

Engagement Summary and What We Heard Report

Engagement Summary

In response to the direction from Committee on 2020 July 15, Administration requested feedback from Calgarians regarding the proposed amendments during the month of August. Due to COVID-19, and in order to reach the greatest number of Calgarians in a limited timeframe, Administration took a comprehensive approach to engaging Calgarians and stakeholders, including:

- The creation of a project page containing general information about the proposed changes, a timeline, FAQs and an eight-question survey
- 24 bold signs located strategically along each of Calgary's identified Main Streets
- Targeted social media advertisements citywide, including Facebook and Twitter. The proposed amendments were also discussed on Reddit.
- Planning and Development's Dispatch email newsletter.
- Council was provided with a "toolkit" to explain the project and help in answering constituent questions.
- Email communication and online meetings with BILD, NAIOP, Federation of Calgary Communities, BIAs via Calgary Neighbourhoods liaison and the Open4Businesses Committee.
- Internal communication and education via online meetings.
- Emailing potentially impacted industry stakeholders.

What We Heard Report

Project overview

The City of Calgary (The City) is proposing the removal of minimum parking requirements for non-residential uses from the Land Use Bylaw in order to support the changing needs of society, create stronger alignment between the Bylaw and overarching city-wide policy documents, and to lay the foundation for Calgary's comeback.

Presently, parking minimums in the Bylaw can result in an over-supply of parking for different uses in varying locations throughout the city because the parking minimums required exceed the real demand for parking. Eliminating vehicle parking minimums for certain uses citywide will enable those who are most familiar with their own parking needs to determine the amount supplied. Known as "Open Option Parking", this method of deregulating parking minimums for all uses was approved on a citywide basis by The City of Edmonton on June 23, 2020 (Charter Bylaw 19275).

This direction, given by members of Council at the July 15, 2020 Special Standing Committee on Planning and Urban Development, responds to a number of issues with minimum parking requirements:

- Many parking minimums over-estimate the need for parking
- Parking is costly, and that cost is indirectly passed onto consumers, businesses and tenants
- Over-supply of parking can create an urban form that discourages walking, cycling and transit
- Our spaces can end up being designed for vehicles rather than for people
- Encourages driving over more active modes of transportation
- Is not aligned with [Calgary's Climate Resilience Strategy](#)

In light of these issues, The City is proposing to allow businesses and developers to advise how much parking makes sense for their development, rather than relying on parking rates in the Land Use Bylaw. This change is expected to provide relief to businesses, create walkable and attractive communities and support Calgary's climate goals.

Engagement overview / What we asked

An online survey was open for input on The City's Engage Portal from August 4 through 31, 2020. Questions were multiple choice. The first four questions included an 'Other' option where stakeholders could provide their own response to the question. The questions are listed below.

- When thinking about parking at the destinations that you frequent (where you work, where you run errands, where you play, etc.), what do you think is working well?
- When thinking about parking at the destinations that you frequent (where you work, where you run errands, where you play, etc.), what do you think is not working well?
- What do you see as the advantages of The City allowing businesses to choose how much parking they need?
- What do you see as the disadvantages of The City allowing businesses to choose how much parking they need?
- Do you think that there are enough Barrier Free parking stalls supplied at the destinations that you visit? Barrier free can be defined as: designed for those with physical or other disabilities, also known as accessible or universal.
- Do you think that there are enough bicycle stalls supplied at the destinations that you visit?
- Do you think that The City of Calgary should allow businesses to determine their own parking supply?
- Are you answering this survey as a business owner?

What we heard

Responses to the online survey indicated that access to parking and low-cost parking are important to stakeholders. Stakeholders felt that factors such as Calgary's winter weather, the need to transport large amounts of goods such as groceries, going places with children, reliability issues and additional time required for transit, options for seniors and people with reduced mobility, and Calgary's large geographic area all make owning a vehicle a necessity. In general, stakeholders did not support the proposed changes.

Response rates were higher for questions asking about disadvantages and what is not working well with the current system. In addition, responses to the 'Other' category for all questions almost uniformly discussed issues and challenges with the current system and proposed change, regardless of whether the question was asking for advantages or what was working well.

