

DATE OF MEETING    DECEMBER 09, 2024

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**SUBJECT**            NANAIMO PARKING REVIEW AND BYLAW UPDATE – PARKING  
CONDITIONS REPORT

## **OVERVIEW**

### **Purpose of Report:**

The City is undertaking a Parking Review and Bylaw Update as identified in multiple Integrated Action Plan tasks (C2.1.2, C2.1.3, C2.1.5, C2.2.4, C2.2.6). This report serves as an introduction to the Phase 1 Conditions Report.

## **BACKGROUND**

Nanaimo is one of the fastest growing communities in Canada, which brings growing pressure on the mobility system to provide safe, convenient, and affordable transportation to meet the community's needs.

The Nanaimo Transportation Master Plan and City Plan envisioned Nanaimo's mobility growth strategy to follow a path that shifts daily trips away from personal vehicles and towards walking, rolling, or transit. This trend towards a car-light culture diminishes the need for more or bigger roads and ensures that critical users (emergency responders, goods movement, other essential services) are not impeded by congestion. Effective regulation of parking plays a key role in the success or failure of these plans.

City Plan identifies this need in Policy C2.1.7: Manage parking city-wide with a focus on right sizing parking to continue fulfilling needs including access, loading, and pick-up for businesses; accessible parking for people with mobility or family needs; and EV parking, while recognizing that an overabundance of cheap and convenient parking tends to increase vehicle use and reliance.

Except for some localized situations, parking in Nanaimo has historically been plentiful and either free or very low cost. The University, Hospital, and Downtown areas are currently the largest areas which use widespread parking management strategies to ensure appropriate access for users. Historically, addressing localized concerns has taken a reactive approach, one where a problem is identified and solutions are developed in isolation, creating a patchwork of curbside regulations across the City. This diversity of solutions can be at odds with the development of a comprehensive, city-wide approach.

Careful consideration of management and regulation of parking is essential when a new development is being reviewed. Developments have traditionally been required to accommodate parking on-site to support businesses or residents without spilling onto the street; however, there is often discussion at the approvals stage regarding how much parking is needed or whether there can be a variance from the minimum requirements in bylaw. There is

no question that parking costs money to build and if the requirement is too high, the development may not be viable. Parking also costs the City money to manage when it overflows on to the street. The overflow can also frustrate neighbours which typically results in calls to the City for enforcement, which adds additional cost to the City.

Emerging transportation trends introduce additional considerations that impact how parking is managed in Nanaimo. As more people adopt active transportation, and cargo bikes and e-bikes increase in popularity, appropriate parking for bikes and e-mobility will be required. Ongoing rises in e-mobility and food delivery creates a need for adequate pick-up and drop-off facilities. And changes to the ways that people engage with the public realm is changing the ways we think about the highest and best use for limited road right-of-way that has traditionally been allocated to (often free) curbside parking. |

## **DISCUSSION**

As Nanaimo grows it's essential that the trend move away from personal vehicles in order to create a Green, Connected, Healthy, Empowered, and Prosperous Nanaimo. However, this is a change for many users and navigating that change will take a thoughtful and purposeful strategy that accounts for the needs of all users. Parking management is a topic that intersects with many areas of life in the City, and the work of City Plan envisions a proactive and comprehensive review of the City's approach to this topic.

Staff have begun this study process and completed the first phase which produced the "Parking Conditions Report". The report identified several areas of concern and provided high-level recommendations for discussion and consideration.

The next stage of this project will be an engagement and options assessment stage to identify different options for addressing some of the issues identified. Following this engagement stage, preferred recommendations will be identified for detailed review with a focus on identifying specific updates to relevant bylaws to align with desired directions and changes in the City's approach to off-street parking and curbside management. The final stage will be the implementation of those recommended changes. It is expected that the entire process will conclude before the summer of 2025 and will result in updates to all bylaws that guide or enforce parking. It is also anticipated that this process will produce guiding documents on operational processes such as evaluating and prioritizing changes to curb space and providing direction to developers on the decision-making process for off-street parking.



## **CONCLUSION**

Nanaimo’s approach to parking management requires a proactive and comprehensive review to ensure bylaws and policies align with the goals established in City Plan. The Parking Conditions Report identifies key issues requiring attention and high-level discussion of how these issues may be addressed. Next steps will be to identify specific options, engage with the community to determine preferred solutions, and implement those solutions in City bylaw and policy. |

## **SUMMARY POINTS**

- Management and regulation of on- and off-street parking intersects with many areas of Nanaimo’s growth and development as a community. Parking management has a significant impact on increasing the number of daily trips being completed by walking, rolling, or transit.
- Bylaws and policies around parking have a significant impact on the type and amount of development that occurs in the City.
- Historically, Nanaimo has taken a reactive and siloed approach to addressing area-specific parking concerns as they have emerged. Developing a proactive and comprehensive strategy to parking management will advance many of the City’s goals.
- Emerging trends such as the use of cargo bikes and e-bikes, food delivery and e-commerce, and complete streets need to be appropriately addressed.
- The City is undertaking a comprehensive parking review to identify needed updates to ensure that our approach is aligned with achieving the goals in City Plan Nanaimo: Reimagined and the Transportation Master Plan.
- A parking conditions report has been prepared and engagement and recommendations will be completed in 2025.

**ATTACHMENTS:** |

Attachment A: Nanaimo Parking Review and Bylaw Update – Parking Conditions Report dated November 29, 2024, prepared by Urban Systems

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