. This last category includes comments that implied significantly different views depending on context (e.g. one view for detached houses, another for townhomes.) It also includes ambiguous or off-topic responses.

Table 2 summarizes the most commonly cited views expressed in the 215 comments against widening driveways. (Since many commenters expressed several different points, these percentages do not add up to 100 per cent.)

Table 2 - Reasons cited in comments against proposed driveway widenings

Rank	Comment	#	%
1	Want to protect greenspace/amenity space/trees; want less pavement	70	33%
2	People should clear out their garages and park there	45	21%
3	People should have known what they were buying into/should buy an appropriate house and lot/this is not what I bought into	41	19%
4	Concerned about snow storage/removal	34	16%
5	Don't want my neighbourhood to become a parking lot/used car lot/wreck yard/concrete jungle.	31	14%
6	Wider driveways will encourage more cars/promotes sprawl/people should use transit	30	14%
7	Concerned about drainage/flooding	29	13%
8	Ugly/tacky/aesthetics	20	9%
9	Developers should be required to provide wider lots/longer driveways/more space	20	9%
10	Wider driveways lead to loss of on-street parking space	17	8%
11	City should enforce on-street parking rules/stop illegal street parking	12	6%
12	Heat island effect	6	3%

Table 3 summarizes the frequency of certain recurring views expressed among the 213 comments in favour of widening driveways. (Again, many commenters expressed several different points, these counts and percentages do not add up to 100%)

Table 3 - Reasons cited in comments in favour of allowing wider driveways

Rank	Comment	#	%
1	Want parked cars off the street/residents are taking up all street parking, leaving none for visitors	99	46%
2	Winter parking/driving/snow clearance/accumulation	43	20%
3	Safety	40	19%
4	Streets are too narrow/hard to get through	35	16%
5	The loss of green space is okay/pavement is better than weeds (pesticide ban, watering restrictions)	18	8%
6	Aesthetics	11	5%
7	Need more flexibility/there just isn't enough room	7	3%
8	Jockeying cars is inconvenient	6	3%
9	Garages are too small to park a car	5	2%
10	Public transportation is not practical in the suburbs	4	2%
11	People need their garages for storage	4	2%

Some observations can be made of the remaining ambiguous, neutral or split responses:

- Many of comments echoed the sentiments expressed in the For and Against comments, without taking a clear stance for or against allowing wider driveways generally.
- The most common thread was that development standards caused/allowed the problem to occur. (This also came up in some of the For and Against responses.)
- In some cases, commenters objected to wider driveways for townhouses specifically.

E-mail responses

Of the 48 comments received by e-mail, most (29 out of 48) expressed opposition to relaxing the driveway rules, while about one-third (15 out of 48) expressed support for the idea. Themes in the e-mail responses are broadly similar to those expressed through the written survey comments.

A number of comments (both e-mail and through the survey) suggested that permeable pavers would make a wider driveway more acceptable and less problematic from a drainage standpoint.

Some commenters asked why the proposed changes are only being contemplated outside the Greenbelt.

Ottawa Sun comment thread

Following an interview on the Suburban Driveway study that was published in the Ottawa Sun on July 24th, 2013, Staff consulted the online comment thread. As of July 26th, 2013 when the comment thread was closed, there were 64 comments; unlike the general response to the survey, most of these were against the proposal to allow wider driveways.

Formal Circulation - November 1st through December 3rd, 2013

Formal circulation drew an additional 23 comments from the public and eight comments from technical agencies. Most of the public comments echoed or repeated comments received during the survey and are addressed in Table 4, below.

Responses to comments from the public

Table 4 summarizes the comments received from the public and how this report addresses them.

Table 4 - Comments and responses

Comments	Response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Want to protect greenspace/amenity space/trees; • (Wider driveways are) ugly/tacky/make the neighbourhood look like a ghetto; • Want less pavement; • Concerned about snow storage/removal; • Don't want my neighbourhood to become a parking lot/used car lot/wreck yard/concrete jungle; • Wider driveways lead to loss of on-street parking space; • Concerned about drainage/flooding. • Need more flexibility/there just isn't enough room. 	<p>The proposed amendment does not increase the limits on the permitted width of driveways, i.e. it remains at 50 per cent of the front yard. The only change is to eliminate some obstacles that constrain where that 50 per cent may be located and to give greater flexibility to homeowners in doing so.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would like to see empirical evidence that allowing driveways to extend up to 1.8m in front of the house will not cause drainage problems; would like to know the effect if 25%, 50% or more of households widened their driveways in this manner. 	<p>Where the proposed Zoning By-law amendment allows driveways to be extended in front of the house, it only does so to the extent that walkways are currently allowed in this space, i.e. 1.8 metres. Where a driveway and/or walkway is allowed in front of the front wall of the house, the combined width cannot exceed 1.8 metres. Therefore this amendment does not result in a net increase in the allowable hardscaped area in front of the house, it merely gives some flexibility as to whether that hardscape is driveway, walkway, or a bit of both.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heat island effect; • Esthetics; • Permeable pavers would help. 	<p>To the extent that driveways will be allowed to extend in front of the house, these concerns are mitigated by the requirement for an alternative paving material which will increase albedo (i.e. increasing the amount of sunlight which is reflected instead of being absorbed and radiated as heat) and avoid the sea of asphalt effect. Many of these alternatives</p>

