

## Bylaw 17896

### Text Amendment to Zoning Bylaw 12800 to Update Parking Requirements for Religious Assemblies

---

#### **Purpose**

To amend parking requirements for Religious Assembly uses to reflect local context and provide a more effective method of calculating minimum requirements.

#### **Readings**

Bylaw 17896 is ready for three readings after the public hearing has been held. If Council wishes to give three readings during a single meeting, Council must unanimously agree "That Bylaw 17896 be considered for third reading."

#### **Advertising and Signing**

This Bylaw has been advertised in the Edmonton Journal on Friday, March 3, 2017, and Saturday, March 11, 2017. The Bylaw can be passed following third reading.

#### **Position of Administration**

Administration supports this Bylaw.

#### **Previous Council/Committee Action**

At the December 7, 2016, Urban Planning Committee meeting, the following motion was passed:

That Administration prepare amendments to Zoning Bylaw 12800 as outlined in the December 7, 2016, Sustainable Development report CR\_3822, and return to a future City Council Public Hearing.

#### **Report**

The investigation into parking for Religious Assemblies began in 2015 as a result of a Council inquiry into parking for large Religious Assembly sites.

Religious Assembly uses pose a number of challenges when regulating parking. Religious Assemblies are highly variable in the scale and frequency of gathering. As our city has become more diverse, there has been a corresponding diversification in worship days, worship frequency, and high holiday celebrations, which has changed the way people practise their faith during the week and the year. Addressing the variability of this parking demand requires consideration of two potential impacts. If there is too much parking, the spaces may remain empty for most of the year, leading to less attractive streetscapes and fewer opportunities for landscaping or other uses on site. If there is too little parking, there may be increased on-street parking on surrounding streets that creates disruption for local residents.

An additional challenge is that congregation sizes change throughout the lifecycle of their members. Some Religious Assemblies are located in facilities that exceed their space needs, while others have outgrown their buildings. New patterns of Religious Assembly use are also emerging, with some choosing to locate in commercial retail bays, and others building large assembly buildings to serve a regional congregation.

The current method of determining the minimum parking requirement for Religious Assemblies in Zoning Bylaw 12800 has several limitations. Parking is required at a rate of one space for every four seats, posing a challenge for Religious Assemblies that do not use seating in their worship space. The seating requirement also does not take into consideration the full footprint of the building, which may include gathering space for large events such as weddings. A further limitation is that a single rate applies to the whole city, despite different development patterns and parking rates in each neighbourhood.

In order to establish new parking rates that would address these challenges, Administration looked to the current parking provision in Edmonton's existing Religious Assemblies. This approach provided a detailed understanding of current parking provision and how it varies between different locations in the city and various sizes of assembly. This data was then used to establish a minor and major size threshold for Religious Assemblies and a context specific parking rate for each of Edmonton's distinct neighbourhood types, including the Central Core, Mature, Established, Industrial and New neighbourhoods. Religious Assemblies in the Downtown Special Area will continue to have the same parking rates to align with other uses and standards in the area.

Basing the minimum parking requirement on existing supply is a unique approach compared to other uses in Zoning Bylaw 12800. Typically, the parking requirements are intended to accommodate all potential parking demand on site. Conversely, the proposed approach assumes that some peak parking demand will need to be met through other means such as shared parking, satellite (off-site) parking lots, and on-street parking. The parking impact assessment would take site-specific characteristics into consideration and may also include a parking management plan to outline strategies for shared parking or off-site parking management.

This approach was driven by:

- the unique characteristics of Religious Assemblies, which may be unused for large portions of the week or year
- the desire to minimize possible hardships to existing facilities that were constructed at a time when parking requirements were lower or did not exist
- the desire to avoid disrupting established development patterns in existing neighbourhoods
- the variability in Religious Assembly operations and the potential impact they may have on the surroundings

The proposed amendments create context-specific requirements that can allow Religious Assembly uses to integrate successfully in a range of neighbourhoods. The amendments also increase choice for how Religious Assemblies can accommodate their parking by allowing some peak parking demand to be met off-site through shared or on-street parking. This approach ensures more efficient use of land and contributes to a more compact city. By linking parking requirements to the building size, the proposed approach also offers a consistent way to determine requirements for the multitude of religious practices in our diverse city.

### Policy

The proposed Zoning Bylaw 12800 text amendment supports *The Way We Grow*, Edmonton's Municipal Development Plan policy:

- 5.6.1.2 Encourage new development to locate and organize vehicle parking, vehicle access, service areas and utilities to minimize their impact on the property and surrounding properties and to improve the safety and attractiveness of adjacent streets and other public spaces.
- 5.5.1.3 Reduce the visual and environmental impact of large hard surface parking lots.

The proposed amendments supports *The Way We Move*, Edmonton's Transportation Master Plan policies:

- 7.4.a (4.1) Manage on-street and on-site parking to strategically anticipate and respond to projected parking supply constraints or surpluses.
- 7.4.b Developing land use and parking policies that manage the supply of parking provided for a development with a focus on providing only essential parking and supporting Transportation Demand Management.

### Corporate Outcomes

This report contributes to the Corporate Outcome "Edmonton is attractive and compact" as the proposed amendments will reduce instances of empty or underused land devoted to infrequently used parking spaces. The proposed parking standards also promote an attractive city by ensuring parking areas are appropriately integrated into existing neighbourhoods.

### Attachments

1. Bylaw 17896
2. Mark-up of Proposed Amendments to Zoning Bylaw 12800 to introduce new parking regulations for Religious Assembly uses