- For a detailed summary of the input that was provided, please see the [Summary of Input](#) section.
- For a verbatim listing of all the input that was provided for the 'Other' categories, please see the [Verbatim Responses – 'Other Categories'](#) section.

Next steps

This What We Heard Report will be presented to Council and included in the final report to Council to inform their decision.

If you are interested in getting involved in the Public Hearing of Council on November 2:

- Public are strongly encouraged to follow Council and Committee meetings using the live stream www.calgary.ca/watchlive
- Public wishing to make a written submission may do so using the public submission form at the following link: [Public Submission Form](#)
- Public wishing to speak are encouraged to participate remotely. Contact the City Clerk's Office by email at publicsubmissions@calgary.ca to register and to receive further information on how to call in.
- Those who wish to appear in person to speak to an agenda item can expect COVID-19 protocols to be in place.
- Members of Council and Committees may be participating remotely.

Summary of Input

When thinking about parking at the destinations that you frequent (where you work, where you run errands, where you play, etc.), what do you think is working well?

Multiple choice responses

| Answer choice | Response count |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| I can always find available parking stalls | 776 |
| The parking is free | 1,281 |
| I have choices in how to get to my destination (walking, biking, transit, car-share, driving) | 659 |
| The availability of parking is reducing Calgary's reliance on vehicles | 113 |
| The destinations are walkable, creative and well designed | 252 |
| Businesses are varied and unique | 614 |
| Other | 528 |

'Other' Category – Key themes

| Theme | Description |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Not enough parking | Stakeholders indicated that there is already a shortage of parking in Calgary for many of the destinations they frequent. This causes issues such as driving around looking for a parking spot, parking in residential areas and added stress. |
| Parking too expensive | Stakeholders indicated that parking in Calgary is very expensive, with some pointing out that Calgary's parking rates are among the highest in North America. |
| Nothing is working well | Stakeholders felt that nothing about parking in Calgary is currently working well, and that none of the multiple-choice responses for this question were applicable. |
| Shop where there is parking | Stakeholders shared that they often make their decision of where to shop based upon where they will be able to park. |
| Destination and time dependent | Stakeholders indicated that parking is more difficult to find in specific areas of the city and at peak times. Problem areas included Kensington, 17 Avenue S.W., Inglewood and Aspen Landing. |
| Transit | Stakeholders felt that taking transit was not a viable alternative to driving as it drastically increases travel times, is costly, especially when purchasing tickets for an entire family, and that it is difficult to take large loads of goods such as groceries on transit. |

| Theme | Description |
|-------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Downtown | Stakeholders felt that parking issues were especially pronounced in the downtown core, and that many have stopped visiting downtown shops and restaurants due to a lack of parking. |
| Free parking | Stakeholders shared a preference for free parking. |
| Engagement issues | Stakeholders indicated the available multiple-choice responses felt biased as they did not provide an option for discussing issues with parking. Some stakeholders felt the wording of the multiple-choice responses was inconsistent. |
| Stalls too small | Stakeholders indicated that current stall sizes are too small for larger vehicles, and make it difficult to load goods and children into vehicles. |

When thinking about parking at the destinations that you frequent (where you work, where you run errands, where you play, etc.), what do you think is not working well?

Multiple choice responses

| Answer choice | Response count |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| It is difficult to find available parking | 1,639 |
| I have to pay for parking | 1,504 |
| There is little choice in how to get to my destination (driving is required) | 1,151 |
| The availability of parking is not reducing Calgary's reliance on vehicles | 667 |
| The destinations are not walkable | 1,178 |
| The destinations are not attractive or inviting | 440 |
| There is an abundance of retail chains and very few independent retailers | 701 |
| Other | 235 |

'Other' Category – Key themes

| Theme | Description |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Not enough parking | Stakeholders indicated that there is already a shortage of parking in Calgary for many of the destinations they frequent. Stakeholders felt this issue was especially pronounced in popular destination areas |

