

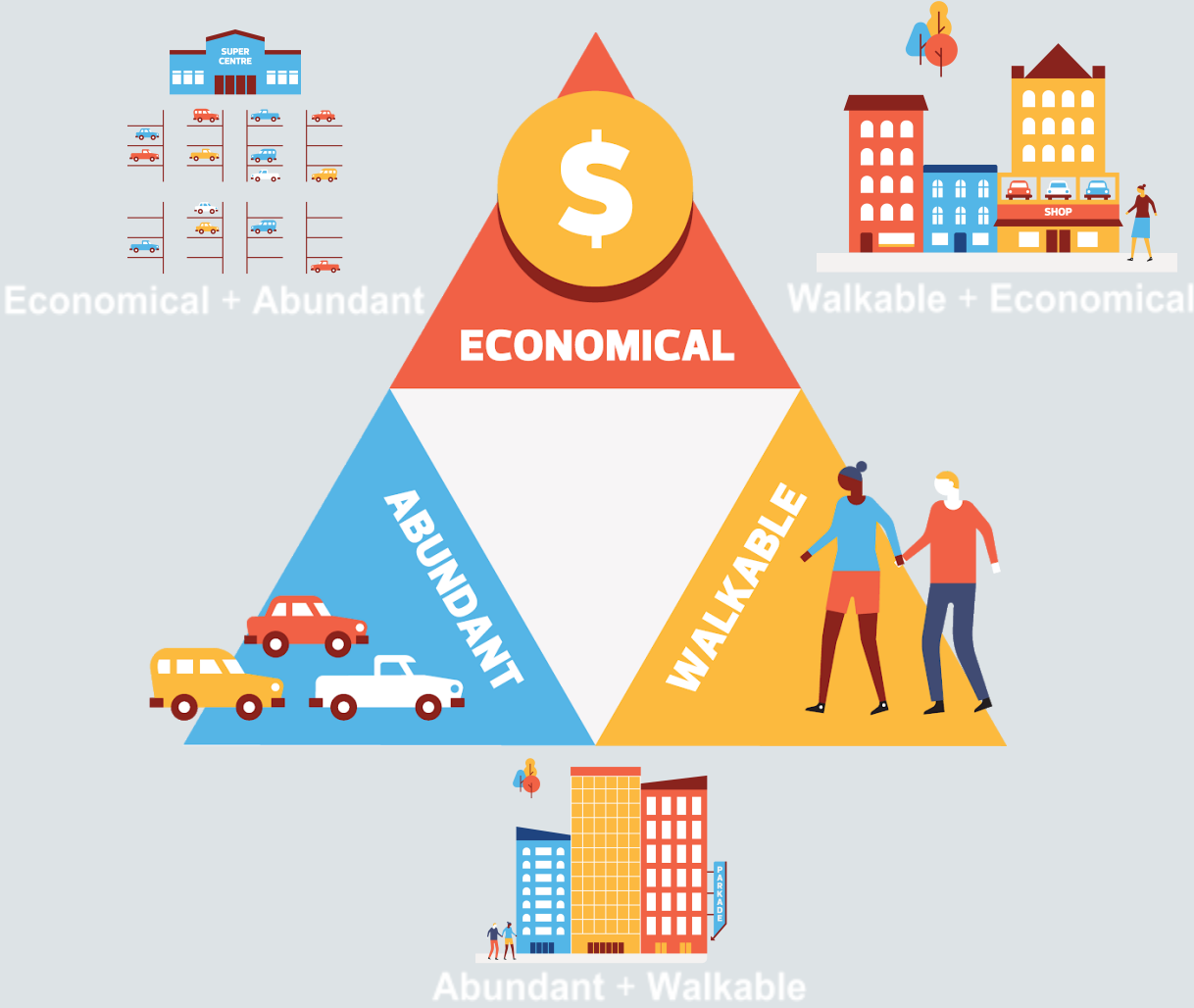


Rules for Parking for New Homes and Businesses
Recommendation Report

Executive Summary

Parking plays a powerful role in shaping how communities are built and the way we move around the city. Many of Edmonton's existing minimum parking requirements were put into place in the 1970s and don't reflect current needs and preferences.

