



Automotive Commercial Zoning By-law Technical Paper

What We Heard Report

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Introduction

This What We Heard report documents the consultation undertaken for the Automotive Commercial Uses technical discussion paper. Stakeholders, including industry representatives, were invited to participate through interviews, but there were no responses to these invitations. The consultation consisted of an online public survey with 10 respondents.

The discussion paper is prepared by Gladki Planning Associated in support of the Comprehensive Zoning By-law Review to address land use planning issues regarding automotive commercial uses.

This study will inform (1) any necessary changes to the Official Plan policies related to automotive commercial uses; (2) where within the City of Richmond Hill, these uses should be permitted in the new comprehensive zoning by-law; and (3) appropriate performance standards for automotive commercial uses (e.g. size, setback, landscaping, parking and loading).

These uses are important to providing services for maintaining automobiles and supporting commercial businesses throughout the City. The City plans for these uses through zoning By-laws and other planning tools, to reduce conflict but also to ensure convenient access for the public and to support local businesses.

Eight types of automotive uses are generally defined in zoning By-laws and the Official Plan in the City of Richmond Hill. The use of these terms is not always consistent between the Official Plan and Zoning By-laws or even between various zoning By-laws. The following are common defined terms relating to automotive uses:

- Automotive Service Commercial includes a range of automotive uses including gas stations, the sale of auto parts, car washes and minor repair shops;
- Automobile Service Station means a place for the sale of petrol or petroleum products or oil changes or where light running repairs are performed;
- Gas Bar means a place where petrol, petroleum products or automobile accessories are sold but does not include any repairs;
- Gas Bar Convenience Retail Store means a small retail store associated with a gas station which is primarily intended to serve pre-packaged goods to drivers and passengers;
- Motor Vehicle/Lubrication Establishment means a shop providing for the on-going maintenance of motor vehicles but not including body shop or service station which may provide repairs or public garage;
- Motor Vehicle Washing Establishment means an automated car wash;
- Public Garage has a number of meanings which vary between By-laws. Generally, a public garage refers a place for the running repair of vehicles but not including a motor vehicle body shop. The definition may also include car dealerships and car washes or

may explicitly exclude these uses. See the review of By-law definitions below for more detail; and,

- Service or Repair Shop may refer to an establishment for the repair of goods including automobiles and for the sale of tires as defined in By-law 2523. Some other in Richmond Hill By-laws exclude automotive uses from this definition. See By-law definitions below for greater detail.

The following automotive uses are examined through the discussion paper and through public consultation:

- Gas station;
- Car wash;
- Car dealership;
- Auto mall;
- Electric vehicle charging station;
- Car and truck rental agency including customer-driven moving vehicle/trailer rental;
- Car-share facility or app-assisted rental parking spot;
- Automotive repair shop;
- Automotive body shop;
- Automotive accessory/parts store; and
- Facility for storing/maintaining corporate fleet vehicles (such as school bus, taxi or delivery truck depot).

Automotive Commercial: Consultation Summary

The public was consulted for this project to inform an appropriate land use and zoning approach. Public response to this item was limited through the community survey with no further input from stakeholders.

Respondents were asked to indicate their preference regarding the location of Automotive Uses within the City, the potential clustering of these uses and the design of these facilities.

Although limited response was received, survey respondents provided valuable input regarding automotive commercial uses in Richmond Hill. Respondents were generally satisfied with existing locations of automotive uses within the City and note some preference regarding the locations where each of these uses are permitted through the City including some interest in the clustering of particular automotive uses. Respondents also indicated support for access throughout Richmond Hill to car-share facilities and vehicle charging stations.

Community Survey

Automotive Commercial Uses Survey was shared by the City of Richmond Hill between June and July 2021, with 10 respondents. The survey results are as follows.

Access

Respondents indicated a strong preference for access to gas stations, car wash facilities accessible from a place of residence or a place of work. Respondents also note an interest in electric vehicle charging locations accessible from a place of work.

A desire for access in proximity to home and work was not expressed for all uses. There was no preference for access to car dealerships or fleet storage facilities.

Location of Automotive Uses and Facilities

The majority of respondents also indicated that they either live or work in proximity to at least one Automotive Use. The majority also indicate some satisfaction with respect to the location of existing automotive uses or facilities in the City with respondents being overwhelmingly satisfied with the existing location of automotive body shops, repair shops, rental agencies, gas stations, dealerships.

No issues were identified regarding the location of automotive accessory/parts stores or fleet storage facilities.

Public charging points are currently limited in Richmond Hill and respondents noted a desire for these facilities to be accessible in proximity to places of work.

