

Common Concerns and Related Information

Administration heard a range of feedback on the proposed changes during engagement with community members. Some individuals responded with support for the changes and saw an opportunity for cost savings to allow homeowners to invest in other priorities. Others supported or were neutral towards the proposed changes as they perceived that the amendment would have little impact on them.

Other individuals expressed a range of concerns. The main themes are discussed in detail below, along with supplementary information that was provided by Administration to address those concerns.

Multiple cars per household

Administration heard the perception that Edmonton is a two-car city, and a strong belief that all households have at least two cars. This led to a concern that one parking space per household would be insufficient.

In 2009, Administration commissioned a study to determine how many vehicles households had on average. The final report, *City of Edmonton Zoning Bylaw Parking Study Final Report*, was completed in March 2010. The results showed that the average number of vehicles in Edmonton was 1.5 vehicles per household. The study also found that there are roughly equal numbers of households with no cars (13%) as there are with more than three cars (12%). This indicates that not all households in Edmonton have two or more vehicles and that the current requirements mean some households are required to have more parking than they use. In the April 2016 Insight Survey, only 7% of respondents noted that they had more cars than available parking spaces.

Demographically, the composition of Edmonton households is also shifting to smaller sizes. The 2011 Federal Census showed that almost 95,000 (29%) of Edmonton's 325,000 households were single-person households. Further information on this trend is provided in Table 1 below.

Table 1 - Household sizes (2011 Federal Census)

Household size	Number of households	Percent of all households
1 person	94,910	29%
2 persons	105,815	33%
3 persons	51,940	16%
4 persons	43,960	14%
5 persons	17,635	5%
6 or more persons	10,495	3%
Total number of households	324,755	100%

The *Jasper Place Neighbourhood Housing Assessment* (November 2013), undertaken as part of the Jasper Place Area Redevelopment Plan, provided a more detailed breakdown of household composition in four mature neighbourhoods in Edmonton. The study found that single-person households occupied 27% of all single detached homes, 24% of semi-detached, duplex, triplex and fourplex homes, and 18% of row houses. This suggests that roughly a quarter of low density housing that currently requires two parking spaces may be occupied by a single person.

On-street parking

Although regulated separately from Zoning Bylaw 12800, concerns around the impact of the proposed changes for on-street parking was flagged on numerous occasions. It was felt that reducing minimum off-street parking requirements would make on-street parking congestion worse, lead to more people parking close to driveways, and could make streets less safe. Parking availability for visitors was also highlighted as a concern.

City streets are a shared resource for all Edmontonians. While there are no guarantees that the same spot will be available every time, on-street parking provides a flexible option that many Edmontonians choose to make use of in residential areas. The April 2016 Insight Survey found that 14% of respondents choose to park on the street, including 17% of single detached home owners who responded.

The new parking regulations will not change Edmontonians' ability to choose to park on the street. Property owners who do not wish to face the uncertainty of on-street parking will continue to have the option to accommodate their parking needs on their private property. The on-street parking supply in a neighbourhood will change slowly over time, as properties are redeveloped and those new houses are built with one parking space.

Neighbourhoods may elect to request on-street parking management tools to help meet visitor parking requirements, such as time limited spaces. These tools can help ensure turnover of on-street parking in heavily frequented areas. Further information is provided in Attachment 4 - Approach to On-Street Parking Management in Residential Areas.

In regard to safety, cars parked on-street may reduce drivers' visibility in front of a parked car, and can make it more difficult to see oncoming traffic when exiting a laneway or at intersections. At the same time, on-street parking provides a buffer between moving vehicles and the sidewalk. On-street parking further serves to narrow the driving width of the street, which can encourage drivers to reduce their speed and be more aware of their surroundings. In this sense, on-street parking has both advantages and disadvantages in terms of street safety.

Undersized garages

Concerns were expressed that many people are required to park on-street because their garage space is too small to accommodate their vehicle. Results from the April Insight Survey found that only four percent of respondents noted being unable to park in their assigned parking space because their vehicle did not fit.

Administration did consider potential changes to the minimum size requirements for garages. Initial analysis suggested that larger garages could not be accommodated on the minimum lot widths required for Single Detached Housing in the RF1, RF2, RF3, RF4, RMD and RPL zones with a corresponding decrease in the minimum side setbacks for rear garages, from 90 centimetres to 70 centimetres. Additional lot coverage may also be required to accommodate standard garage sizes. Administration does not recommend pursuing further amendments to garage width requirements. In addition to increasing the size of garages and impermeable surfaces dedicated to car parking on properties, it could also result in over-sized garages for many households with smaller vehicles.

Garages used for storage

Administration heard concerns that many people make use of their garage space for storage or other uses. This was seen as contributing to high on-street parking levels. In the April 2016 Insight Survey, 8% of respondents noted that they used their garage for storage or other uses. The City does not have the power to compel a resident to use their required parking space if they wish to park on the street.

Driveways

Concerns that front driveway layouts decrease the number of on-street parking spaces was noted, particularly in cul-de-sacs. Double wide front driveways have the effect of decreasing curb length where on-street parking can occur. Reducing minimum parking requirements to one space per dwelling can allow for narrower driveway widths, and subsequently increase on-street parking opportunities.

Winter conditions

Some respondents highlighted snow clearance and storage as being an issue in areas where there are contiguous stretches of driveways. Driveways for front-attached garages and rear attached garages can be close together so there is no room for snow storage in the winter. Reducing minimum parking requirements to one space per dwelling can allow for narrower driveway widths, creating more space for snow storage and increasing the space between driveways.

Implications for residents

Concerns were expressed that the proposed changes would create challenges for homeowners who may buy a home with a single parking spot and later experience difficulty accommodating their parking needs.

A homeowner's choice to have only one parking space on their property will have a number of implications if they own two vehicles. Residents would not have guaranteed on-street parking spaces to accommodate their second vehicle and may have to park at a distance from their home. They would be required to find a place to locate their second vehicle during snow clearing times in the winter. Purchasing a home with one parking space may also decrease the future sale value of their home.

These are the trade-offs that individual Edmontonians will need to make when they are choosing their home. Some may decide that a more affordable home upfront is worth the inconvenience that parking one car on the street may bring. Others may decide that the savings are not worth the inconvenience and may choose to pay more upfront for two or more spaces.

The proposed text amendment does not require residents to remove existing parking spaces, and homeowners who wish may still accommodate two or more parking spaces. Administration believes Edmontonians are able to make these choices to best meet their needs.

Further opportunities

Some respondents stated that the proposed bylaw does not go far enough, and that the City should eliminate minimum parking requirements. Of those respondents, some stated that they would like to see no minimum parking requirements and that the City institute maximum parking requirements instead.

The upcoming comprehensive review of parking regulations in Zoning Bylaw 12800 will include further discussion on parking issues and opportunities to further refine the City's approach to regulating parking in the future.