This report presents the findings of a public survey, technical study and policy review that informed City Administration's recommendation that minimum parking requirements be removed from the Zoning Bylaw. This change will allow homeowners and businesses to choose the amount of parking that's right for them, and support gradual change as new homes and businesses are developed.

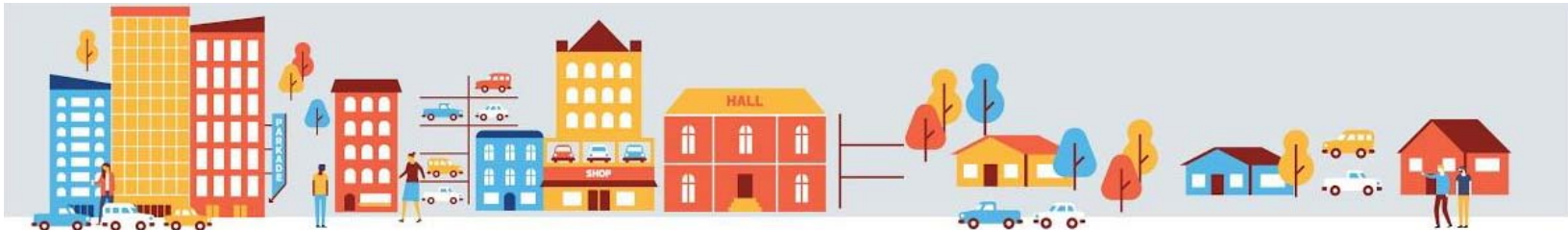


Introduction

Minimum parking requirements set out the number of parking spaces that must be provided on private property when new homes and businesses are constructed. The number of required spaces for commercial development is typically tied to the size of the building, for example one parking space for every thirty square metres of floor area. In the case of residential development, parking rates are calculated by the number of units, for example one and a half spaces for every two-bedroom unit.

Minimum parking requirements strongly influence the design and cost of development in our city. Surface parking lots lead to more spread out and less walkable neighbourhoods. Providing land or underground parkades to accommodate minimum parking adds to the cost of new homes, stores and offices. This creates barriers to businesses opening and makes housing more expensive. Parking also affects how Edmontonians choose to travel. More surface parking means more spread out and less walkable neighbourhoods. Lots of free available parking can also encourage people to drive more.