	<p>are permeable to a greater or lesser extent, which would further help in managing stormwater.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The loss of green space is okay/pavement is better than weeds (pesticide ban, watering restrictions.) 	<p>Green space is one aspect of neighbourhood character. The grass/landscaped area is necessary to accommodate stormwater runoff and snow melt, not just from paved surfaces but rooftops as well. Subdivisions and house lots are designed with the assumption that a certain amount of on-site green space will help mitigate drainage issues.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Winter parking/driving/snow clearance/accumulation. 	<p>Allowing wider driveways reduces the amount of space available for on-site snow storage. In some cases there is already a certain amount of snow that gets pushed on to the sidewalk or the street itself, requiring more frequent removal at substantial cost. Widening driveways does not eliminate the snow accumulation problem but moves it around and in some cases makes it worse.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objections to allowing driveway widening are specifically directed at townhouses. 	<p>Several commenters during the formal circulation said specifically that townhouses should not have wider driveways, due mainly to drainage and snow storage issues.</p> <p>The amendment maintains the current 50 per cent limit on the proportion of the front yard that may be used for driveways. In practice, a townhouse on a 5.5 metres wide lot will be allowed to use only half or 2.75 metres of its width for driveways, a restriction that will trump any notion of extending the driveway in front of the rest of the house.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wants to know which villages will be affected by the amendment. 	<p>The proposed changes would apply only in the suburban area. (See Document 1.) The rural area, including villages, are not</p>

	affected.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jockeying cars is inconvenient. 	The relaxation of rules for where a driveway can be located should make it easier to park side-by-side where the lot is wide enough.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City should enforce on-street parking rules/stop illegal street parking; want parked cars off the street/residents are taking up all street parking, leaving none for visitors. 	These are enforcement matters.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Garages are too small to park a car; People should clear out their garages and park there; Developers should be required to provide wider lots/longer driveways/more space; People need their garages for storage; Streets are too narrow/hard to get through. 	Research has suggested that the garages currently being built in many suburban houses, although they meet the requirements of the Zoning By-law, may be too small to easily accommodate vehicles, particularly when the other storage functions of the garage are taken into account. Similarly, slightly deeper minimum setbacks would better accommodate the use of driveways for parking, with comparatively little detrimental impact on urban design. These observations will be referred to the Working Group on Suburban Subdivisions Standards for consideration in their work.

Comments from technical agencies

The proposed amendment was informed by meetings with representatives of the Public Works and Infrastructure Services Departments. These meetings occurred prior to the formal technical circulation.

These Departments urged caution in approaching any change to the rules that would allow driveways to be widened. However, their concerns were particularly acute with respect to the possibility of allowing driveways to exceed the 50 per cent limit in order to allow double-wide driveways for townhouses:

- Excessively wide driveways leave too little space for storing snow on the lot, resulting in driveway snow being pushed on to the right-of-way. Wide driveways also reduce the amount of space available for snow removed from the roadway by City crews. Both of these aspects entail a significant increase in City removal costs.
- Water drainage during spring melt, winter rain, and other freeze/thaw cycles would see impacts due to difficulties in clearing and keeping clear catch basins of snow.
- From a legal standpoint, claims could increase on sidewalks due to poor water drainage during freeze/thaw as well as snow redeposit onto sidewalks.
- Fire hydrants are required to be 3m from any adjacent driveway or parking area; a driveway that is widened to within 3m of a hydrant would contravene this guideline.
- Services are usually installed under the grassed areas to reduce reinstatement cost when servicing and take advantage of snow cover to reduce frost depth penetration. Allowing these grassed areas to be paved increases the risk the pipes underneath freezing in winter.
- Where driveways and curb cuts are widened, it may require a replacement of curb inlet catchbasins (i.e. the kind where stormwater enters sideways at the curb) with surface type (the kind that is horizontal and flush with the ground.) Compared to curb inlets, surface inlets are costly to maintain and problematic from an accessibility standpoint.
- The stormwater collection system is designed assuming a certain amount of permeable surface (i.e. grass) to help absorb rainwater and meltwater. Removing too much of this grass and replacing it with pavement is problematic.
- There may be legal issues in that claims could increase on sidewalks due to poor water drainage during freeze/thaw as well as snow redeposit onto sidewalks.

- Wider driveways leave little room for trees and tree growth.

Comments from technical circulation (November 1 - December 3rd, 2013)

Most of the responses to the technical circulation indicated no comment or no objection. These include the Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority, Rogers Communications, South Nation Conservation Authority, Rideau Valley Conservation Authority, Netricom, Hydro One Winchester and le Conseil des écoles publiques de l'Est de l'Ontario.

Ottawa Hydro submitted a list of requirements that they would need to be met in the case of a driveway widening. However, Ottawa Hydro confirms that these requirements "are not substantially different from the current driveway rules. However we want to be absolutely sure that the home owners aware of the potential risks of excavating around buried Hydro cables and how to obtain locates."

