

City of Nelson

Downtown Parking Strategy

March 2021

The City of Nelson’s 2013 Official Community Plan states that “the City will consider completing a parking study for the downtown that considers transit opportunities, buses, bicycle infrastructure, pedestrian needs, and parking requirements, and ensures that there is adequate parking to meet the projected growth in the region”.

This strategy incorporates multi-year research and public consultation to propose guiding principles to assist in decision-making on parking as well as a work plan of specific actions to implement over the coming decade. Needs and circumstances might change over time and some recommended actions might require additional public consultation prior to moving forward with policy or bylaw changes, but this document is expected to serve as the starting point for Nelson’s parking planning for the 2020s.



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Context

Committed to the Economic Vitality and Liveability of the Downtown

As the commercial and cultural heart of Nelson, the downtown continues to be vibrant and progressive and the City of Nelson is committed to ensuring that that prosperity continues. A sustainable parking strategy is fundamental to creating a positive downtown experience for residents, businesses, tourists and shoppers. The City has been assessing the parking needs for the downtown, and is developing a parking strategy to enhance the residential and commercial activities in the downtown and support a healthy, safe, convenient, inviting and friendly downtown. The challenge of downtown parking planning is to adequately balance the expectations and needs of those who live in the downtown and shoppers, tourists, business owners, and others who commute into the downtown from other neighbourhoods in Nelson or from outside of the city.

Charging for parking follows the ‘user-pays’ model applied to most services and does two things:

1. It promotes a turnover rate that is healthy for local businesses. Busy downtowns where parking is free suffer from cars that take up prime spaces all day. It makes finding a parking space easier.
2. It offsets municipal expenses that would otherwise be paid through property taxes. The City estimates that about 40% of those who park downtown, do not live in Nelson. Because parking revenue helps fund roads that are used by residents and non-residents alike, it makes sense to help fund it through parking instead of property taxes exclusively.

In Nelson, only about 6% of parking is pay parking. The City directs all meter and paystation revenue to fund improvements to our roads and sidewalks. In 2019, parking meters are expected to contribute \$975,000 towards road replacement, which is budgeted at \$1.425 million. That doesn’t include regular maintenance: snow removal, sweeping and cleaning, and minor patching and repair, which is budgeted at an additional \$1.9 million. Without parking revenue, we would need an 11% increase in property taxes to fill in the gap. On the other hand, if parking revenue increased to cover all road costs, taxes could decrease by 26%.

How much would a new parkade cost?

Recent parkade projects have estimated varying figures per stall, from \$23,000 in Kamloops to \$34,000 in Kelowna to \$48,500 in Guelph to \$50,000 in Whitehorse. In White Rock, the new four-storey parkade that opened in May 2019 cost over \$68,000 per stall. Assuming a figure between Kamloops’ and Kelowna’s, \$233/month of revenue per stall would be required over 10 years to pay off the construction costs. Assuming White Rock’s cost of construction, each stall would cost \$572 per month. However, the cost would be much higher after factoring in the high price of land in the downtown, as well as loan interest, management, operations, and maintenance costs.

Where we park matters. As a community, we can be mindful of where customers want to park and where employees should be parking to free up valuable stalls for customers and those who need to come downtown for just a quick errand. Every prime spot occupied by a commuter all day results in at least 5 fewer potential customer visits into the downtown. Businesses feel like they are losing sales because customers complain that they can’t find a place to park, and shoppers are frustrated because they can’t find parking close to where they want to shop.

Nelson's Official Community Plan (OCP) sets out a vision of the downtown that is primarily commercial but with housing in the mix, so as to promote walkability as an alternative to sprawl and car-dependence. Accordingly, both the downtown commercial zone (C1) and the downtown residential zone (R3) allow for unlimited density.

This strategy takes the position that parking will continue to be limited and at times difficult in a successful, vibrant downtown where underground parking is either not feasible due to existing heritage buildings or small parcels, nor desirable: at an estimated \$50,000 per parking stall, underground parking can put a halt to development and/or make housing and commercial units significantly less affordable. A busy downtown where people from far and wide want to be is a sign of Nelson's success.

There are three maps on the right-hand side. The "Downtown Parking Area" represents the geographic scope of this strategy. The "Downtown Core Parking Area" represents the area that was included in the August 2016 parking study (see below). Finally, the "Downtown Parking Area" map from the Off-Street Parking and Landscape Bylaw represents the area where certain parking requirement relaxations are already available (for example, a mixed-use development incentive or an in-lieu payment option of \$10,000 per space).

Supply & Demand

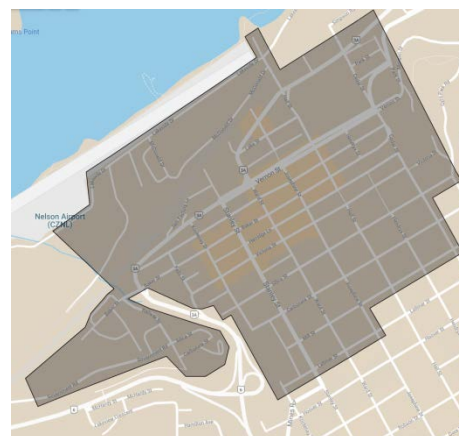
A comprehensive study of supply and demand (9am to 5pm) was completed in August 2016 and a follow-up study of demand took place in winter 2018.

The City of Nelson has 1,529 on-street parking stalls (including 191 in the parkade) in the downtown core parking area as of August 2016. This includes 591 metered spaces, 407 free but time-restricted spaces, 53 resident-only parking spaces, 24 accessible parking spaces, and 197 unrestricted free parking

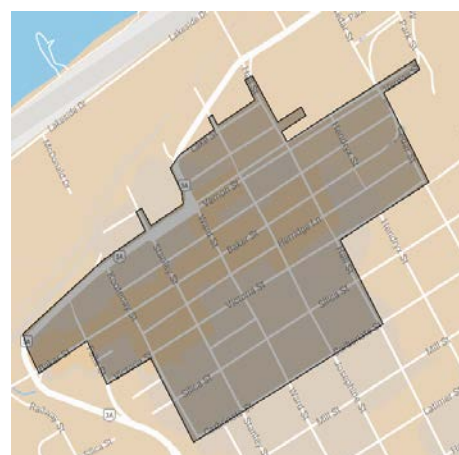
spaces. In addition, there are over 1,300 stalls located in private, off-street parking lots situated throughout the core area.