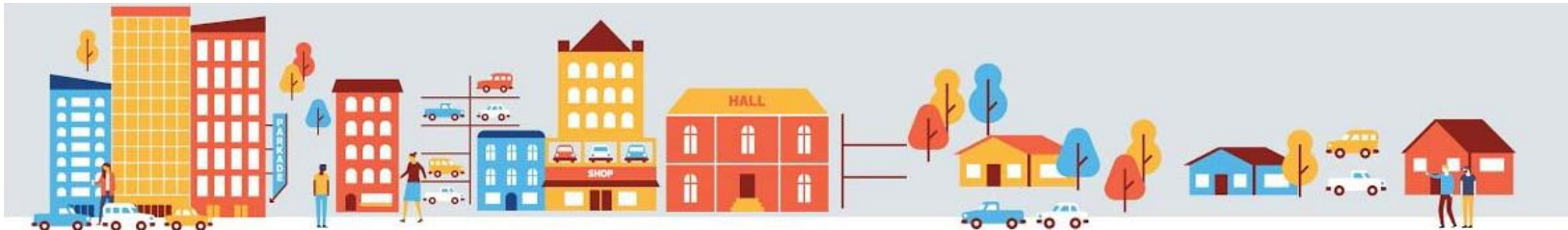
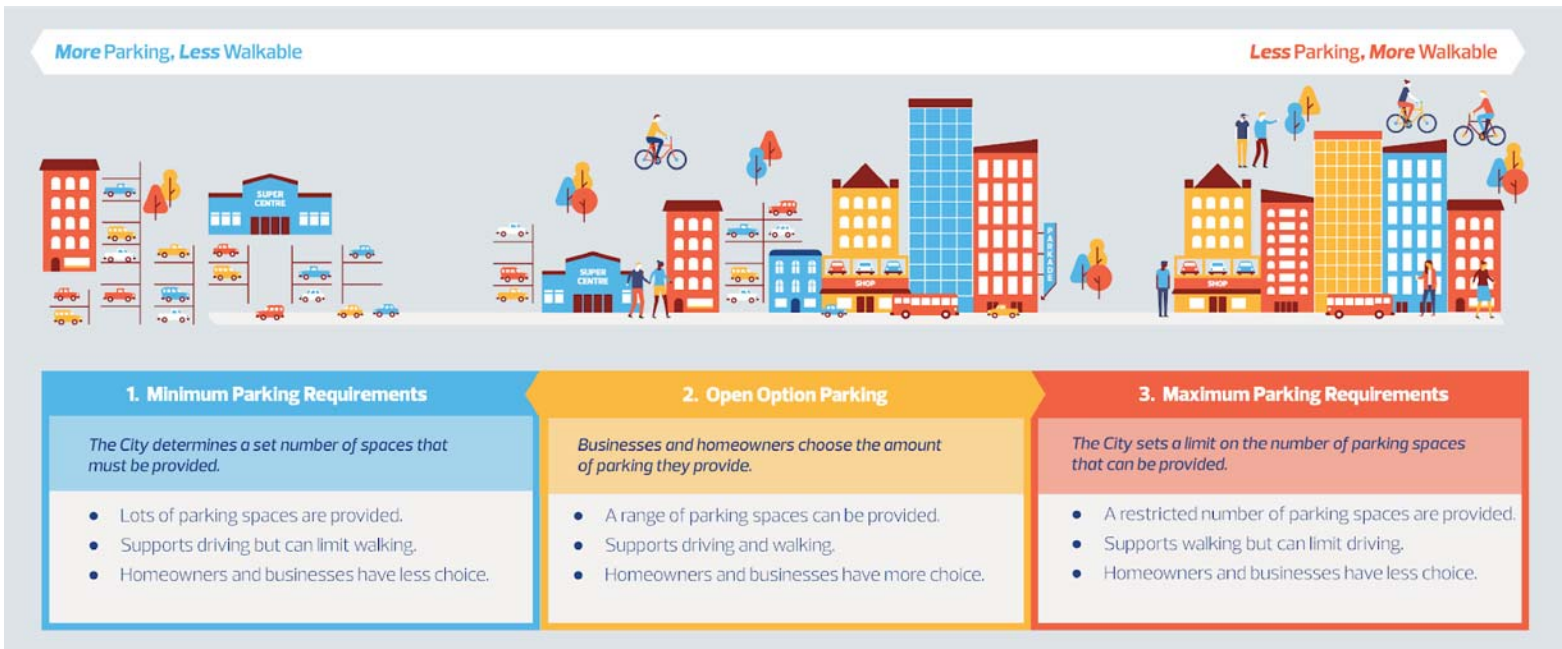
Many of Edmonton's current parking requirements are based on a study from 1973, when Edmonton was roughly half its current population and size. Following a recent series of Council motions to look at parking regulations for specific types of homes and businesses, City Administration identified the opportunity to conduct a comprehensive review of all parking requirements in Zoning Bylaw 12800. The intent of this review was to determine whether existing parking requirements make sense for today's Edmonton and if they help us meet City policy goals included in *The Way We Grow* and *The Way We Move*, Edmonton's Municipal Development Plan and Transportation Master Plan.



Ways to Regulate

There are three main approaches to regulating the amount of parking for new homes and businesses, which in turn have an influence on the shape of the city.

- *Approach 1: Minimum parking requirements:* the City determines a set number of parking spaces that must be provided. Neighbourhoods are designed for driving and are less walkable.
- *Approach 2: Open option parking:* Businesses and homeowners can choose the amount of parking they provide on their property. There is a diversity of neighbourhoods, some that are designed for driving and others that are more walkable.
- *Approach 3: Maximum parking requirements:* the City sets a limit on the number of parking spaces that can be provided. Neighbourhoods are designed to be walkable and are less drivable.