| Theme | Description |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | such as Kensington and 17 Avenue S.W., as well as large shopping areas where multiple stores share common parking lots. |
| Parking too expensive | Stakeholders indicated that parking in Calgary is very expensive, with some pointing out that Calgary's parking rates are among the highest in North America. Some stakeholders expressed frustration with the amount they paid in parking when driving to work. |
| Transit | Stakeholders felt that taking transit was not a viable alternative to driving as it drastically increases travel times, and that Calgary's transit network is generally poorly designed. Some stakeholders indicated they did not feel safe taking public transit. |
| Cycling and pedestrian infrastructure | Stakeholders indicated that there are not adequate pathways and other cycling infrastructure in the city, including bike racks. Stakeholders did not feel as though many of their destinations were walkable, with some areas such as big box shopping malls being dangerous due to the lack of pedestrian walkways. |
| Shop where there is parking | Stakeholders shared that they often make their decision of where to shop based upon where they will be able to park. |
| Reduced mobility | Stakeholders indicated there are currently too few barrier free parking stalls in Calgary. Seniors and stakeholders with reduced mobility indicated that driving is their primary means of transportation, and that reducing the amount of available parking would limit their access to destinations. |

What do you see as the advantages of The City allowing businesses to choose how much parking they need?

Multiple choice responses

| Answer choice | Response count |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| Supply and demand of parking will be more closely aligned | 798 |
| Could help to conserve space/reduce urban sprawl that leads to higher taxes | 643 |
| May encourage a more active lifestyle | 516 |

| Answer choice | Response count |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Discourages people from owning cars, which is better for the environment | 307 |
| Coupled with the investment that They City is making into transit, will provide more travel choices | 395 |
| Will allow for greater focus on designing places for people rather than for cars | 606 |
| Development of more walkable communities | 657 |
| Will reduce costs to businesses, making small business more viable | 811 |
| Other | 714 |

‘Other’ Category – Key themes

| Theme | Description |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| No advantages | Stakeholders indicated that they saw no advantage to The City’s proposed changes. |
| Not enough parking | Stakeholders indicated that there is already a shortage of parking in Calgary for many of the destinations they frequent, and that the proposed changes would make this issue worse. |
| Developer related | Stakeholders felt that developers and businesses would not invest in adequate parking as a means of saving money. Stakeholders indicated that developers would be the only ones to benefit from the proposed change. Stakeholders pointed out that it is often the developer and not the business tenant who decides upon the number of parking stalls for a development. |
| Shop where there is parking | Stakeholders shared that they shop where there is adequate parking, and that reducing the amount of parking at a location may lead to fewer people accessing that location. |
| Transit | Stakeholders indicated that taking transit would add significant time to their trips and that there would need to be improvements to Calgary’s transit network before it could be a viable alternative to driving. |
| Hard on businesses | Stakeholders felt that a reduction in parking would make it harder for patrons to access businesses, and that they would either go somewhere like a shopping mall where there is more available |

| Theme | Description |
|------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | parking or would shop online. Stakeholders indicated this would primarily impact independent, neighbourhood business. |
| Parking too expensive | Stakeholders indicated that parking in Calgary is already very expensive and that the proposed change would lead to an increase in parking rates due to a decrease in supply. |
| Engagement issues | Stakeholders felt that the questions in the online survey were biased toward supporting the proposed change and to force people not to drive. |
| Better for businesses | Stakeholders indicated that businesses and the market should be able to decide how much parking makes sense and that businesses may seek to provide more parking. Some stakeholders indicated the proposed change would give businesses flexibility to use parking areas for other uses such as patio space. |
| Winter weather | Stakeholders indicated that the length and harshness of Calgary's winters make it unrealistic to walk or cycle to destinations for large parts of the year, especially for seniors and people with reduced mobility. Stakeholders also felt that transit was not a good option during winter months. |
| Maintain minimum requirements | Stakeholders felt that minimum parking requirements should be maintained to ensure there is adequate parking available. |
| Impacts on adjacent businesses and areas | Stakeholders felt that a reduction in parking would result in spillover into adjacent residential areas and parking for businesses with more available stalls. Stakeholders indicated this is already an issue in certain parts of the city. |
| Driving a necessity | Stakeholders indicated that driving is a necessity for some people such as families with children, seniors and people with reduced mobility. Stakeholders felt that it was unrealistic to use transit, walk or cycle when doing activities such as getting a large amount of groceries. Stakeholders indicated driving is necessary in Calgary due to its size and the design of its infrastructure. |

What do you see as the disadvantages of The City allowing businesses to choose how much parking they need?