In a parking study undertaken in August 2016, it was determined that the occupancy of public stalls throughout the entire downtown core parking area was an average of 75%, however key locations on Baker, Vernon, Victoria, Kootenay and Josephine Streets were well over 85% during the hours of 10am to 4pm. Optimal parking stall occupancy is considered by industry experts to be 85%: at this level of occupancy, it is clear that the parking is neither undervalued nor inefficiently underutilised, however there are always a couple parking spaces available per block. At an average of 75% utilization rate, Nelson's downtown core is slightly below optimal use. Parking demand has an impact on traffic: 16.4% of Baker Street traffic was estimated to be cruising for a parking

Downtown Parking Area



Downtown Core Parking Area



Downtown Parking Area, defined in the Off-Street Parking and Landscape Bylaw

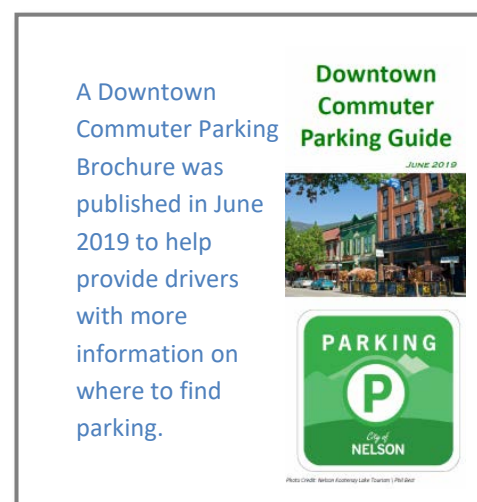


spot mid-afternoon on a Friday in August (calculated according to the number of vehicles that pass by a vacant parking stall).

Data on winter parking demand date back to 1995 as part of the City of Nelson Integrated Transportation Strategy by Urban Systems. That study, of all 658 metered stalls from Falls to Hendryx and Vernon to Victoria covered over two days, found an average occupancy of 66%, and at its highest from 11am to 1.30pm (84%). On average cars were parked for one hour.

The key issues found by these studies were:

- There were numerous vehicles with expired meters that had received a ticket and stayed for several hours or the entire day, appearing to 'accept' receiving a ticket in order to stay at a meter all day. The current penalties do not appear effective, and there has been limited follow up on those with parking fines, also reducing resources that could be going into the parking system. (The Finance Department is currently working on collections options.)
- Improve wayfinding/signage for motorcycle parking spots in order to increase their use and attractiveness and make it clear that they are free: motorcycles often use regular metered spaces and pay for those meters, even when there is free and unrestricted motorcycle parking within one block – this unnecessarily takes away from automobile parking.
- The one-hour parking limit on the north side of Baker Street may be an insufficient amount of time for some shoppers, but it likely is helping to achieve the goal of increasing turnover.
- There are limited places for employees that work in the downtown to park for a full day, so many park in lower Uphill (two hour zones) and move their vehicles every two hours, or risk getting a ticket.
- Bylaw Enforcement has limited resources, resulting in an inability to frequently enforce parking rules, resulting in use of the zones that was not intended i.e. parking all day in a two hour zone – many of these two hour zones are in residential areas, putting additional pressure on residents who can't find parking close to their homes.
- There is a significant amount of two hour parking just outside the downtown that is free, reducing resources that could be going into the parking system and giving drivers little incentive to pay for commuter parking.



Future Parking Demand

According to BC Stats, the population of the Nelson area (which includes as far as Nelway, Balfour, Krestova, and Slocan) is projected to grow by 4.8% by 2038, which means about 1,100 more people within 30-45 minutes' driving distance in the next 20 years. Housing construction is on the rise, with 118 new dwelling units in Nelson alone in 2018. Nelson Kootenay Lake Tourism states that tourism may be expected to see an increase of 5% per year.

Other trends suggest that parking demand may not increase at the same pace, however. According to a province-wide analysis by the *Vancouver Sun*, there has been a 13.9% decrease in drivers aged 16 to 21 in Nelson between 2003 and 2013.¹

In our region, transit use has typically increased by 5% to 10% per year in recent years.² As of early 2019, BC Transit is undergoing a review of the regional transit system. The 2016 census found that 30% of the population of Central Kootenay typically drives to work, which is a 1% decrease from 2011 and 2006.

Carshare membership in Nelson increased 50% in 2018 and as of 2021, there are over 325 carshare users in Nelson. The Province is planning on introducing ride-hailing (e.g. Uber) in the coming year. While studies have found that if anything, services like Uber may increase traffic congestion, they still may help to reduce parking demand, particularly for destinations like the downtown where people know in advance that parking may not be convenient.

Based on the above analysis, and further work that the City of Nelson is doing to update and advance its Active Transportation Plan as well as the transportation demand management plans included in this strategy (most importantly, park-and-ride for commuters), this strategy does not assume a significant increase in parking demand in the downtown over the coming decades. Parking requirements, or Council-approved mitigation solutions in-lieu, continue to apply to new construction, including new secondary suites. For example, the busy Kootenay Co-op's old location on the west side of the downtown had no off-street parking. Their new location since 2016 offers 37 stalls for its customers, thanks to its redevelopment.

A key task for the successful implementation of a parking strategy will be ongoing monitoring of demand and use of alternative modes of transport.