Approach to the Review

To help decide which approach to regulating parking makes the most sense for Edmonton, City Administration undertook two studies.

Values and Priorities

City Administration worked with market research consultants to gain an in-depth understanding of Edmontonians' values and priorities related to parking. Edmontonians were asked a range of questions about parking, and were asked to rank three different scenarios for how the city could look and to explain why they chose that option:

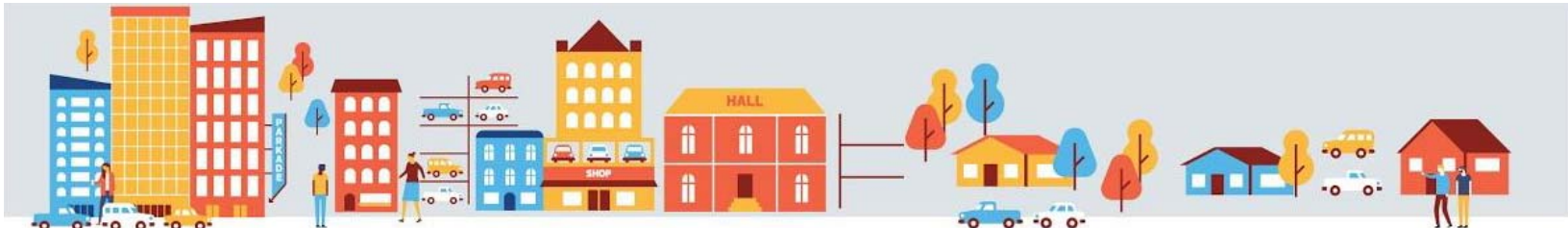
1. Abundant surface parking (such as South Edmonton Common)
2. A mix of free and paid parking (such as Whyte Ave or 124 Street)
3. Mainly underground parking (such as Downtown)

As highlighted in the Values and Priorities Survey report, there is a diversity of perspectives among Edmontonians, with a majority preferring more compact and walkable neighbourhoods.

Technical Study

City Administration hired a team of technical consultants and used a range of data to understand how Edmonton's existing parking spaces are used. As outlined in the Technical Study report, Edmonton's parking supply is generally underused. While there were a minority of parking lots that were more than ninety percent occupied, this occurred for only short periods of time throughout the day or week. The study also found that variables such as location, neighbourhood type, or land use could not be used to predict parking demand. The unpredictability of parking needs highlights a challenge in determining a formula for setting parking requirements.

Both of these studies are available in full at edmonton.ca/makingspace



Recommendations for Parking Regulations

City Administration looked to the findings of the Technical Study and Values and Priority Survey, as well as existing City policy, to inform their recommendations for parking regulations in Edmonton. The following section outlines the key recommendations being made by City Administration. These recommendations will be presented to Edmonton City Council's Urban Planning Committee, who will then decide if the recommendations should move forward to City Council Public Hearing for approval.

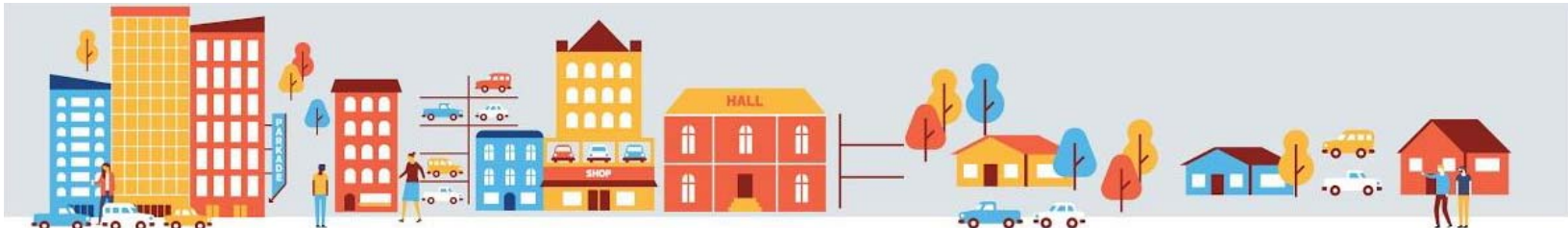
Open Option Parking

The Technical Study found that there is an existing surplus of parking spaces in Edmonton. While some parking lots reached over 90 percent capacity, these were a minority of cases and these were only full for portions of the day or week. This finding suggests that the existing minimum parking regulations have resulted in an oversupply of parking spaces.

