

Comprehensive Review of Parking Regulations in Zoning Bylaw 12800

Recommendation

That the May 7, 2019, Urban Form and Corporate Strategic Development report CR_6707, be received for information.

Executive Summary

Parking is a key factor in shaping how communities are designed. The City's approach to parking strategy, policy, and regulations impact how Edmonton is built and how people move around the city.

Parking is supplied mainly in two ways: onsite (e.g. in a garage, parking lot, or parkade), and on-street parking. Municipalities, through zoning or land use bylaws, typically require a certain number of parking spaces to be provided onsite with new homes and businesses. Many of Edmonton's existing onsite parking requirements were established in the 1970s and in recent years have required frequent adjustments to better support more compact communities, the adoption of greener transportation modes, and more vibrant commercial areas.

This report presents a range of research findings and highlights potential options for regulating onsite parking:

- Minimum Parking Requirements
- Open Option Parking
- Maximum Parking Requirements

The intent of this report is to inform Urban Planning Committee of Administration's parking regulation analysis and to determine the extent to which the City should regulate onsite parking.

Report

Zoning Bylaw 12800 sets out regulations for parking spaces on private property. While requirements vary across the city, most homes and businesses are required to provide a minimum number of parking stalls. Many of these requirements are based on a study from the 1970s.

Since 2016, a series of Zoning Bylaw amendments related to parking highlighted an opportunity to better align current regulations with homeowner and business needs. As such, Administration conducted a comprehensive review of all parking requirements in Zoning Bylaw 12800.

Research and Analysis

A range of research and analysis was undertaken to inform the review of parking regulations.

Policy and Jurisdictional Scan

A review of recent amendments to minimum parking requirements in Zoning Bylaw 12800 show a consistent trend towards reducing and removing minimums in Edmonton. This trend is also apparent in municipalities across North America and in academic research. Further information is provided in Attachment 1.

Technical Study

A study of Edmonton's parking supply showed a surplus of onsite parking across the city, with a majority of parking lots underused even during peak periods. Optimal utilization is defined as 90 percent of parking spaces occupied. At peak observed occupancy, only 7.5 percent of sites surveyed were found to have reached optimal utilization. The study also found that variables currently used to set minimum parking requirements, such as location, business type, or access to transit, are not significant predictors of parking demand. Further information is provided in Attachment 2.

Values and Priorities Survey

Administration hired a third party vendor to complete a twenty minute telephone survey with 801 Edmontonians to gain insights on values and priorities related to parking. The availability of parking at home and on the street emerged as important priorities. Roughly two thirds of Edmontonians felt that groups and individuals other than the City should be responsible for determining parking supply on private property. Further information is provided in Attachment 3.

Preferred Options Survey

Administration conducted an online survey through both the Insight Community and open web link to gauge respondents' level of support and preferred approach to regulating parking. This survey was completed by more than 4,100 individuals and an additional 19 written responses were received by Administration. Open option parking was found to have the highest level of support (60 percent) and was most likely to be chosen as the preferred approach for regulating parking (47 percent). Attachment 4 provides further details.

Assessment of Approaches

This research and analysis was used by Administration to evaluate three main approaches to regulating onsite parking as shown in Attachment 5. Any changes to onsite parking regulations could impact on-street parking.

Approach 1 - Minimum Parking Requirements

The City sets minimum onsite parking requirements to guarantee parking is provided for homes or businesses. This can lead to less compact development as more land must be dedicated to parking areas. The cost of development is also higher because either more land is required to accommodate surface parking or more capital is required to build structured parking. As such, minimum requirements can create challenges as the City works to enable more compact, affordable, and walkable neighbourhoods.

Existing minimums could be lowered to partially address these issues; however, as identified in the Technical Study, the variability in parking use creates a challenge in determining what an appropriate minimum parking level would be.

Minimum parking requirements can also create delays and additional expense in the development permit process, as Parking Impact studies and variances may be required

Approach 2 - Open Option Parking

Compared to Approach 1, the open option approach better aligns with existing policies and emerging policy direction. The Evolving Infill, Missing Middle, and affordable housing initiatives have highlighted the need for more responsive parking requirements to enable these types of developments.

Open option parking allows homeowners and businesses to choose the amount of parking that best meets their needs. People who use transit or active modes can opt for no parking on their property, while others who rely on cars for travel can choose the amount of onsite parking that works best for them. Businesses can also cater to their customers by choosing the amount of parking that suits their target market.

Open option parking can result in increased demand for on-street parking in areas where multiple developments provide no, or limited, onsite parking. This would impact the ability for residents to park in front of their homes, which was identified as a priority for Edmontonians in the Values and Priorities survey. In addition, as part of public hearings related to new developments, citizens frequently express concerns about on street parking in mature and established neighbourhoods. In order to address these concerns, Administration would have to reallocate and increase resources to proactively manage on-street parking impacts.