The City of Nelson has made numerous commitments to sustainability, including presently collaborating on a region-wide 100%-renewable energy strategy. Their influence on parking policy is to support the transition to electric vehicles and to consider the importance of supporting viable alternatives to driving in, out of, and around the downtown.

"Public space has a high value
[...]"

Something of a misconception is the notion of 'free' parking. If a visitor to city x does not pay a fair price for parking in the city, then the visitor is subsidised by the city and local inhabitants will pay – via taxes – for the visitor's parking space."

European Platform on Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans

¹ <https://vancouversun.com/news/local-news/fewer-b-c-youth-opting-to-get-behind-the-wheel>

² <https://thenelsondaily.com/news/increased-transit-ridership-nelson-region-leads-expansion-service-45634>

Parking Planning Principles

Good strategies begin with research-based principles. For example, here is a summary of the principles that a couple of recent parking strategies were based on:

Barrie, ON
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder involvement • Ensure that the parking policies are resilient enough to withstand projected growth and demographic changes • Reduce dependency on cars: “To this end, monthly parking passes should cost at least 20% more than monthly adult transit passes” • Target an 85% occupancy rate • A positive business case should be made to support any development or investment in parking lots, structures, and equipment and the business case must financially support the goal of sustainability • Implement performance measurements • Continue to have a parking reserve that is user rate funded and is sustainable • Rates should be competitive and supportive of policy decisions – neither the highest nor the lowest when compared to similar parking services and other municipalities. Parking must be perceived as having a value. (Free or discounted parking must be carefully considered and aligned to strategy, desired goals and behaviors.)
Kelowna, BC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City will focus on excellent short-term parking management to support higher turn-over while maintaining a governing role in long-term parking solutions. • The parking system will continue to pay for itself (will operate under a user-pay cost recovery model). • Focus on customer service and fairness in parking practices by providing options, technologies and information. • The City will work with institutions, businesses and developers to plan solutions for parking management. • Parking will be used to support a balanced transportation system.

There are two broad questions that municipal parking policy has to consider its approach towards³:

1) Choosing between a district or site-specific planning approach

<p><u>District parking</u> means providing parking through shared, public parking resources like parking lots and street parking. Although they are certainly free to build their own parking if they want to, individual properties aren’t required to have off-street parking (but they are required to pay for the public parking that they do use). The expectation is that people may need to walk up to a couple blocks to their destination, but since not everyone is home all the time (and not all businesses have the same peak periods), there are overall fewer parking spaces in a neighbourhood since the resources are shared. For example, a parking space is used by customers of a breakfast restaurant in the morning, a restaurant at lunch, specialty retail in the afternoon, and residents in the evenings.</p>	<p>A <u>site-specific approach</u> means focusing on solving parking problems using parking requirements for new development, so that each and every property is intended to have sufficient parking for a typical day, and street parking is only used during exceptionally busy times. Drivers will generally park on the property that they are visiting, but since it is private parking reserved for the customers of that business (or the residents of that house), they likely have to get in their car and drive to the next business or house that they visit, even if it’s just a block or two away. This approach has been found to lead to significantly more parking spaces per capita and to cause more greenhouse gas emissions, since private property signage requires customers to move their cars as they go from business to business doing their errands.</p>
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³ Barter, P. A. (2015). ‘A Parking Policy Typology for Clearer Thinking on Parking Reform’, *International Journal of Urban Studies*.

- 2) Treating parking as public infrastructure or as a private good to be supplied by the market.

This second question is as much about whether municipalities should even intervene in parking management at all, as it is about whether parking should be free. On the one hand, there is the perspective of parking researcher Donald Shoup who thinks that “even if parking is necessary, it doesn’t have to be free. Food and housing are also necessary, but we don’t assume they should be free” and therefore that municipalities don’t necessarily have to directly create or subsidize parking, because it is simply a good like any other. If there is demand for parking, a private entrepreneur will step in, just as is the case for housing.

On the other hand, we can take the approach that parking is just as much a public infrastructure requirement as roads, public transport, and parks. The biggest criticism of this approach is from those who want to encourage people to drive less: infrastructure is generally subsidized by the entire population, so a parking-as-infrastructure mindset often leads to excess parking supply that even those who don’t drive are required to pay for.

In recent years Nelson, like most cities, has leaned towards the site-specific approach, although the historic downtown is built on a district parking model.

The Victoria Transport Policy Institute, a widely-referenced BC-based transportation research think tank, cites consumer choice, user info, efficient utilization, and flexibility as some of the angles to consider in parking policy.⁴ Urging cities to not follow the conventional trajectory of reactive and operational parking policy that leads to car-dependent and less-liveable cities, they propose that parking policy should reflect the vision for the development of the city and that it should ask whether public space is fairly distributed.

The most widely referenced scholar on parking is Professor Emeritus Donald Shoup, whose perspective is that “city parking policies subsidize cars, encourage sprawl, degrade urban design, prohibit walkability, damage the economy, raise housing costs, and penalize people who cannot afford or choose not to own a car.”⁵ He sees parking regulation as necessary to ensure readily available but sufficiently used parking. His three recommended parking reforms are:

- 1) Remove off-street parking requirements

Shoup argues that in reality, planners can’t predict parking demand for the lifespan of a new building, and thus parking requirements are guesses at best. A 2013 survey of Southern Californian planners found that when setting parking requirements, 73% use the requirements of nearby cities as their basis, 66% revert to the current standards, 46% use engineering data

“” *Get the honest message out: Nelson is a popular place to live and to visit. Parking will continue to be limited, whatever solutions we come up with. Consider walking, biking, carpooling and parking further from your destination. It will be healthy for you and easier on our parking stresses.*

- Response to the 2019 downtown parking strategy survey

⁴ https://www.vtpi.org/park_man.pdf

⁵ Donald Shoup (2018). *Parking and the City*, Routledge. The author’s best-known book is “The High Cost of Free Parking”, published in 2005.

collected from 1970s suburban America, and only 29% of cities commissioned original studies when setting local policy.