Respondents generally agree that the City's Regional Corridors (Highway 7 and Yonge Street) are most supportive of a range of automotive uses including gas stations, car washes, automotive accessory/parts retail, vehicle dealerships, rental agencies and car share.

Gas Station

Respondents generally indicated a preference for access to gas stations throughout the City's road systems including along the Highway 7 and Yonge Street, arterial roads, and the intersection of major roads. Respondents indicated that these uses should not locate along local and collector streets.

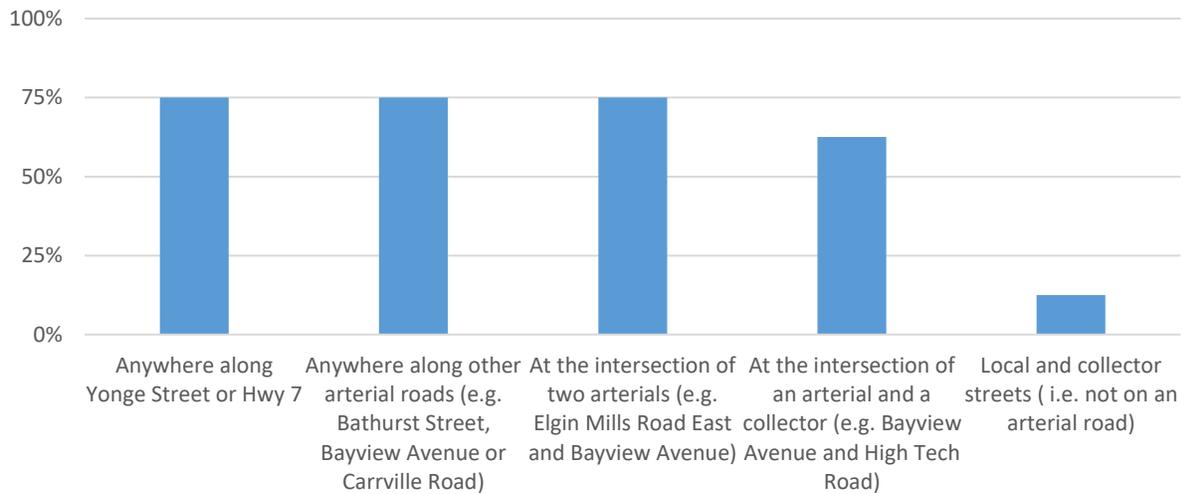


Figure 1 - Where would you like to have the following uses or facilities located?: Gas Station

Respondents also support the location of gas stations in major and local centres (78%, 7 respondents; 1 skipped) while there was moderate support for these facilities to also be located within the City’s employment areas (56%, 5 respondents; 1 skipped).

Car Wash

Respondents generally indicated some level of support for access to car wash facilities across the City’s major road systems, particularly along the Regional Corridor and arterial roads.



Figure 2 - Where would you like to have the following uses or facilities located?: Car Wash

Respondents indicated some level of support for car wash facilities within major and local centres (67%, 6 respondents; 1 skipped). There was support for these facilities within the City’s employment areas (78%, 7 respondents; 1 skipped).

Car Dealership

Respondents noted support for car dealerships located along limited road types. Support was noted for these facilities adjacent to the City’s Regional Corridors.