Edmonton's current parking requirements set different rates for different types of land uses (for example restaurants versus stores), and for different areas (for example close to transit versus further from transit). However, the Technical Study showed that there are no consistent trends between different land uses or locations. Even when controlling for a range of factors like location and nearby population density, there were no variables that could predict the level of parking demand at different sites.

A clear illustration of this point relates to observed parking at 10 Tim Hortons sites. Even when controlling for the type and brand of business, there was significant variation in observed parking utilization on each of the sites where the same franchise is located. The variation in utilization across the same use and the same business demonstrates the challenge in determining a minimum parking requirement that would work for the wide range of uses, sites, and local context in Edmonton.

In the Values and Priorities survey, just under 40 percent of Edmontonians selected Scenario 2 - mix of free and paid parking, with the top reason given that it allows a balance of transportation options and the choice to walk, ride a bike or drive. Twenty percent selected Scenario 3 - mainly paid parking, and also highlighted walkability and more active lifestyles as the top reason for their choice. Just under 40 percent of Edmontonians selected Scenario 1 - abundant surface parking, highlighting the convenience of surface parking lots. Scenario 2 was also selected as the second choice for those that ranked Scenarios 1 or 3 as their first choice, at 71 percent and 64 percent respectively.



The Values and Priorities Survey also found that 60 percent of Edmontonians were not aware that the City of Edmonton currently set minimum parking requirements. Just over two thirds felt that either businesses, homeowners or others should determine parking requirements, rather than the City.

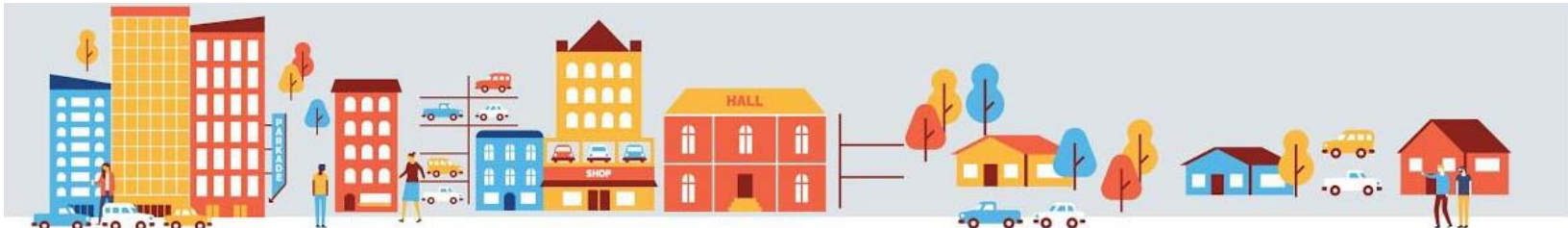
Taken together, the Technical Study and Values and Priorities Survey suggest that the open option approach to regulating parking would best meet the needs of Edmontonians. The Technical Study supports the open option parking approach as it would allow homeowners and businesses to determine their parking needs based on a wide variety of factors that cannot be captured in regulations. Additionally, the Survey results suggest that there is a range of parking preferences among Edmontonians, with a majority supportive of options that support more walkable neighbourhoods, and allowing others than the City to make decisions about the provision of parking.