2) Charge the “right prices” (market rates) for on-street parking to maintain an 85% occupancy rate

The goal is to ensure that there are always at least a few vacant spaces on any block, so that anyone who comes by (and is willing to pay) can park if they so want. Donald Shoup’s market-approach to parking is that parking should be priced at a rate that generally ensures that 85% of stalls are occupied and 15% are vacant. He comments that “charging too much or too little for on-street parking can cause a lot of harm. If the price is too high and many curb spaces are vacant, adjacent businesses will lose customers ... If the price is too low and no curb spaces are vacant, drivers searching for a place to park will congest traffic, waste fuel, and pollute the air”, and businesses will also lose money because the free, convenient parking spaces will be taken up by commuters or others who don’t really need that space. Pricing parking puts a value on it. This thinking compares parking demand to a gas: the more cheap or free parking there is, the more parking demand there will be. It contracts and expands based on the price.

For more, see Appendix D: Further Reading

Under a user-pays model, charging for parking reduces the burden of road and parking infrastructure maintenance on property tax payers. Raising the cost of parking means avoiding property tax increases. Based on previous years’ parking revenue, a meter rate increase from \$1.25 an hour to \$1.50 could save each dwelling in the city on average an estimated \$50 per year in property taxes.

Transit is also a user-pays transportation system. Transit trips are currently \$2.25 each way, while parking is \$1.25 per hour. For two people to come downtown by bus, it would cost \$9 in cash fares round-trip.

3) Spend meter revenue (or permit fees) to improve public services, amenities, and parking enforcement on the affected streets

“Parking Benefit Districts” are areas where meter or street parking permit rates are increased, and 100% of the new revenue goes to improve infrastructure (e.g. potholes, sidewalks), services (e.g. events, increased parking enforcement), or amenities (e.g. benches, public art, gardens) specifically for that block or street. For example, if residents think that there isn’t enough parking enforcement happening on their street and that too many cars are illegally parked there, they might be interested in paying more for their parking permits if that money goes to enforcement and makes it significantly easier to find a parking space. In many cases, the residents or businesses of the benefit district blocks vote annually on how to spend the generated revenue, or form a committee that decides on their behalf.

Studies suggest that convenient parking (such as being able to park right at one’s door) correlates with higher levels of car ownership and directly leads to more vehicle use, even when adequate public transport service is nearby.⁶ Supply generation has resulted in the “self-fulfilling” parking stall: the more free and convenient parking

⁶ See Zhan Guo’s 2013 peer-reviewed studies: “Home parking convenience, household car usage, and implications to residential parking policies” and “Residential street parking and car ownership: a study of households with off-street parking in the New York City region”.

can be counted on, the more convenient and attractive automobility becomes. For that reason, in 2012 California proposed a limit of one required parking space per dwelling unit in areas “well-served” by transit in order to protect its investment in transit: the state subsidizes cities’ public transport, but in return cities foster ample free parking, undermining the quality of that investment. Carsharing is already beginning to normalize a several-minute walk to the nearest vehicle.

Equity issues also come into play. Parking requirements have been found to result in up to 13% less housing constructed.⁷ In Nelson, this is particularly apparent to staff when it comes to secondary suites: secondary suite projects are often abandoned when homeowners simply cannot afford to create the required parking space, particularly on challenging lots. Free permits are more likely to benefit people with more disposable income, because they are likelier to have more vehicles.⁸ Like a regressive tax, parking requirements penalize the housing that is the most affordable by construction cost—smaller units—because the cost of a stall is fixed: a \$50 per-month parking cost is only 2.5% of a \$2,000 rent, while it would be 10% of a \$500 rent. In multi-unit developments, parking typically constitutes 10-20% of the cost of housing, highlighting an opportunity to improve affordability if car parking and housing are divided into two separate purchases.⁹

A view towards the coming 20 to 30 years is necessary to avoid building infrastructure that entails long-term cost and will become more of a burden than a benefit over its lifespan. No definitive conclusions about the effect of autonomous vehicles, carsharing, ride-hailing (Uber), active transportation, and park-and-ride on parking demand in Nelson for the next few decades, but the future of mobility must be considered. Park-and-ride transit systems are more easily decommissioned than a multi-storey parkade, should autonomous vehicles, for example, usher in the end of privately owned vehicles and make the scale of parking that we already have obsolete.

⁷ Jung, O. (2011). Who Really Pays for a Parking Space? Estimation of Marginal Implicit Value of Off-Street Parking Spaces for Condominiums in Central Edmonton, Canada. *Transportation Research Record: Journal of the Transportation Research Board*.

Manville, M. & Shoup, D. C. (2010). “Parking requirements as a barrier to housing development: regulation and reform in Los Angeles”. Shoup, D. (2014). “The High Cost of Minimum Parking Requirements”, *Transport and Sustainability*.

⁸ de Groote, J., Van Ommeren, J. N., & Koster, H. (2015). “Car Ownership and Residential Parking Subsidies: Evidence from Amsterdam”.

⁹ Victoria Transport Policy Institute (2016). “Parking Requirement Impacts on Housing Affordability”.

