

A POLICY GUIDE:

Making Parking Lots and Commercial Driveways Safer For Pedestrians

Presented By: Saira Shah
Saira.shah@dal.ca



Introduction:

Why pedestrians and parking lot?

Analyzed nineteen plans and design guidelines in North America

Criteria:

The quality of a policy maker's writing based on the Planning Aid England Document

The pedestrian safety features based on a literature review of pedestrian safety studies



A Well-Written Policy



Have a Specific Intention (Purpose):

“Be clear about what you are seeking to achieve and what the outcome of applying the policies is intended to be” (Planning Aid England, 2015, P. 6).

Document Example-Toronto, ON: “The Design Guidelines for ‘Greening’ Surface Parking Lots [respond to] both the [urban design and environmental challenges] associated with a surface parking lot. The Guidelines are intended to create surface parking lots that are not only [efficient, but also safe, attractive and environmentally responsible.]” (Toronto City Planning, 2013, P. 1)



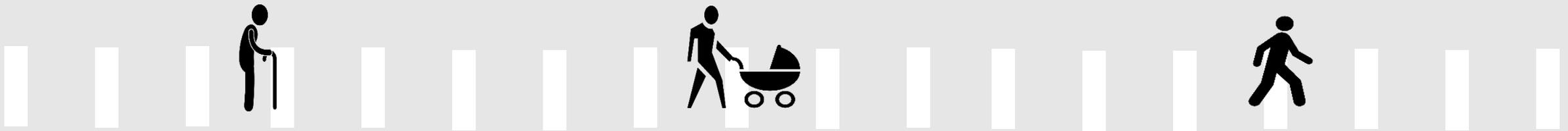
Be Clear and Unambiguous:

“Policies should be drafted with sufficient clarity that a decision maker can apply them consistently and with confidence when determining planning applications. Care needs to be taken in order to ensure that your intention is clear and that your policies do not include words that are open to different interpretations” (Planning Aid England, 2015, P. 6).



Be Clear and Unambiguous:

Document Example- Vaughan, ON: “Pathways should be [distinctly paved and barrier-free, well-lit] with pedestrian-scaled lighting and include benches, bike rings, and trash receptacles at nodal points, as determined at site plan design stage. Provide a safe, [interconnected pedestrian network within and adjacent] to parking lots [to connect] building entrances, parking spaces, public sidewalks, transit stops and other pedestrian destinations” (City of Vaughan Policy Planning Department, 2016, P. 6).



Be Flexible:

Provides options for implementation. “Care needs to be taken in using terms such as ‘must’ and ‘preserve.’ This is because it discourages positive change which could improve and enhance the community” (Planning Aid England, 2015, P. 7).

Document Example- Westminster, CO: “To enhance pedestrian safety and attractiveness of the walkway, internal pedestrian walkways within a parking lot or drive area must be distinguished from the driving surface by [\[use of pavers, bricks, integrally colored, scored concrete, or other acceptable methods\]](#) as determined by the City” (City of Westminster, 2011, P. 10).



Include Evidence:

“Evidence should be provided to support your policies and the choices you have made” (Planning Aid England, 2015, P. 8).



Include Evidence:

Document Example- Cambridge, MA: City sidewalks are important social spaces as well as travel routes, and space for people to stop and talk or to stand and watch must also be factored into calculations of optimal sidewalk widths, especially in commercial areas. Nonetheless, it is not the case that sidewalks should always be as wide as possible: [\[“Having too much space is just as undesirable as having too little. Too much space makes a sidewalk seem ‘empty,’ because people are distributed over too large an area.”⁷\]](#)

⁷Project for Public Spaces, *The Effects of Environmental Design on the Amount and Type of Bicycling and Walking*, National Bicycling and Walking Study, FHWA Case Study No. 20, U.S. Dept. of Transportation, FHWA-PD-93-037 (April 1993), pp. 17-18. (City of Cambridge, 2000, P. 3.3)



Use Positive Language:

“Planning policies should use positive language, looking at ways to enhance and improve your area. The words ‘encouraged,’ ‘supported’ and ‘will be permitted’ all convey positive approaches to development” (Planning Aid England, 2015, P. 7).

Document Example- Vaughan, ON: “To provide for a [\[safer and more generous\]](#) pedestrian realm, more landscaping and reduce the length of pedestrian crossings, minimize dimensions of drive aisles, access mouths, stacking lanes or turning radii” (City of Vaughan Policy Planning Department, 2016, P. 3).



Have a Clear Plan for Implementation and Enforcement:

“The policies must set out the time period for which it will apply and a clear plan for implementation” (Planning Aid England, 2015, P. 8).