Administration would have to rely on development permit tools, such as parking impact studies, to identify where on-street parking impacts would need to be addressed. Parking Impact assessments are completed at the cost of the developer and would require Administration to review and proactively work to manage on-street parking congestion. This can be addressed through a range of on-street parking management measures outlined further below.

Approach 3 - Maximum Parking Requirements

This approach works well in areas where there is a desire for densification such as in close proximity to transit. This can include a total cap on the number of parking stalls, or only a restriction on the number of surface parking stalls. The City currently employs total cap maximum parking requirements in Downtown, on main streets, and near several transit areas.

Parking maximums in strategic areas can:

- support an increased return on public investment through higher ridership and land development intensity around high frequency transit, and
- help achieve *Edmonton's Energy Transition Strategy* emission targets by promoting more transit oriented development and a shift in transportation mode.

Maximum requirements do not remove the potential needs for variances to parking requirements in Zoning Bylaw 12800 bylaw, which can create delays in the development permit process. Similar to Approach 2, maximum parking requirements may increase demand for on-street parking. Administration would have to reallocate and increase resources to proactively manage on-street parking impacts.

Based on Administration's assessment, the open option parking approach and maintaining and expanding maximum parking requirements in strategic areas near transit, would best support compact, walkable, and affordable communities.

On-street parking

Changes to parking regulations would have implications for on-street parking.

Administration has identified a number of proactive measures to address potential changes to on-street parking, including:

- Changing regulations that would allow different homes and businesses to share surplus parking stalls;
- Continuing to evolve on-street parking management programs including proactive parking management strategies (e.g. paid parking), residential parking programs and time restrictions to ensure there is a balance of parking between homeowners and businesses on public road right of way;
- Reviewing and renewing the City's Residential Parking Program Policy and Procedures in 2020;

- Delivering public education campaigns to communicate that on-street parking is a shared public resource, and considerations for homeowners and businesses to account for when deciding how much parking to provide on their property; and,
- Ongoing monitoring of development permit data and on-street parking use to adjust regulations as needed through the Zoning Bylaw Renewal process.

More information is provided in Attachment 5.

Implementing Changes to Minimum Parking Requirements

The effects of any changes to minimum parking requirements would be gradual due to the nature of the permit process, as new regulations come into effect when properties are developed or redeveloped. Findings from the Values and Priorities survey suggest there are also strong indications that market incentives would continue to result in parking being provided with new homes and businesses.

The market would take time to adjust to any regulatory change as there is a varying level of sophistication within the market. In a deregulated scenario (open parking), the amount of onsite parking provided may not meet the actual demand.

Next Steps

Administration will draft bylaw amendments that reflect the extent to which Committee wishes to regulate parking minimums and will return to Urban Planning Committee by quarter three of 2019. Potential implementation options include:

- a one step implementation path where open option parking would be introduced city-wide this year, or
- an incremental implementation where reductions and removal of minimum parking requirements would be strategically phased in over a period of time based on context.

The amendments will maintain the strategic parking maximums currently in place and add maximums for surface parking with commercial developments.

In addition to evaluating potential parking approaches, Administration examined a number of other regulations that influence how parking is provided in Edmonton and identified opportunities to improve the current regulatory structure (Attachment 6). The regulatory improvements can be implemented whether or not parking minimums are changed.

Budget Implications

On April 11, 2017, City Council approved a service package that made funding available for this review of Edmonton's parking regulations. Approximately one third of

funding remains available. The use of the remaining funding could be used to support on-street parking management studies and programs, public education campaigns and additional technical consulting to determine new city-wide or context-specific minimums, as required to meet the City’s desired level of parking regulations.

Administration may require additional resources for on-street parking management, public engagement and parking studies to inform the appropriate parking management strategy required by location. These requirements would be aligned and phased in depending on the level of development or change in on-street parking supply as a result of the bylaw amendments.

Corporate Outcomes and Performance Management

Corporate Outcome(s): Edmonton is attractive and compact			
Outcome(s)	Measure(s)	Result(s)	Target(s)
The city is attractive	Edmontonians’ Assessment: Well-designed Attractive City (% of survey respondents who agree/strongly agree)	53% (2017)	55% (2018)
Neighbourhoods are designed for more efficient use of land	City Wide Density (units per net residential hectare)	27.8 (2014)	75.00 (2018)
Corporate Outcome(s): Edmontonians use public transit and active modes of transportation			
A range of travel options are available	Journey to work mode (Auto Passenger, Transit, Walk, Cycle or Other)	24.7% (2016)	25.9% (2018)

Attachments

1. Policy and Jurisdictional Scan
2. Technical Study
3. Values and Priorities Survey
4. Preferred Options Survey
5. Assessment of Approaches
6. Other Regulatory Considerations

Others Reviewing this Report

- R. Kits, Acting Deputy City Manager, Financial and Corporate Services
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- A. Laughlin, Deputy City Manager, Integrated Infrastructure Services
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