Key Actions Taken between 2017-2020

A number of new policies and changes have been introduced in the previous three years, including:

1. Placing restrictions on new driveway accesses (curb cuts) to limit their size and number in cases where street parking would be lost.
2. New parking spaces downtown. New angled parking spaces on Lakeside Drive are pending.
3. Allowing free parking at the City Hall parking lot after-hours and on weekends.
4. Introducing wheelchair accessible parking requirements for large developments that align with the recommendations of advocates.
5. Review and elimination of certain residential accessible parking spaces that are no longer used.
6. Engagement with downtown churches regarding street parking, leading to signage changes.
7. Signage changes to allow drivers to park in many commercial loading zones after-hours.
8. Numerous amendments to parking requirements, including reductions for uses such as care services and art galleries, opportunities for relaxations for secondary suites when no new burden on street parking is expected, and greater flexibility to meet parking requirements, including placing parking on an adjacent lot or integrating carsharing.
9. New mobile vending policy to regulate commercial uses of public street parking stalls.
10. Improved information online (www.nelson.ca/parking) and a new downtown parking brochure.
11. Starting in January 2018, a new residential permit application process to better enforce the current, longstanding eligibility requirements.
12. Implemented 'meter hood' dashboard passes for greater convenience for contractors.
13. Introduced a new \$5 day-parking meter rate for commuters, with a pilot project on the 300 block of Cedar Street and during summer months, the curling club lot.
14. Updated parking rates at the city parkade, a forthcoming new secured bike parking area, and other improvements to the parkade, including murals and a new security door.
15. Paystations at both Lower and Upper Hall Street.
16. New public electric vehicle charging stalls (four Level-2 spaces and two Level-3 chargers).
17. Parking amnesty program to collect unpaid parking tickets, as per the draft strategy's call to follow-up on tickets as a matter of fairness to those who have paid.
18. In response to COVID-19, 50% of summer parking revenue in 2020 was directed towards supporting the downtown business community.
19. Began pilot of after-hours complaint procedure, allowing citizens to submit well-documented photo evidence of parking infractions.
20. Implemented new Bylaw Enforcement technology and an online permit system (parking.nelson.ca)
21. Citywide electric vehicle charging requirements for new buildings.
22. Expanded the Off-Street Parking and Landscape Bylaw's "Downtown Parking Area".

Consultation

In addition to the consultations detailed below, the strategy's recommendations come from significant staff research between 2016 and 2019 into best practices from other cities and studies, feedback and complaints, and day-to-day operations and observations of numerous departments.

2016 Downtown Employee Commute Survey

The questionnaire was modeled after numerous examples of 'downtown employee parking surveys' from other Canadian and American cities.¹⁰ The title was changed to 'commute survey' in recognition that a large number of employees do not drive to work and that it is important to get a sense of how many do not regularly, or ever, require parking.

The August 2016 study was limited to places of employment located on Herridge Lane and Vernon, Baker, and Victoria Streets between Hwy 3a to the west and Hendryx Street to the east, and the north-south streets within those boundaries.

A total of 296 responses were received. Approximately 120 businesses were given paper copies of the survey, the Chamber of Commerce was sent the survey by email to send to its membership, and large employers (the hotels, Kootenay Co-op, and Nelson CARES) were sent the survey by email to their employees. Only 15 places of employment that had been given surveys did not return any. One small business visited refused to participate. Some businesses said that some employees who walk or take the bus assumed that they didn't need to fill out the survey, which suggests that responses could be somewhat skewed towards vehicle commuters.

Modal Share: How do respondents go to work?

66%¹¹ of respondents always, nearly always, or usually commute by private vehicle. Only 15% of commuters *never* commute with their own car.

26% of respondents always, nearly always, or usually commute by foot. 60% *never* walk to work.

8% of respondents always, nearly always, or usually commute by bicycle.

6% of respondents always, nearly always, or usually commute by bus. 84% *never* commute by bus.

7% (n=20) of respondents park at a meter. 16% (n=47) park for free in Uphill. Nearly one-third do not pay for parking. Others pay up to \$100 per month.

The vast majority already walk 3 to 20 minutes from their parking space to work. Only 22% park at or beside their place of work. At least one-fifth of respondents work fewer than 5 days per week in the downtown. In this situation, monthly parking passes are not efficient, as the parking space would sit vacant half of the time.

¹⁰ Examples: <https://www.research.net/r/P9VB7RC> (Kirkland, WA)
http://media.wix.com/ugd/c30319_a8842a7ff2e045b897bea8bbf2fbeb8.pdf (Thorold, Ontario)
<http://www.nashvilledowntown.com/files/docs/2015-employee-survey-report-for-website.pdf> (Nashville)

¹¹ Percentages do not always add up to 100% as not all respondents answered all questions. Percentages are calculated out of the total response count of 296.

A rate of \$2 per day could be advisable for out-of-downtown parking and \$5 per day for prime parking. However, free or significantly discounted transit should be afforded to participants in the system to encourage them *not* to drive whenever it is possible for them because a parking rate of only \$2 per day is half a round-trip bus fare, making transit hardly advantageous.

26% (n=26) would be enticed by free transit, and:

19% (n=57) by “more frequent bus service within Nelson on the same routes that currently exist”

19% (n=56) by “more frequent regional bus service on the same routes that currently exist”

Car commuters want free, dependable, all-day employee parking, even if it is a ways away. Most are willing to walk as far as 10 to 15 minutes to reach such parking.

52% of respondents were either enthusiastic or open to a strategy of incentivising as many commuters as possible to park outside of the downtown core and/or to drive less often. Many see the benefit of this and many more are tired of ‘cruising for parking’ (searching for available parking) every day, plugging meters, and moving their vehicle several times during the day to avoid a ticket. Parking 10 minutes by foot from work is preferable than spending 10 minutes to find a spot 5 minutes by foot away. Close to half of respondents opposed this approach, but voluntary measures would in fact work to their benefit: the more commuters who park away from downtown, the more parking there will be for those employees who truly need it.

Many respondents asked for **“better” bus times that align better with a 9-to-5 work day.** They report that some buses leave exactly at 5pm, or at 5:07pm. At least one respondent only drives to work on Sundays because there is no Sunday bus service. Numerous respondents complained of the incompatibility of the north shore bus schedule, in particular the ferry connection.

There was significant interest (above 18% of respondents) for **incentives and improvements for transit.** Improving transit, or offering free transit to commuters, is significantly less expensive than building a new multi-storey parkade. Possibilities based on respondent input include:

- Adjustments to bus schedules;
- Increased frequency of service to both Nelson and regional bus schedules;
- Different variations of free transit:
 - Free bus passes for downtown employees
 - Free transit for “locals” in the summer months
- Safer, more enjoyable bike and pedestrian routes.