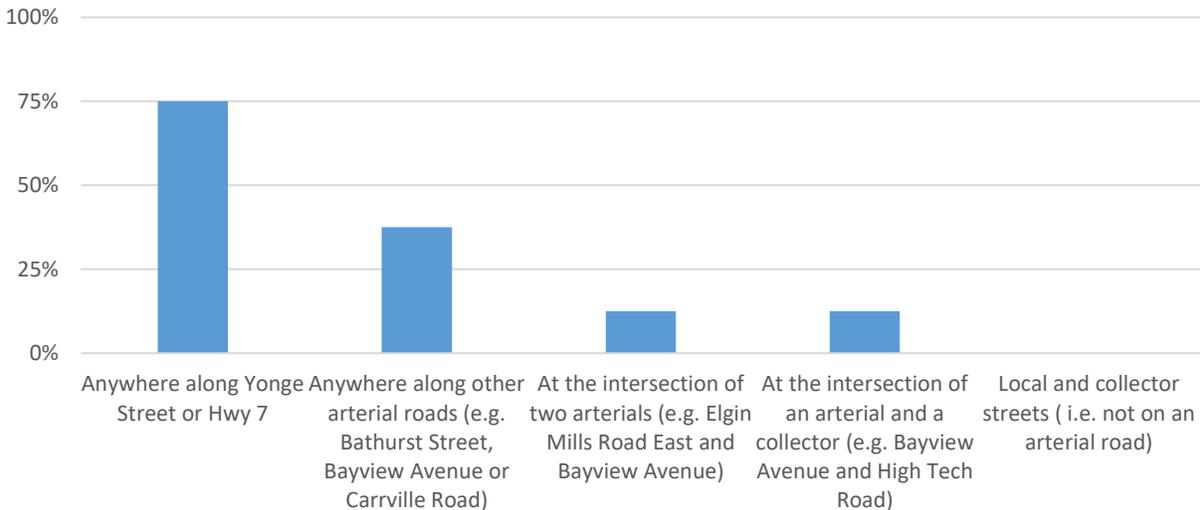


Figure 3 - Where would you like to have the following uses or facilities located?: Car Dealership

Respondents did not support the location of vehicle dealerships within major and local centres only 33% supported this use in these locations (3 respondents; 1 skipped). Of respondents, there was modest support for car dealerships within employment areas (56%, 5 respondents; 1 skipped).

Auto Mall

Respondents did not note a strong preference for Auto Mall uses in any area in the City. These uses are generally preferred along major roads among respondents.

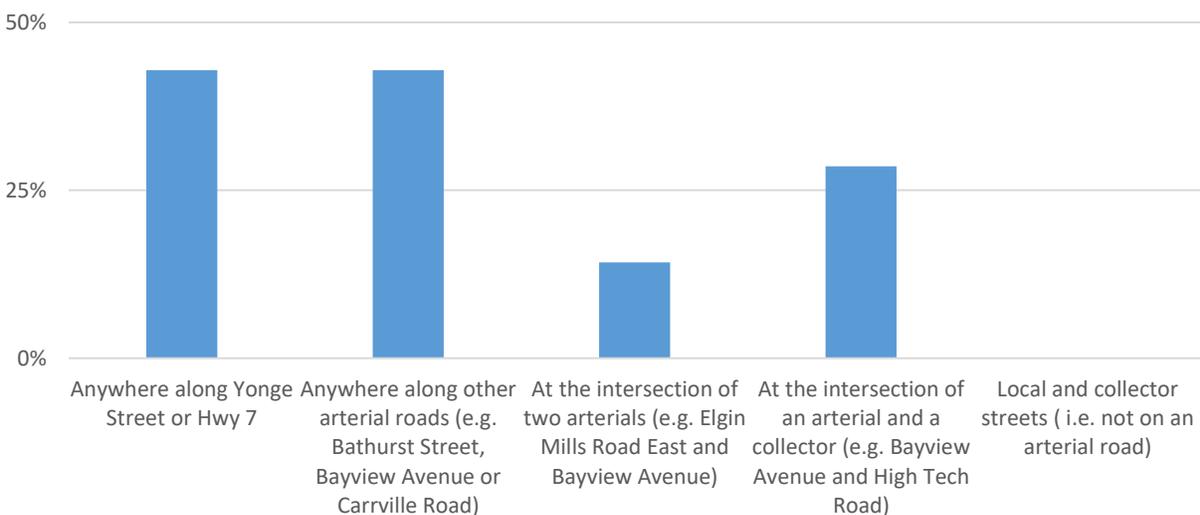


Figure 4 - Where would you like to have the following uses or facilities located?: Auto Mall

Electric Vehicle Charging Station

Respondents note a preference for electric vehicle charging stations to locate along Yonge Street and Highway 7 and at the intersection of arterials.