MTS Allstream (which owns part of the telecommunications/fiber optic network) comments: "Caution: When you have the drawings up to construction please send them to us with all details, and we will do a mark-up for you showing our plant intersecting with your construction. At this stage we can only say that Allstream has some area with plant."

Responses to comments from technical agencies

The comments from Public Works and Infrastructure Services were taken into account in drafting the proposed changes, and these agencies' concerns are the primary reason for not increasing the 50 per cent cap on driveway area.

The comments from Ottawa Hydro and MTS Allstream are essentially restatements of their current criteria, and no change is proposed to how these are applied.

**RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE BUILDING
BETTER SUBURBS TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP**

DOCUMENT 4

In the course of this zoning study, several observations were made that relate to the parking difficulties experienced by residents of outer suburban neighbourhoods. To amend these zoning provisions, which in many cases would involve a fundamental change to the rules of suburban development, is outside the scope of the present report.

The Building Better Suburbs is being carried out by a technical working group examining all aspects of suburban subdivision design and zoning. It is expected to bring forward recommendations on the design of new subdivisions. To that group, the following observations are supplied:

1. Parking spaces located in garages may be too small.

The Zoning By-law sets the minimum size of a parking space at 2.6 metre wide by 5.2 metres deep (106(1)), including when that space is located abutting or near a wall, column or other similar surface that obstructs the opening of the doors of a parked vehicle or limits access to a parking space, that parking space must have a minimum width of 2.6 metres. (106(4).) Many home models being built in Ottawa have very small garages, particularly townhouses which often have garages as small as 2.74 metres (9') wide.

A relatively small number of commenters suggested that garages are too small to park a car in, and that this is why cars are left on the driveway and why a second vehicle ends up parked on the street. More commenters observed that garages are not used to park cars but rather are used for storage. This is not surprising if the garages are too small to park a car.

It may be appropriate to increase the minimum size of a parking space when it is located in a garage, to ensure that it is wide enough to be used for parking (with space for opening car doors and moving around the vehicle) without undue difficulty.

2. Suburban townhouse lots may be too small.

Some townhouses in production in Ottawa are as narrow as 5.5 metre (18 feet) wide. Since most of these include parking that is accessed from the front of the house, it makes for a very tight fit. If parking width requirements were increased as suggested in point #1, above, this would lead to proportionately more of the facade being occupied by garages and driveways. To maintain a balance between esthetics and functionality, one option is to increase the minimum width of townhouse lots to ensure that a functional garage and driveway is balanced by more green space and building facade. This option has to be weighed against the City's overall growth management strategy to determine how it would impact development densities.

3. Minimum front yard setbacks with respect to garage doors may be too shallow.

Many newer subdivisions have buildings that are set back only 3 metre to 4.5 metre from the street line. This is not readily apparent to the casual observer, since the width of the City's boulevard makes the setback seem that much larger. However, these setbacks mean that a car parked in the driveway encroaches on the public right-of-way.

Where a household has two or more vehicles (as is commonly the case in the outer suburban area) it is likely that at least one of them will be parked in the driveway. Indeed, even in single-car households, cars are often parked in the driveway *instead of* in the garage. Therefore the driveway should be big enough to contain the vehicle on the property.

The Zoning By-law requires that parking spaces be at least 5.2 metre long. It may be worth considering an amendment to the effect that a driveway leading to a garage from the street (which effectively serve as parking spaces themselves) must be a minimum of 5.2 metre in length for detached, semi-detached, duplex, stacked and townhouse dwellings in the outer suburban area. This will ensure that when a car is parked in the driveway, it remains on the property and does not encroach on the public right of way.

This rule would not preclude builders from locating houses in accordance with a 3 metre or 4.5 metre setback, but it will require that the garage be set back farther. Most existing house designs, which put the garage flush with the front wall of the dwelling, would effectively have to be set back an extra 70-220 centimetres beyond what is currently required. In the longer term, house designs that recess the garage door relative to the front wall would also contribute to better urban design.

4. Should street-oriented townhouses be required to have rear lanes?

A recurring theme in this study has involved the tension between several conflicting imperatives. Townhouses on narrow lots allow for more affordable housing and lower per-dwelling-unit infrastructure costs to both the developer and the City. However, this narrow frontage leaves little room for street trees and their root balls, snow storage, garbage on pickup day, or for parking in front of the house. These needs all end up competing for a very small space and at a certain point, particularly if multiple vehicles are to be parked, there can be a real conflict. Frequent driveways (in practice, where they are located less than about six metres apart) break up the street frontage to the point where on-street visitor parking is lost.

One solution to this would be to require that street-oriented townhouses have rear-lane access for vehicles, and no driveways from the street; keeping the cars and parking at the back, while leaving the front for trees and greenspace, effectively doubles the amount of frontage available to these uses. This would impose some design changes on developers and builders who currently create lots and buildings designed for vehicle access from the front. However, it may be worthwhile in the long run if it serves to alleviate the problems highlighted in this report and in the comments received.