Those who were **opposed** to relocating employee parking said, for example:

Employees should have the same right to park close to work as well as customers
Good for residents & tourists. Doesn't work for me
Customers can walk too
Not cool to take away our parking for those who will continue to shop despite this fact.
Some people complain that it makes Nelson like a resort town that caters more to tourists than local inhabitants. I wouldn't want that.

One business owner said: **“Customers can walk, workers need to be able to park close to work.”**

2019 Consultation: Downtown Parking Strategy Public Survey

Between January 24th and February 18th, 2019, 903 responses were received to Nelson's initial downtown parking strategy survey, entitled "Share Your Ideas". The survey was widely advertised to residents and the business community, including sidewalk sandwich boards and 500 postcards left on vehicle windshields parked on the street and at the Nelson & District Community Complex (NDCC).

A more detailed report of the survey findings is attached. In summary:

- 70% agree with working towards "reliable, better allocated parking", so that people know where they can go to find parking and they can be sure that a parking space will be waiting for them there". Only 6% were against.
- There is a strong interest in improving transit and creating a robust park-and-ride system. 69% want to invest parking revenue into this; only 11% disagree.
- There is support for free commuter parking outside of the downtown in order to encourage use and leave core parking for short-term and residential parking.
- Day-rate commuter parking is slightly more popular than monthly permits. This likely reflects the needs of part-time workers.
- There is a strong desire to use the parkade entirely for all-day commuter parking.
- People want to pay for parking with an app, and prefer this over paystations.
- Improving active transportation infrastructure is seen by many as key to the parking strategy. This includes improving cycling ease-of-use as well as keeping sidewalks clear of snow and ice in the winter.
- There is some interest in reforming the residential parking permit system, but not as much support as staff expected.

There was broad discontent with long trucks, especially with snowmobiles, using angle parking. Although some people are frustrated by getting parking tickets, more respondents believed that there isn't enough parking enforcement, especially in Lower Uphill. There is general dissatisfaction with the two-hour parking model in Lower Uphill, which work neither for residents (they cannot find parking) nor for commuters who are required to move their vehicles every two hours.

2019 Business Consultation

On February 14th, 2019, the Nelson & District Chamber of Commerce hosted a breakfast meeting to discuss the parking strategy. Nine individuals attended. Conversation outcomes include:

- Interest in promoting the 'airbnb' of private off-street parking stalls when not used.
- If paystations are to be used, there must be two per block.
- Consider a cap on outdoor patios that use parking stalls.
- Variable parking meter rates: meters become cheaper the further away they are from the Baker Street core.
- Avoid future loss of parking spaces due to hydro boxes.
- Improve transit: more bus stops on Baker, a downtown bus/shuttle loop, free transit passes for seniors, and a park-and-ride system even if only peak-time shuttle runs from 8am to 9am and 4pm to 5.30pm.

Staff have also met with School District 8, the Nelson & District Community Complex (NDCC), Interior Health, and all of the downtown churches.

Strategy

A Sustainable Vision for Nelson's Downtown

The provision of a new parkade represents a major cost to the City and to residents, and a major piece of infrastructure that potentially could become obsolete in the coming decades. Public consultation in early 2019 found a clear preference on the part of residents to invest in transit (including park-and-ride infrastructure), rather than new parkades (see Appendix B). Furthermore, data currently show that while free parking near the downtown is oversubscribed, paid parking options in the downtown are underutilized – this suggests that user fees for a potential parkade likely would be too high to make such a project viable. The provision of a significant influx of parking could result in reduced viability of alternative modes (walking, ridesharing and public transit use), and increased traffic problems.

“The problem is not so much a supply problem – a shortage of parking – as it is an availability problem.”

1995 City of Nelson Integrated Transportation Strategy

Better parking management with more efficient use of existing parking resources is the focus of this parking strategy. The goal is to provide incentives to encourage those who can to find alternative means to come downtown, which will help free up parking spaces for those who do need to drive. When appropriately applied, parking management can reduce the number of parking spaces needed by the community, providing for a variety of economic, social, and environmental benefits, as well as improving the aesthetic of the downtown by being able to focus on amenities and spaces for people. It can also contribute to making residents' day-to-day lives easier.

Guiding Principles for Decisions on Parking

1. Balancing different groups' needs and wants: the public survey results (Appendix B) make it clear that a large number of downtown residents, out-of-Nelson commuters, and downtown customers all make arguments why they deserve to park right at their destination, for free. Even if property taxes were to increase to make up for lost revenue, this expectation is not realistic in a downtown with as many storefronts as Nelson has. Downtown residents without off-street parking point to the property taxes that they already pay as evidence for their right to park multiple vehicles on the street; out-of-town commuters cite the amount it already costs to commute and that unlike city dwellers who could walk, they have to drive; and finally out-of-town shoppers claim that without readily available free parking, they are increasingly avoiding downtown Nelson altogether.

A sample of the contrasting perspectives expressed by respondents to the online survey can be found in Appendix C.

2. Reliable parking: increasing parking availability. People will know where they can go to find parking and they can be sure that a parking space will be waiting for them when they get there. Focus on using a district (or shared) parking approach.
3. The City's primary role in parking management should be to provide an appropriate supply of affordable, secure, accessible, and convenient short-term public parking, including the protection of existing on-street spaces and creating new spaces where possible, to support higher turn-over and efficient use of

existing parking spaces, with a secondary role of governing and planning for all-day parking. In line with the principle of financial sustainability, a business case must be made for new City-owned parking lots. The Official Community Plan “encourages the provision of more vehicle parkades off Baker Street”, but it does not assign this role to the municipality. The municipality should not be solely responsible for satisfying demand for parking; this role should be shared with the private sector.