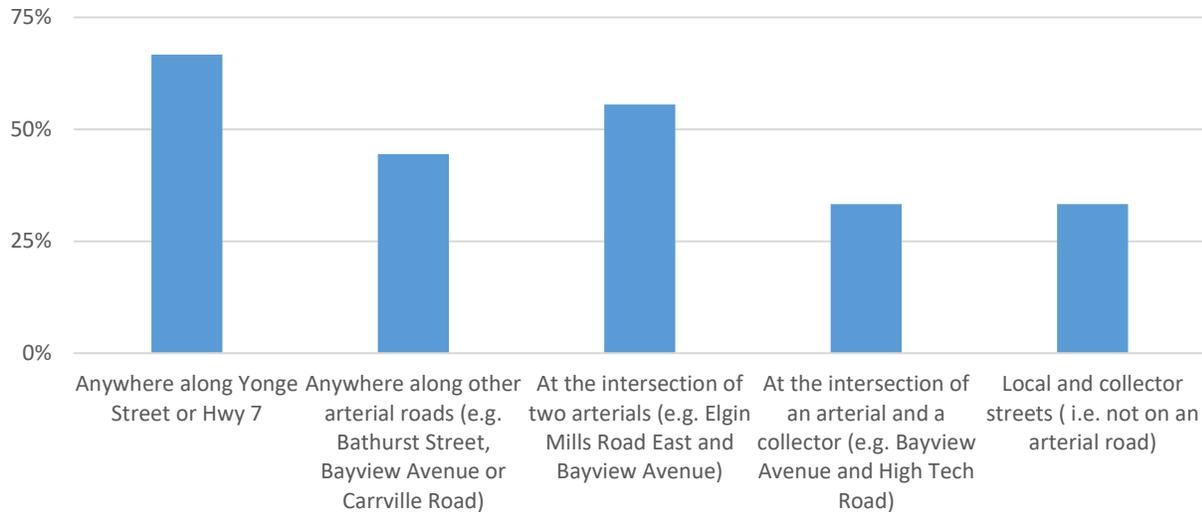


Figure 5 - Where would you like to have the following uses or facilities located?: Electric Vehicle Charging Station

There is support for these uses within major and local centres (78%, 7 respondents; 1 skipped) and the City’s employment areas (56%, 5 respondents; 1 skipped).

Car and Truck Rental Agency

Respondents indicate a preference for car and truck rental agencies primarily along major routes.

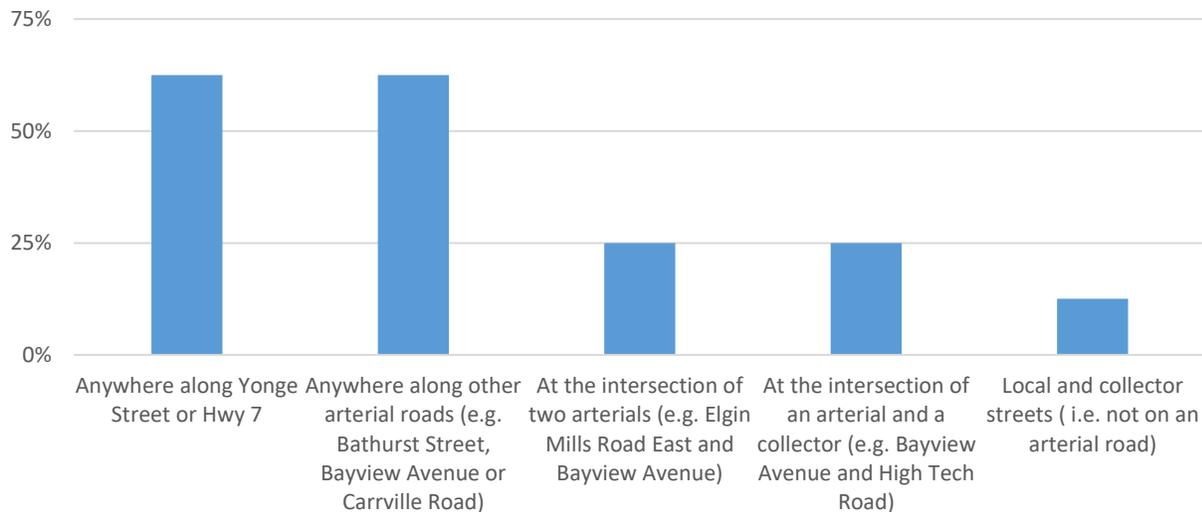


Figure 6 - Where would you like to have the following uses or facilities located?: Car and Truck Rental Agency

There is a notable preference for these uses in employment areas (67%, 6 respondents; 1 skipped) while there is limited support for these uses within major and local centres (33% 3 respondents; 1 skipped). It is notable that while rental agencies are not supported within major and local centres, respondents support app-assisted rental parking within major and local centres.

Car-share facility or App-assisted Rental Parking Spot

Similar to car and truck rental agencies, respondents indicate a preference for car-share or app-assisted rental along major routes. There is moderate support for these uses along other road types however.