Have a Clear Plan for Implementation and Enforcement:

Document example- Toronto, ON: “The Design Guidelines for ‘Greening’ Surface Parking Lots [apply to] the design, review and approval [of all developments containing surface parking.] The Guidelines have [city-wide applicability] and [will normally apply to] the evaluation of [design alternatives in rezoning, official plan amendment and site plan applications.] Owners of existing parking lots are [not required], but are encouraged, to make alterations and improvements consistent with the Guidelines at the time of resurfacing or other appropriate phase in the development lifecycle” (Toronto City Planning, 2013, P. 4).



Pedestrian Safety Features



Defined Pedestrian Paths

colours or textures used to differentiate pedestrian and vehicular space



(Shah, 2017)

Eglinton Town Centre, Toronto ON



(Shah, 2017)

Halifax Shopping Centre, Halifax NS



Sidewalks and Crosswalks

a pedestrian path separated from vehicular traffic that can allow pedestrians to cross a lane of vehicular traffic safely



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Infrastructure to Slow Vehicular Traffic

stop signs, speed bumps, etc



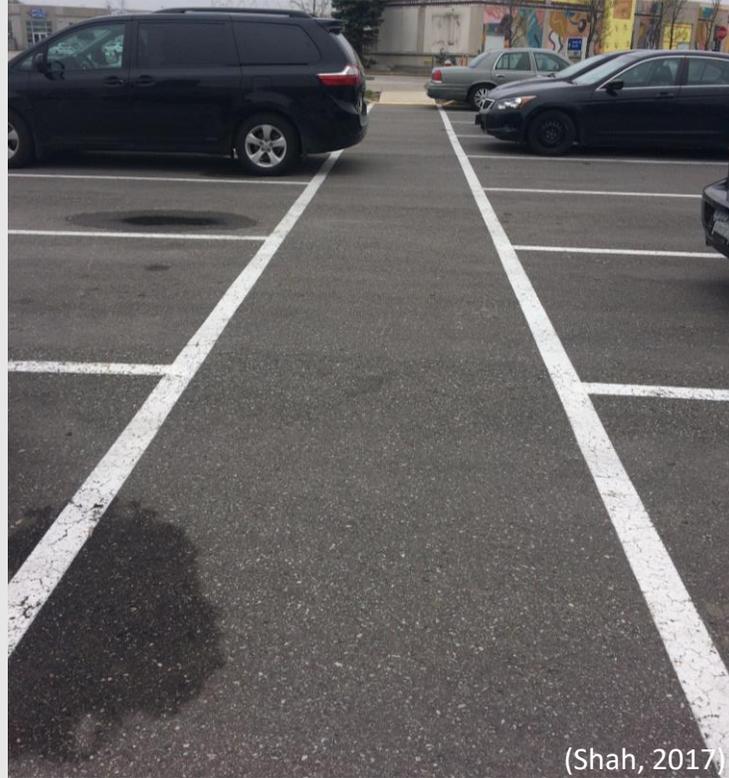
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A Pedestrian Median

a pedestrian path located between parking aisles to allow pedestrians to cross from one end of the parking lot to the other safely