Policies in *The Way We Grow* calling for more walkable neighbourhoods, providing more housing options, and supporting a vibrant local economy are also supported by the open option parking approach. Removing parking minimums creates opportunities for more compact development that is walkable in scale. Smaller parking areas can also be easier to navigate for pedestrians and create more street-oriented buildings. Allowing flexibility in the number of parking spaces provided with residential development allows homeowners to match their needs to the amount of parking they provide on their private property or purchase as part of a condo. The open option approach to parking also reduces barriers for new businesses opening and allows them to cater to customer needs.

Targeted regulations

While the open option approach to regulating parking aligns with feedback from Edmontonians, technical data, and a number of City policies, the approach does not fully align with direction in *The Way We Grow* to promote higher density development around transit. In particular, the Plan calls for development near LRT stations and transit centres to “...support transit use, manage parking and transportation demand...” Similarly, *The Way We Move* calls for “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.” Open option parking works towards achieving only essential parking by allowing businesses and homeowners to provide parking according to their needs, however the open option parking creates the opportunity for higher levels of parking in transit areas and does not directly work towards Transportation Demand Management.

To create better alignment with existing City policy, City Administration recommends the addition of two targeted regulations related to the quantity of parking provided.



Maximums

The Zoning Bylaw currently has maximum parking restrictions for residential development in transit oriented and main street areas. There are also existing maximum parking limits for residential and non-residential uses in the Downtown Special Area. Administration recommends retaining these existing maximums to encourage more transit and pedestrian oriented development in these strategic areas, and to introduce parking maximums for non-residential uses in transit oriented and main street areas. This is reflective of approach 3 - maximum parking requirements.

Transportation Demand Management

Transportation Demand Management includes a wide range of policies, programs, services and products that influence when, where, and how people travel with the goal of reducing single occupant vehicle travel and, as a result, increasing the efficiency of the transportation network by managing travel demand. Development on private property can influence Transportation Demand Management through a variety of factors, such as the number of vehicle and bicycle parking spaces provided, end of trip facilities, or by offering programs such as transit passes or car share options for users of the building.

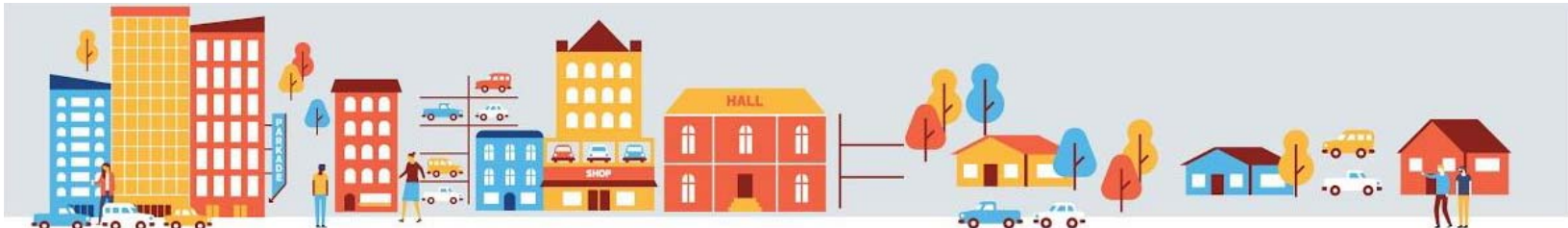
City Administration recommends that Transportation Demand Management studies be required for any Direct Control zones and development permit applications on properties over 1 hectare in size. These requirements will ensure that larger developments have plans in place to meet their transportation needs and that a variety of travel options are accommodated on site.

Shared parking

At present, Edmonton's Zoning Bylaw prevents the sharing of parking between different buildings and businesses. This is because the bylaw distinguishes between accessory parking (parking provided for the users or residents of a particular building or property) and non-accessory parking (parking that is provided for users of other buildings or properties).

The Technical Study found that many parking spaces were unused throughout the day. The Study also found that commercial and residential properties had different patterns of parking use. Observed parking on commercial sites tended to peak midday, whereas the highest observed parking for residential buildings occurred in the late evening and overnight. This data suggests that allowing parking spaces to be used by a variety of businesses and residents could make better use of existing parking in Edmonton. The Values and Priorities Survey found a high level of agreement with opportunities for shared parking, with 94 percent agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement "buildings should be able to share parking spaces." Allowing shared parking also supports *The Way We Grow* policies of compact development, efficient use of infrastructure, and the adaptability of neighbourhoods.