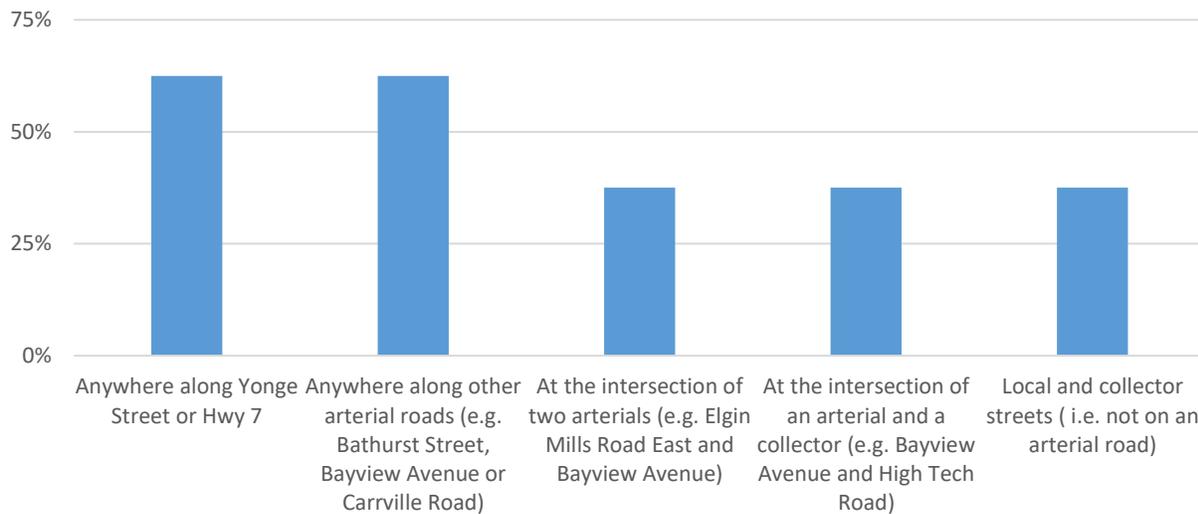


Figure 7 - Where would you like to have the following uses or facilities located?: Car-share Facility or App-assisted Rental Parking Spot

These uses are supported within major and local centres (56%, 5 respondents; 1 skipped) and within employment areas (67%, 6 respondents; 1 skipped).

Automotive Repair Shop

Automotive repair shops are desired along arterial roads primarily and are preferred to not be located along Yonge Street, Highway 7 or at major intersections.

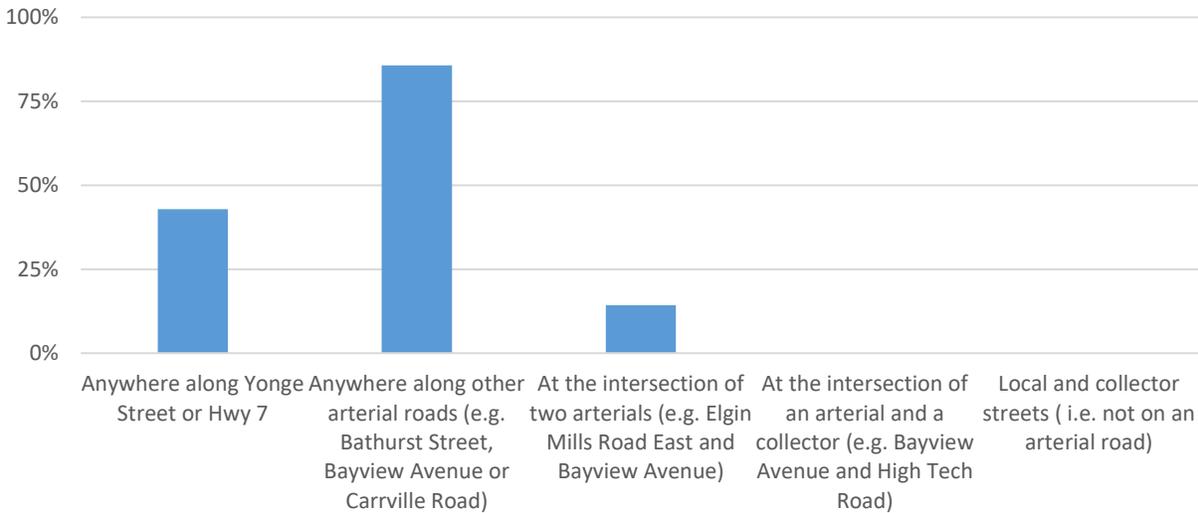


Figure 8 - Where would you like to have the following uses or facilities located?: Automotive Repair Shop

Respondents note a general preference for these facilities within the City’s employment areas (78%, 7 respondents; 1 skipped). There was limited support for the location of these uses within major and local centres (44%, 4 respondents; 1 skipped).

There is limited support for automotive oil change shops within major and local centres (44%, 4 respondents; 1 skipped) and employment areas (44%, 4 respondents; 1 skipped).

Automotive Body Shop

Similar to automotive repair shops, automotive body shops are preferred along arterial roads and not supported along Yonge Street or Highway 7.