Multiple choice responses

| Answer choice | Response count |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Businesses don't necessarily know how much parking they require | 1,462 |
| Businesses may choose to supply less parking to reduce their costs | 1,867 |
| Could result in not enough parking for customers which could lead to spillover into other areas | 2,125 |
| Could result in people preferring to shop online than to look for parking | 1,542 |
| May discourage people from owning vehicles | 118 |
| Calgary doesn't yet have the transit networks to support reduced parking | 1,562 |
| We don't know what the future holds and whether transit will be less viable with future pandemics | 943 |
| Other | 387 |

'Other' Category – Key themes

| Theme | Description |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Transit | Stakeholders indicated that Calgary's current transit network does not support reducing the amount of available parking. Stakeholders indicated that taking transit adds significant time to their trips, and that it is dirty and unsafe. Stakeholders felt transit was inconvenient for activities such as getting groceries or transporting larger items. |
| Not enough parking | Stakeholders felt that there is already a shortage of parking in Calgary and that the proposed changes would only make the situation worse. |
| Shop where there is parking | Stakeholders shared that they shop where there is adequate parking, and that reducing the amount of parking at a location may lead to fewer people accessing that location. |
| Developer related | Stakeholders felt that developers and businesses would not invest in adequate parking as a means of saving money. Stakeholders indicated that developers would be the only ones to benefit from the proposed change. Stakeholders pointed out that it is often the |

| Theme | Description |
|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | developer and not the business tenant who decides upon the number of parking stalls for a development. |
| Impacts on adjacent businesses and areas | Stakeholders felt that a reduction in parking would result in spillover into adjacent residential areas and parking for businesses with more available stalls. Stakeholders indicated this is already an issue in certain parts of the city. |
| Parking too expensive | Stakeholders indicated that parking in Calgary is already very expensive and that the proposed change would lead to an increase in parking rates due to a decrease in supply. |
| Bad for businesses | Stakeholders indicated that reduced parking would make it more difficult to get to businesses, which would lead more consumers to shop online or at locations with more parking, harming local and independent businesses. Stakeholders indicated that reduced parking that might work for one business could limit future businesses due to an undersupply of parking. |
| Driving a necessity | Stakeholders indicated that driving is a necessity for some people such as families with children, seniors and people with reduced mobility. Stakeholders felt that it was unrealistic to use transit, walk or cycle when doing activities such as getting a large amount of groceries. Stakeholders indicated driving is necessary in Calgary due to its size and the design of its infrastructure. |
| Good idea | Stakeholders expressed support for the proposed changes, indicating that they allow greater flexibility for businesses and would lead to a less car-centric culture in the city. |
| Limited mobility | Stakeholders indicated there are currently too few barrier free parking stalls in Calgary. Seniors and stakeholders with reduced mobility indicated that driving is their primary means of transportation, and that reducing the amount of available parking would limit their access to destinations. Stakeholders felt that reducing parking in the city would lead to more people illegally parking in barrier free stalls. |
| Winter weather | Stakeholders indicated that the length and harshness of Calgary's winters make it unrealistic to walk or cycle to destinations for large parts of the year, especially for seniors and people with reduced |

| Theme | Description |
|-------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | mobility. Stakeholders also felt that transit was not a good option during winter months. |

Do you think that there are enough Barrier Free parking stalls supplied at the destinations that you visit?

Multiple choice responses

| Answer choice | Response count |
|-----------------------|----------------|
| Yes | 1,253 |
| No | 657 |
| Unsure / I don't know | 736 |

Do you think that there are enough bicycle stalls supplied at the destinations that you visit?

Multiple choice responses

| Answer choice | Response count |
|-----------------------|----------------|
| Yes | 978 |
| No | 956 |
| Unsure / I don't know | 707 |

Do you think that The City of Calgary should allow businesses to determine their own parking supply?

Multiple choice responses

| Answer choice | Response count |
|-----------------------|----------------|
| Yes | 711 |
| No | 1,532 |
| Unsure / I don't know | 403 |

Are you answering as a business owner?

Multiple choice responses

| Answer choice | Response count |
|---------------|----------------|
| Yes | 252 |
| No | 2,404 |

Verbatim Responses – ‘Other’ categories

Verbatim responses to the “other” category can be viewed by selecting the “What We Heard Report” available on <https://engage.calgary.ca/parking> under “Provide Your Input”.