Kennedy Commons Shopping Centre, Toronto ON

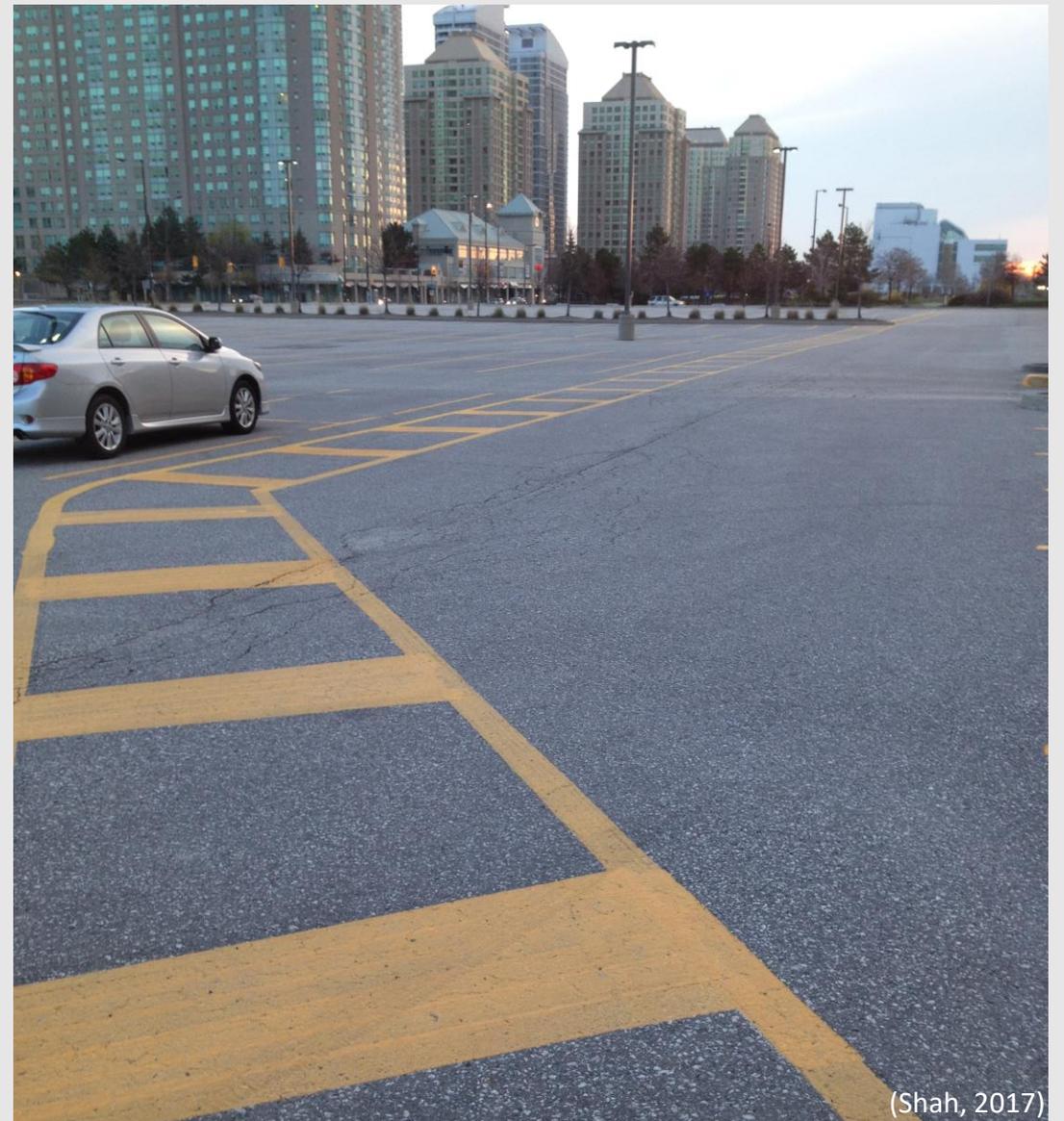


Eglinton Town Centre, Toronto ON



A Pedestrian Network

a path connecting pedestrians to all areas of the development safely through a combination of sidewalks, crosswalks, and pedestrian medians



Scarborough Town Centre, Toronto ON



Example Policies from Documents:

Toronto, ON: “Establish a direct and [continuous pedestrian network within and adjacent] to parking lots to connect building entrances, parking spaces, public sidewalks, transit stops and other pedestrian destinations” (Toronto City Planning, 2013, P. 10).

Lincoln, NE (Design Standards): “Internal parking lot design that provides for the comfort and safety of the pedestrian through the provision of [sidewalk facilities within the parking area.] This type of pedestrian facility offers the pedestrian a safe, convenient, and comfortable walking environment from the furthest parking stall up to the front of a building” (City of Lincoln, 2006, Ch. 3 P. 2).



What to Avoid When Creating Pedestrian Safety Policies:

1. Vague phrases

Town of The Blue Mountains, ON: “For [longer blocks] or properties, create [central pedestrian connections] that connect [parking areas to building entrances.]” (GSP Group Inc, 2012, P. 10)

2. Discourage developers from including pedestrian infrastructure

Kitchener, ON: “[Have] at least one building face or the main entrance adjacent to an arterial road. [Have] barrier free pedestrian links to transit stops provided in either concrete or asphalt. (City of Kitchener, 2014, P. C30)



What to Avoid When Creating Pedestrian Safety Policies:

3. Not including examples and specific tools to achieve the policy objective

Glenview, IL: “Pedestrian needs [\[should be accommodated\]](#) within parking lots. Parking lots should include design elements to address:

- a. How pedestrians will be protected from high volume vehicular traffic
- b. How main entrances are linked to the parking lot
- c. How traffic will be properly managed and controlled. Large planting medians should incorporate pedestrian cross paths. Bicycle racks should be provided” (The Village of Glenview, 2009, P. 4).



Implementation

Where to place pedestrian safety policies?

What to include in the guidelines?

How a pedestrian circulation plan can influence enforcement?



Thank You



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