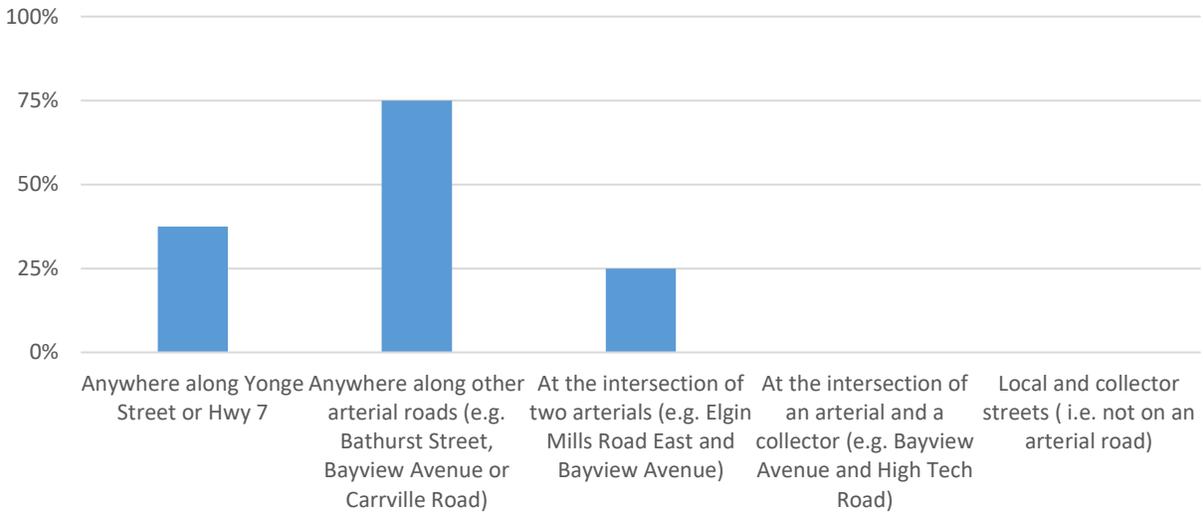


Figure 9 - Where would you like to have the following uses or facilities located?: Automotive Body Shop

These uses are not supported within major and local centres (11%, 1 respondent; 1 skipped). There is modest support for these uses within the City’s employment areas (56% 5 respondents; 1 skipped).

Automotive Accessory/parts store

Automotive accessory/parts stores are supported along Highway 7, Yonge Street and the City's arterial roads.

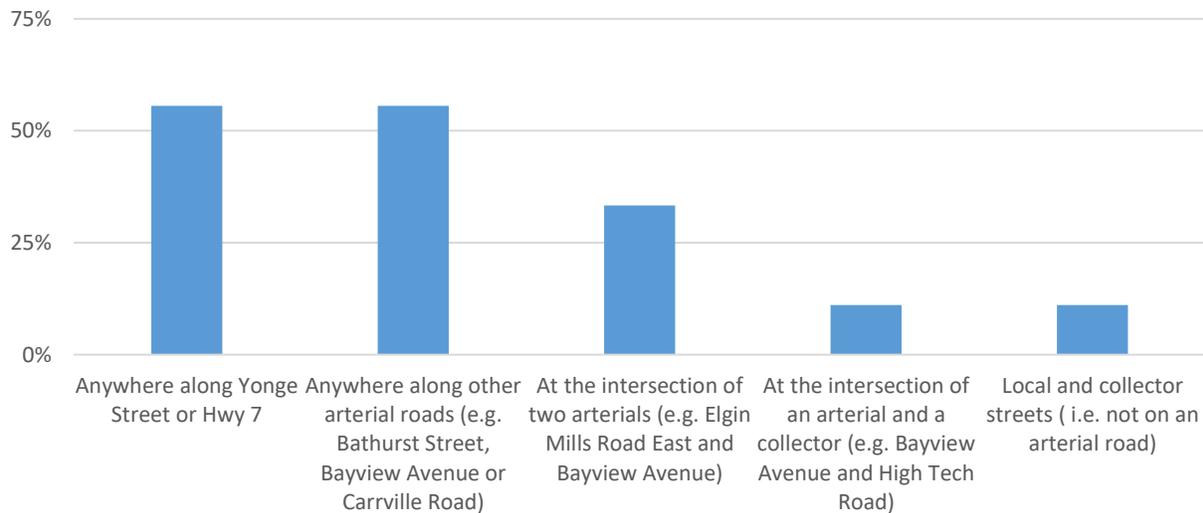


Figure 10 - Where would you like to have the following uses or facilities located?: Automotive Accessory/parts store

There is limited support for these uses within employment areas (44%, 4 respondents; 1 skipped) and some support within major and local centres (56%, 5 respondents; 1 skipped).

Facility of Storing/Maintaining Corporate Fleet Vehicles

There is limited support for fleet management facilities in locations across the City.



Figure 11 - Where would you like to have the following uses or facilities located?: Facility Storing/Maintaining Corporate Fleet Vehicles

Respondents note some preference for these facilities within employment areas (44%, 4 respondents; 1 skipped). No respondents noted a desire for these facilities to be located within major and local centres.