City Administration recommends introducing opportunities for shared parking in the Zoning Bylaw.



Bicycle and Barrier-free Parking Spaces

Edmonton's Zoning Bylaw sets out a minimum number of bicycle parking spaces that is dependent on the number of required vehicle parking spaces (for example, the number of bicycle spaces must be equal to 20 percent of the number of required vehicle parking spaces). Alberta's Building Code similarly sets the number of required accessible or barrier-free stalls to the number of parking stalls required by the municipality. Removing minimum parking requirements through the open option approach would result in no required bicycle parking or barrier-free spaces.

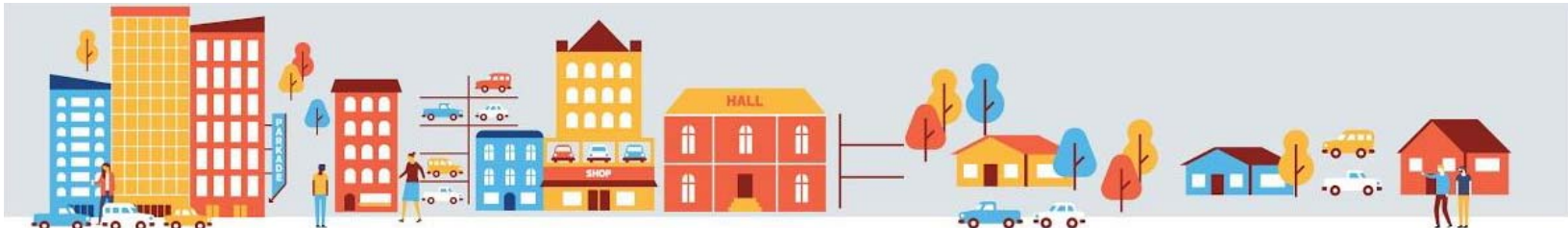
Providing bicycle and barrier-free parking spaces is important to promoting travel options and creating complete and inclusive communities, highlighted as important goals in both *The Way We Grow* and *The Way We Move*. The need for an adequate supply of barrier-free parking stalls were also highlighted in previous consultations regarding changes to parking requirements. In order to ensure that an adequate number of bicycle spaces are provided, City Administration recommends adding requirements for bicycle and barrier-free parking spaces that are not related to required vehicular parking spaces.

The number of bicycle parking spaces will be determined as part of the Bike Plan work currently being undertaken. The number of barrier-free stalls are based off of existing standards in the Alberta Building Code. A certain number of barrier-free parking stalls will be required even if there is no standard parking stalls being provided.

Design Regulations for Parking Areas

As part of the Values and Priorities Survey, Edmontonians were asked about the design of parking lots. Eighty one percent agreed with the statement "Providing sidewalks in large lots makes it easier/safer to get from my vehicle." *The Way We Grow* also highlights the importance of reducing the visual impact of parking lots, including the call to "reduce the visual and environmental impact of large hard surface parking lots" and encouraging "new development to locate and organize vehicle parking...to minimize their impact on the property and surrounding properties and to improve the safety and attractiveness of adjacent streets and other public spaces."

City Administration recommends refining the existing landscaping requirements for parking areas to ensure greenery is used to mitigate the visual impact of parking lots and to provide more direction for the design of pedestrian walkways within parking lots. These changes will ensure safer and more walkable parking areas for all users.



Next Steps

We are looking for your thoughts and feedback on City Administration's recommendations! You can provide your input by taking an online survey at edmonton.ca/makingspace that will run from February 11 to 24th. Your feedback will then be incorporated into a report that will be shared with Edmonton City Council's Urban Planning Committee in spring 2019.

To stay informed of project milestones, you can also sign up for our mailing list at edmonton.ca/makingspace

If you have any questions, please contact:

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Thank you for taking the time to learn about regulating parking for new homes and businesses in Edmonton!