4. Role of the private sector: The City will work with institutions, businesses, developers, and downtown residents to plan solutions for parking management. Parking policies will support the private sector and employers to contribute to improving the parking and transportation overall, including encouraging peer-to-peer sharing of private off-street parking.
5. Focus on customer service, friendliness and fairness in parking practices by providing options, technologies, and information: User-friendly parking technology that is supported by the community will be considered. Parking enforcement is an important tool for maximizing the downtown parking supply and managing fair access to it. Additional payment options, improved signage, fair practices and real-time information make parking more accessible and easier to find, and lessens enforcement requirements and supports active business areas and balanced neighbourhoods.
6. Support the Transition to Active Transportation: Parking will be used to support a balanced transportation system and city planning and urban design goals in general, found in other Council-approved policies. Parking is one part of a larger transportation picture. Inexpensive and plentiful parking will not encourage people to use transit, carpool/taxi, walk, or cycle, which are key goals of higher-level City of Nelson plans. For people who are physically able to, it should be considered normal to sometimes walk 20 minutes or more instead of driving and searching for a parking space downtown. Consider the fact that the online public survey on parking highlighted that many residents see clear, ice-free sidewalks, bike parking, effective street lighting, and other measures that make year-round active transportation more accessible and pleasant as important strategies to solving parking issues. Low-carbon transportation should be given priority, where appropriate. Furthermore, Nelson has committed itself to achieving a 100% renewable energy economy.
7. Support a safe, healthy, inclusive community: road design, including setting speed limits and the consideration of pedestrian access, can have a significant role in community well-being. Prioritising active transportation in Nelson is supported by Interior Health in a letter sent to the City of Nelson in March 2019. Good parking planning will help support a built environment where people enjoy the time spent getting from their vehicle to their destination. Inclusion means considering parking (and road) policy that’s fair and beneficial for the whole community, including those who do not drive or own a vehicle. Good parking management contributes to traffic safety by increasing availability of parking and reducing illegal, dangerous parking.

“It is important to note that users of different travel modes experience very different levels of service, with car users usually getting higher levels of service. Parking policy can help to change this balance.”

European Platform on Sustainable Urban Mobility

8. Support the transition to electric vehicles: under the provincial Zero Emissions Vehicles Act, by 2030 30% of new vehicles sold in British Columbia will be required to be electric, and the quota jumps to 100% by 2040. The City has a role in preparing public and private infrastructure alike to accommodate the next generation of vehicles.
9. Transportation Demand Management: focus on getting more people into the downtown core all while keeping more vehicles out of it. By supporting those who are able to not bring a vehicle into the downtown, we free up existing parking spaces for those who need them. The City's *Low Carbon Path to 2040* plan recommends to "update existing bylaws so that parking priority is given to low carbon modes of transportation".
10. Customers and downtown residents first, while balancing amenities like patios: Prime spaces used by commuters hurt the downtown economy. The Official Community Plan promotes discouraging commercial users from parking on nearby residential streets.
11. Financial Sustainability: Parking is never free. When it's free to the user, the cost burden is shifted to property tax payers. The parking system will pay for itself under a user-pay cost recovery model, including funding for new infrastructure, maintenance, equipment, enforcement, upgrades, customer service applications, replacement of existing infrastructure, management, and alternative modes of transportation. Specifically, parking revenue over the long-term could be used to support principle #1. Parking rates will:
 - a. Help reduce dependency on single-occupant vehicles by moving towards equalising parking rates with the cost of a monthly adult transit pass, as transit is currently more expensive than parking for many commuters;
 - b. Ensure that parking is perceived as having a value: rates should be competitive with privately-run parking and supportive of City policy, while aiming for a 85% occupancy rate per block, which means that parking resources are adequately and efficiently used, but that most of the time there is one or two vacant parking spaces per block; and
 - c. Strike a balance in spreading the costs of road and parking infrastructure between user-pays parking fees and property taxes, ensuring fair value for Nelson property tax payers.

Recommended Meter and Signage Changes

In the downtown metered core, there will continue to be mixed meter durations: mostly 2-hour, with some 1-hour meters on Baker Street, some 15-minute meters in select high-turnover locations, and 4-hour and all-day meters on the periphery of the downtown.

In addition to the recommendations on the map below, consider acting on the following:

- 1) Creating all-day commuter parking meters on underutilised spaces on Lake Street, while balancing with 2-hour or even 15-minute meters for adjacent businesses
- 2) 4-hour meters on Hall Street between Front and Lake Streets, given the large amount of off-street parking on that block
- 3) On the Josephine Street right-of-way between Front Street and the rail tracks, consult with adjacent businesses on their desired maximum metered parking duration
- 4) Creating angled parking on the north side of Lakeside Drive and charging the City's daily commuter parking rate
- 5) In close consultation with the immediately adjacent residents and businesses, consider one-way streets for the 300 and 400 blocks of Victoria and the 500 to 800 blocks of Silica in order to potentially double parking capacity on those streets and/or improve active transportation infrastructure
- 6) Formalize the following two free parking areas:
 - a. Eastside of 300 Cedar → resident and paid all-day commuter parking
 - b. North side of 100 Vernon → paid all-day commuter parking



Recommended Actions

Maximize Current Parking Assets

Objectives

- **The City will provide a balance of strategically located short- and long-term parking to support higher turnover and efficient use of existing parking spaces; and, where possible, develop new stalls.**
- **The City's primary role in parking management should be to provide an appropriate supply of readily-available, secure, accessible, and convenient short-term public parking, especially on-street, with a secondary role of governing and planning for all-day parking options.**
- **Spread out parking demand: incentivise drivers who are coming to the downtown for 2 or more hours to park farther out in order to free up prime spaces for shorter visits and for those who truly need to park as close as possible to their destination**

1. Work with owners of private parking lots to make use of stalls during off-use hours (i.e. during evenings and weekends) by encouraging shared spaces with other individuals and/or businesses.
 - a. Allow public parking after-hours and weekends on surface parking lots usually reserved for employees, including City Hall and other government/institutional parking areas
 - b. Encourage residents and property owners to participate in peer-to-peer parking space sharing.