Automotive Hubs

Automotive uses and facilities, such as dealerships, automotive rental services and automotive repair facilities are often clustered together as means of providing convenient and accessible sales and service to customers and businesses. There is general support for an automotive hub within Richmond Hill.

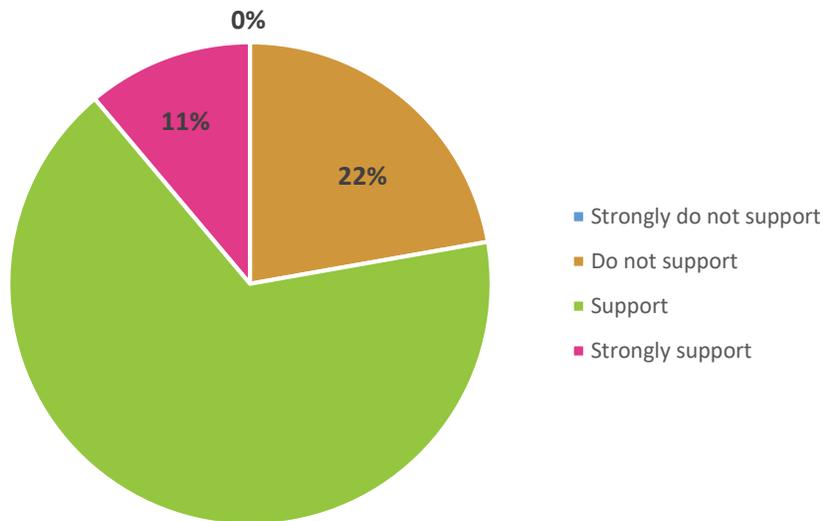


Figure 12 - How would you rate the following statements for addressing automotive commercial uses and facilities (automotive hubs) in Richmond Hill?: An automotive hub would be appropriate for locating automotive commercial uses in Richmond Hill

There is support for these facilities within major/local centres within the City of Richmond Hill with all respondents supporting the location of these facilities in these locations.

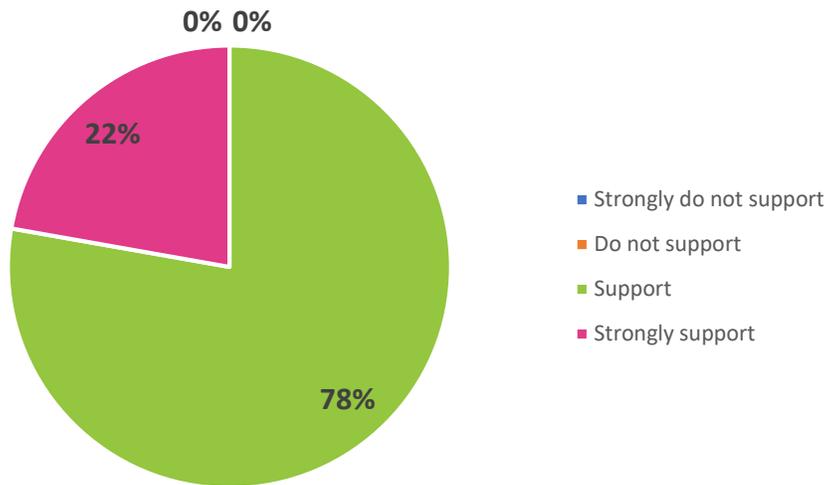


Figure 13 - How would you rate the following statements for addressing automotive commercial uses and facilities (automotive hubs) in Richmond Hill?: An automotive hub should be located within a major/local commercial centre

Respondents generally also support the location of these facilities within the City's employment areas, however some opposition is also noted.

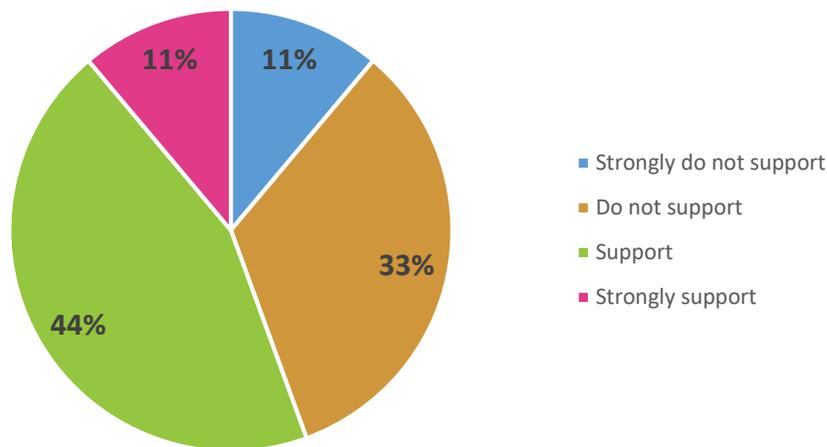


Figure 14 - How would you rate the following statements for addressing automotive commercial uses and facilities (automotive hubs) in Richmond Hill?: An automotive hub should be located in an Employment Area

Responses were received from 9 respondents. One respondent skipped this question.

