



City needs to cut parking red tape

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TREB PRESIDENT'S COLUMN AS IT APPEARS IN THE TORONTO SUN

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If you are a regular reader, you will remember one of my recent columns that provided an update on a City of Toronto decision to clarify its rules to ensure that residents could continue to park their cars on their driveways. As I mentioned then, adequate parking, or the lack of it, can be a deal maker or a deal breaker in a real estate transaction. So, I want to, once again, spend some time on this issue; however, this time, my focus is on the City's rules for front-yard and/or boulevard parking.

For most Toronto residents, parking their vehicles is straightforward: they park them in their driveway, garage, or both. However, many residents don't have either of those options, and, instead, rely on parking spots added by altering the landscaping of their front-yards and the boulevard portion of their property. Homeowners are required to obtain a permit from the City for such parking spots.

The City's process to obtain a permit is not simple. It creates significant red-tape for homeowners and requires the payment of various permit fees. Nevertheless, although that is an important consideration, at present, my main focus with this issue is how the City handles front yard / boulevard parking spots that have already been approved, when a property is sold.

It stands to reason that there should be no added red-tape when a new homeowner inherits an existing licensed front-yard / boulevard parking spot when they purchase the property. While City rules do allow the license for an existing front-yard / boulevard parking spot to be transferred to a new owner, they also require that the new owner complete an application and

pay a fee of \$115.10 to have the license transferred. According to City staff, it may also be necessary to have the parking spot inspected by City staff before the license can be transferred.

Nobody appreciates surprises during the home-buying process, which is why I'm zeroing in on this aspect of this issue. REALTORS® believe that any government rules that add red-tape to the home buying process should be streamlined to help ensure smooth and efficient transactions for homebuyers. With regard to the City's front yard / boulevard license transfer process, where a parking spot has been approved and conforms to the terms of the approval, the license transfer process should be quick, certain, and costs, if any, should be minimal.

REALTORS® make it a priority to work with all levels of government to reduce the red tape that they add to the home buying process. In this regard, we plan to communicate our concerns about the City's front-yard / boulevard parking rules to the City, and I look forward to updating you on this.

Bill Johnston is President of the Toronto Real Estate Board, a professional association that represents 31,000 REALTORS® in the Greater Toronto Area.

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