



Parking Policies: Information Sheet

A part of the Transportation Handbook

Table of Contents

1. [Parking Policies Initiatives](#)
 - a. [Consider alternatives to parking allowance in new developments](#)
 - b. [Design pay parking policies to reduce car use](#)
 - c. [Incentivize car-share networks](#)
 - d. [Repurpose and green parking spaces](#)
 - e. [Develop Local Curbside Management Tactics](#)
2. [Parking Minimums](#)
 - a. [Additional Resources for Parking Minimums](#)
 - b. [Sample Resolutions](#)
 - c. [Metrics for Evaluation](#)
 - d. [Resources](#)
 - e. [Briefing Notes](#)
3. [Communications Resource](#)

Introductions

Proper management of off-street parking is one of the simplest and most effective ways for municipalities to influence travel demand management. A single line in a zoning bylaw can encourage mode shift, greenhouse gas and other pollution reductions from transportation, and healthier communities overall.

Parking Policies Initiatives

Climate Caucus has ranked the following initiatives from beginner to expert, based on Complexity to implement, Staff time & expertise, and Political capital. Please note, these rankings are our own best judgements.

-  Green Square = Beginner
-  Blue Square = Intermediate
-  Black Diamond = Advanced
-  Double Black Diamond = Expert

Consider alternatives to parking allowance in new developments



The Basics:

- Allow partial reduction in parking requirements in exchange for developers providing car shares in new buildings.
- Allow partial reduction in parking requirements in exchange for safe and secure bike parking spaces.

Examples:

Golden, BC - note from Planning Department Staff on Zoning Variance for one specific development:

“The developer has also proposed to introduce two car-share vehicles as part of the OSO development. The developer is also introducing this at their developments in Pemberton. These will be electric vehicles similar to the Modo car share program. OSO would purchase the vehicles, and then users purchase memberships in the car share. This may lead to lower car ownership for the residents of OSO and the community as a whole. It is widely accepted that one two-way car share vehicle equals eight vehicles off the road, which reduces parking demand.”

Resources:

- [Supporting Carshare Vehicles: North American Parking Policies](#)

Design pay parking policies to reduce car use



The Basics:

- Ask staff to review parking policies to see if measures can be implemented to reduce car use. For example:
 - Higher rates in peak times
 - Increase areas where parking fees apply
- Parking is always controversial, so consult with your community.
- Use additional funds from paid parking to pay for free transit, e-mobility finance or EV charging infrastructure

Examples:

- [Kelowna variable parking rates](#), BC
- [Victoria](#), BC
- [Variable Curbside parking Policies Toronto](#), ON

Incentivize car-share networks



The Basics:

- Ask staff to propose ideas for supporting car sharing/car coops such as:
 - Offering free parking, designated parking spots, or free EV charging
 - Becoming a corporate member as a local government and using car share for fleet purposes
 - Incentivizing Staff to use car share and van pooling



Examples:

- [New Westminster BC](#)
- [City of Vancouver](#) - allows actively rented car-share vehicles to park in metered city parking spaces for up to 2 hours for free

Repurpose and green parking spaces



The Basics:

- Propose developing a plan to repurpose parking spaces. Some considerations are :
 - Is the best use of this space to be parking?
 - Some commercial parking can be redesignated as commercial space - i.e. in the future can become offices
 - Designate space as flex space, so it doesn't always have to be used for parking
 - Allow sidewalk cafes, sidewalk patios - Surface parking is easy to convert as numerous pubs and restaurants have shown during the COVID pandemic; a few planters and some tables can convert a parking lot into a patio overnight.
 - Parking can also be required to be designed for conversion to other uses. For example, New Westminster has flex commercial - parking in elevated parkades.

Examples:

- [New Westminster, BC](#)
- [BC government is currently fast-tracking the opening of patios](#)
- [Toronto's policy to green parking lots](#)



Develop Local Curbside Management Tactics

The Basics:

- Curbside management tactics can be used to further incentivize the adoption of zero emission vehicles, by essentially giving these vehicle priority ranking for curbside space compared to ICE vehicles.
- Direct staff to identify areas where ZEV's can be given priority access to the curbside
 - Offer preferential access to curbside zones, such as parking areas or loading zones
 - Can help drive commercial adoption of ZEV's for use in their fleet operations
 - Restrict ability for ICE vehicles to stop for extended periods on city streets
 - Offer preferred parking fees, reserved parking for ZEVS

Examples:

- [Curbside Management Practitioners Guide](#)
- [Curbside Management Strategies for Improving Transit Reliability](#)
- [Curbside Inventory Report](#)

Case Study: Montreal, QC

- Reduced residents-only parking fees for EVs in its [Règlement Sur Les Tarifs \(2022\)](#).
- [EV-only](#) metered parking spots, and metered curbside EV charging stations.
- Low-emission zone pilot and the expansion of urban logistics spaces for delivery fleets in its [Transportation Electrification Strategy 2021-23](#).