Parking Area Layout

Respondents note a preference for the City to regulate the design of automotive uses to address pedestrian walkways through parking areas.

Beyond pedestrian access through parking areas, respondents note that they are generally satisfied with their experience with respect to the layout of parking areas (including vehicle laybys, queuing and loading spaces). Some respondents noted negative experiences are associated with the layout of gas stations, car dealerships, rental agencies, repair shops, accessory/parts stores and facilities for maintaining fleet vehicles.

Automotive Uses Abutting Residential Areas

There is a general interest in addressing the relationship of automotive uses abutting residential areas. The majority of respondents express a desire for the City to address minimum setback distances and visual screening for the following automotive uses abutting residential areas: Gas stations, Car and truck rental agencies, Automotive Repair, Automotive Body Shops, and Facilities for maintaining fleet vehicles. The requirement for a minimum level of visual screening is also desired for automotive accessory/parts stores located adjacent to residential areas.

A desire for minimum landscape strip for rental agencies, repair shops, body shops, facilities for maintaining fleet vehicles is also indicated by respondents.

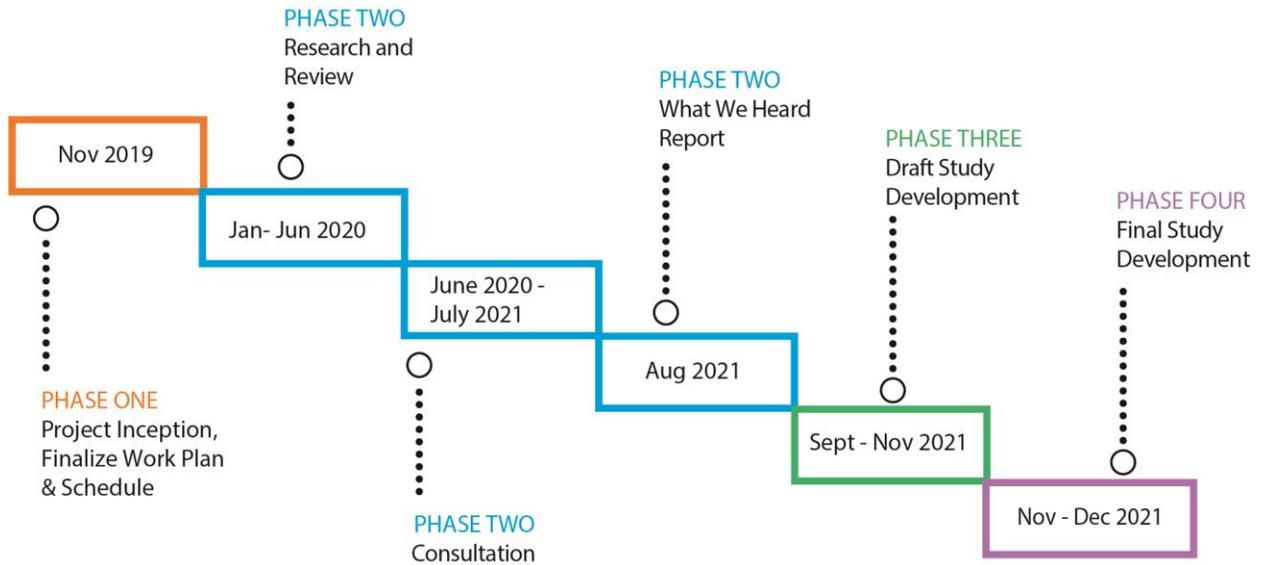
Respondents desired that the City address the separation of loading facilities from adjacent residential areas for car dealerships, rental agencies, automotive repair, body shops, accessory parts stores and facilities for maintaining fleet vehicles.

Queuing Standards Drive-through Facilities

There is modest interest in establishing minimum queuing lengths for drive-through facilities, particularly for drive-throughs associated with gas stations or car wash uses.

Next Steps

- Finalized First Draft of Study, **October 2021**
- Public Information Consultation, **November 2021**
- Final Report, **December 2021**



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Project Webpage:

<https://www.richmondhill.ca/en/zone-richmond-hill.aspx>