

DATE OF MEETING JULY 14, 2025

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SUBJECT **PARKING REVIEW AND BYLAW UPDATE – MID PROJECT UPDATE**

## **OVERVIEW**

### **Purpose of Report:**

The purpose of the report is to update the Committee and the public on the Parking Review and Bylaw Update, highlight key directions, and seek input on the direction of the review.

## **BACKGROUND**

At its December 9, 2024 meeting, the Committee received a presentation and report introducing the topic of city-wide parking, along with a comprehensive review of the current state of parking regulation in Nanaimo. The Parking Conditions Report by Urban Systems forms Attachment A.

Nanaimo is one of the fastest growing communities in Canada, placing increasing pressure on the City's mobility systems. To address this, City Plan and Transportation Master Plan prioritize a shift toward sustainable, inclusive transportation options—such as walking, rolling, biking, and public transit.

Vehicle parking regulations play a pivotal role in supporting this transition. The Parking Review and Bylaw Update aims to modernize parking regulations to align with community values, support sustainable travel, and implement key directions from City Plan. Updating parking rules will help the City manage growth, support housing affordability, and create a transportation network that works for everyone.

Project outcomes are anticipated to include comprehensive updates to:

- The Off-Street Parking Regulations Bylaw 2018 No. 7266
- The Traffic and Highways Regulation Bylaw 1993 No. 5000
- The Crossing Control Bylaw 1996 No. 5174
- City-wide curbside management strategies—how street space is shared for uses like parking, loading, food trucks, emergency access, micromobility, patios, and public space—to ensure safety, fairness, and access for all users.

The review is being delivered in four phases:

### **Project Phases**

- **Phase 1: Background Review (July – November 2024)**  
Delivered a *Parking Conditions Report* (Attachment A) summarizing existing conditions, key challenges, and best practices.

- **Phase 2: Community Engagement & Options Analysis (February – April 2025)**  
Conducted extensive public and stakeholder engagement, the findings of which will help inform draft recommendations.
- **Phase 3: Draft Recommendations Development (May – July 2025) (*currently underway*)**  
Will synthesize technical findings and community input to draft proposed updates to parking regulations and curbside strategies.
- **Phase 4: Implementation (August – Fall 2025)**  
Will finalize and bring forward detailed recommended bylaw amendments, policy updates, and implementation tools.

Engagement is complete and this report and presentation shares key findings and draft recommendations for Council's information and to prompt discussion. Council's input at this stage, along with engagement feedback, best practice, technical review, and alignment with City Plan, will help inform the direction of the final recommendations.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Engagement Summary – Phase 2**

Phase 2 of the parking review project focused on gathering public and focus group input through:

- A Citywide public survey (362 responses, March 1–28, 2025)
- Targeted outreach:
  - Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Inclusiveness (March 12, 2025)
  - Property development community (April 1, 2025)
  - Taxi and passenger transport operators (April 16, 2025)

This engagement is detailed in the *Engagement + Options Assessment* report (Attachment B) and directly informs the development of Phase 3 recommendations.

### **Key Themes: What We Heard**

Community and stakeholder feedback highlighted the following priorities:

- **Lower Car Ownership in Urban Centres** – Many residents in downtown and nearby areas own fewer vehicles per household, likely due to more multi-family housing, services, and better access to transit and walking.
- **Accessibility Concerns** – Over two-thirds of respondents with physical limitations said there aren't enough accessible parking spaces.
- **Curbside Space Priorities** – People want more space at the curb for walking, biking, transit, and short-term parking.
- **Housing Affordability & Parking Requirements** – Developers noted the high cost of providing off-street parking and its impact on housing affordability, advocating for increased reliance on public (on-street) parking where feasible.

- **Market Demand vs. Parking Regulations** – Developers noted they would often prefer to provide less parking, but market expectations and lender requirements largely dictate what is feasible—regardless of actual demand.
- **Barriers to Reducing Vehicle Use** – Many respondents said they would drive less if walking routes and public transit were better. However, 47% indicated they were unlikely to shift away from driving under current conditions.

## Key Directions

Informed by public input, technical analysis, and City Plan objectives, the following Guiding Principles will shape policy development:

- **Policy Alignment** – Ensure parking regulations support City Plan goals around sustainable land use and transportation.
- **Future-Oriented** – Plan for the City we want to become, not just current travel behaviour.
- **Complete Mobility** – Support a multimodal transportation system that accommodates walking, biking, transit, and driving, with a focus on safety and accessibility.

From Section 4.0 of Attachment B, the following priority directions are being explored:

- Adjust off-street parking requirements in urban centres to support higher density and diverse transportation options.
- Encourage transit-oriented development near Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and Bus Frequent Transit (BFT) lines with reduced parking minimums and enhanced Transportation Demand Management requirements.
- Recognize suburban auto-dependence while identifying gradual opportunities for reduced parking.
- Expand requirements for the provision of bike parking and end-of-trip facilities in both residential and employment areas.
- Modernize accessible parking, visitor parking, electric vehicle (EV) charging, and off-street loading requirements to align with equity, sustainability goals, and emerging trends.
- Regulate curbside management in dense areas to manage short-term parking, loading, and multimodal use.

## Preliminary Recommendations

Initial recommendations, outlined in Sections 4 and 5 of Attachment B, are grouped under seven core themes:

1. Vehicle Parking Supply
2. Transportation Demand Management (TDM)
3. Bicycle Parking
4. Accessible Parking
5. Cash-in-Lieu of Parking
6. Off-Street Loading
7. Curbside Management

These recommendations aim to modernize Nanaimo's parking system in line with current policy goals and future urban needs.

### **Next Steps**

As Phase 3 of the parking review project progresses, the following actions will be taken:

- Refine preliminary recommendations using technical analysis and feedback
- Develop proposed bylaw amendments and updated regulatory frameworks
- Present recommendations to City Council and the Governance & Priorities Committee
- Prepare an implementation strategy prioritizing key actions and allocate resources
- Finalize the review in Fall 2025

### **CONCLUSION**

The Parking Review and Bylaw Update is progressing with a clear path toward a modern, equitable, and sustainable parking system. Informed by community input and aligned with City Plan, this work supports Nanaimo's vision of a Green, Connected, Healthy, Empowered, and Prosperous City. The next phase will build on this foundation by turning strategic directions into practical updates to parking regulations and curbside management—helping to manage growth, support housing affordability, and create a transportation network that works for everyone. |

### **SUMMARY POINTS**

- The Parking Review and Bylaw Update project supports City Plan by encouraging more sustainable travel and reducing dependence on personal vehicles
- Public engagement highlighted concerns around accessibility, the high cost of providing parking, and strong support for walking, biking, and transit infrastructure
- Draft recommendations focus on reducing parking requirements where appropriate, and in support of the City's land use objectives, improving curbside use, and expanding active and transit-friendly travel options

### **ATTACHMENTS**

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

ATTACHMENT B: Nanaimo Parking Review and Bylaw Update – Engagement + Options  
Assessment dated June 2025, prepared by Urban Systems

ATTACHMENT C: Urban System Presentation – Nanaimo Parking Review + Bylaw Update

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