Parking Minimums



The Basics:

- Currently, most cities have arbitrary minimum parking requirements that planners determine by copying neighbouring cities or their transportation planning handbooks. As a result, most municipalities have a surplus of parking.
- Such a surplus is costly, as a single underground parking stall has been estimated to cost up to [\\$85,000](#) in some parts of Canada. It also has negative impacts on the environment and equity in communities.
- Dark pavements can contribute to the [urban heat island effect](#), triggering additional energy needs for cooling. Finally, underground parking garages in particular cause problems for [underground water flows](#).
- [Some reports in the US](#) have also highlighted the foregone tax revenue from the amount of city land dedicated to parking.
- Minimum parking requirements have been shown to drive up the cost of housing since the parking space cost is often bundled into the cost to rent or purchase a home. This is particularly inequitable when cities enforce the same minimum parking requirement for luxury condos, rental units near rapid transit lines, and low-income housing.
- While there is no available racialized data in Canada, [studies in the US](#) have shown that the average cost of a parking space is higher than the median net worth of Hispanic and African American households. Thus, minimum parking requirements have a disproportionate impact on racialized households.
- revise your municipality's minimum parking requirements to ensure they are not creating a surplus.

Examples:

- Municipalities can replace their parking minimums with maximums like [London](#) and [Mexico City](#).
- Municipalities can follow [Edmonton](#) and introduce open option parking.
- Also, municipalities should consider offering [payment in-lieu of parking](#), like the [City of Vancouver](#), and options for shared parking and a percentage reduction under certain circumstances, like the [City of Richmond](#).

Alex Lidstone's presentation on her [parking minimums research](#).



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INITIATIVES	THE BASICS	EXAMPLES
REPLACE MINIMUM OFF-STREET PARKING REQUIREMENTS WITH MAX REQUIREMENTS ◆	• Replace your municipality’s minimum off-street parking requirements with maximum requirements. • Where this has been done before, it is recommended to simply switch the current minimum to a maximum requirement. ◦ As a result, technically, no parking is being removed, but developers can build parking spaces according to market demands as long as they stay below the maximum. • This has yet to be seen in Canada, and it will take a significant amount of political capital. Thus, understandably, this will not be an appropriate option in many communities.	• Mexico City • City of London, UK • Map of cities with parking reforms

INTRODUCE OPEN OPTION PARKING 	• Open option parking means that minimum off-street parking requirements are removed from the zoning bylaw, so developers, homeowners, and businesses can decide on the amount of parking for their properties based on their activities, operations, or lifestyle. • This does not mean there will be no parking provided since homeowners and developers will still need to provide the market demand. It is also important to note; this should not affect the current requirements for supply of accessible parking.	• Edmonton
REVISE MINIMUM PARKING REQUIREMENTS 	This can include: • Parking minimums which vary across the city to account for the availability of rapid transit and different types of land use, such from luxury condos to rental apartments to low-income housing, • Provision of payment in-lieu of parking options, and • Provision of variances to minimum parking requirements, such as options for shared parking or a percentage decrease in exchange for proximity to rapid transit or the provision of alternative transportation infrastructure.	• City of Richmond • City of Portland Ordinance

Additional Resources for Parking Minimums



Sample Resolutions

 [City of Edmonton](#)

 [City of Victoria](#)

Metrics for Evaluation

Some suggested metrics:

- modal split – user counts for vehicles, pedestrians, cyclists. Be sure to collect demographic information and provide disaggregated reporting to help ensure equity.
- Surplus parking – can look in residential parking garages and residential street parking at night and see how many spaces are left empty.

Resources

 [Vancouver report to council on parking minimums](#), BC

 [VTPI TDM Encyclopedia – Parking Management](#)

 [Ryerson Report on Parking Policy and High Rise Buildings](#)

 [Bloomberg report on parking reform](#)

 [Fraser Institute Blog on parking minimums](#)

 [VIDEO: Donald Shoup on Parking in the City](#)

 [WEBINAR: Donald Shoup, Councillor Andrew Knack, and Courtney Cobbs on MUNICIPAL PARKING SYSTEMS](#)

Briefing Notes

 [Review Parking Minimums](#)

 [Open Option Parking](#)

 [Parking Maximums](#)

Communications Resource

[Click this link](#) to access potential push backs and how to respond.

Climate Caucus Resources

[Climate Caucus Municipal Grants List](#) – detailed list of relevant municipal grants

[Policies and Resources Library](#) – list of motions, bylaws, council reports and briefing notes



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