Several apps exist that act like an Airbnb platform for parking stalls (for example: Rover Parking, Where I Park, Honk Mobile.) The idea is that a local business owner with a Herridge Lane spot could let others use their space when they go on vacation for a week, or a downtown resident with a parking space might let a commuter use their space from 9 to 5 when they themselves are at work. Or a tenant who is renting a house on Victoria with a parking spot but doesn't actually need it, and could thus rent it full-time to the neighbours four doors down, or just to commuters during the day. A hotel having a slow week could spontaneously rent out a few of their spaces, as can churches when they do not have services or events.

2. Carve out new parking where possible.
 - a. Create more motorcycle parking triangles in otherwise unused areas
 - b. Significantly increase bicycle parking and consider dedicating a strategically-placed parking stall for a large bike rack
 - c. Create on- and off-street small-car parking stalls in order to fit more vehicles into existing space, while leaving sufficient stalls for full-sized vehicles
 - d. Continue implementing angled parking where feasible
 - i. Long trucks (including with snowmobiles) parked in angle stalls are a traffic safety concern frequently cited by the public because they can extend into the travel lane and reduce visibility. The Traffic Bylaw already caps the maximum length of vehicles parked in angle stalls at 6 metres. In order to improve compliance and safety, signage will be installed, which could be affixed to parking meters. Over-length vehicles must be parked in parallel spaces.
 - ii. Consider lowering the downtown speed limit to 30 km/h in order to ensure angled parking is considered safe by residents. Lowering speed limits significantly improves pedestrian and

cyclist safety. Someone hit by a car driving at 40 km/h has a 30% likelihood of dying, but at 30 km/h, this reduces to 10%.¹²

- e. Formalise the Railtown public parking lots at the Cottonwood Market and the parking plaza at the Rod & Gun Club, including carsharing and electric vehicle charging (refer to the Railtown Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Plan)
 - f. Existing parking lots, like the one at 610 Railway and private lots, could benefit from valet parking to fit more cars into the same space if parking demand increases significantly
3. Balance parking turnover with public expectations.
- a. Extend 2-hour parking restrictions and meters into Railtown as the neighbourhood develops
 - b. Consult businesses on whether to return to one-hour meters on Baker Street that were implemented as a pilot project back to two hours to provide for a timeframe that more accurately accommodates people's shopping experience/needs
 - c. Avoid metering motorcycle parking triangles in the short-term in order to encourage motorcyclists to use these smaller spaces rather than taking up a full-sized parking space
4. Prioritise public parking over private parking.
- a. Continue to restrict new driveway accesses (curb cuts) when they would eliminate publicly-accessible street parking.
 - b. Adopt policies to oversee fair access to public on-street parking by private business. The business community should be consulted to allow it to consider the trade-offs between leased spaces and publicly-accessible metered spaces.
 - c. Consider a Council policy restricting licences for private use of street parking. For long-term leases, require consultation with adjacent businesses prior to approving a long-term lease. Leases should only be considered off-Baker and only if the estimated occupancy of metered stalls at that location is below 50%, Monday to Friday during business hours.
5. Work with downtown employers to discourage single-occupancy car commuting and incentivize commuters to park further out (an est. 7% of downtown commuters park at meters intended for short-term customer stops).
6. Consider allowing taxis to wait for fares at downtown fire hydrants.

As an effort to keep taxis from taking street parking spaces, the City of Victoria, BC, formally allows (with signage) taxis to stop at fire hydrants as long as the driver remains in the vehicle and relocates immediately upon approach of an emergency vehicle. Signage would be erected at each fire hydrant indicating "Fire Hydrant – No Parking – Stopping Permitted for Taxis". Extend these permissions to ride-hailing services once they become available.

¹² <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/drive/mobility/article-slowness-cars-down-is-the-quickest-route-to-safer-streets/>
<https://www.citylab.com/transportation/2019/08/low-speed-limit-vehicle-safety-crash-data-traffic-congestion/588412/>

7. Increase the maximum time duration of wheelchair accessible parking from 2 hours to 4 hours. Drivers with accessibility needs who need to visit the downtown for longer than 2 hours may not have the option of parking farther from their destination to use the City's 4-hour metered parking.

The City's bylaws allow holders of an accessible parking permit who have a disability to park for free at parking meters across Nelson. They may also park for an unlimited period of time at a parking meter. With such a permit, it is also possible to park at a designated accessible parking zone for free for up to two hours.

Nelson and Trail are some of the few cities that offer free parking at meters. Most cities offer those with a disability free parking exclusively at designated accessible parking spaces. Kelowna requires that the meter be plugged but does not impose the posted time restriction. Victoria required meter payment, but offers \$60 monthly permits for downtown employees who need to park at a meter.

8. Continue to place all-day commuter parking and 4-hour meters on the periphery of downtown, especially where parking spaces are underutilized.
9. In consultation with the business community, consider shifting the meter-rate times from 9am to 5pm to later hours (e.g. 10am to 6pm) if a new timeframe would better align with the busiest times in downtown Nelson when paid parking may help to free up parking availability for consumers. Evidence currently suggests that there is more parking demand between 5pm and 6pm than 9am to 10am.

Private Business Use of Downtown Parking Spaces

In summer 2019, about 40 downtown parking spaces were used full-time by businesses. This includes patio spaces (17 parking spaces), one food truck (two spaces), and approx. 30 spaces leased to businesses for their own use. In addition, there are over 20 loading zones. Altogether, this represents about 10% of total metered or meterable downtown parking spaces.

Financial Sustainability

Objective

The parking system will pay for itself under a user-pays cost-recovery model, including funding for new infrastructure, maintenance, equipment, enforcement, upgrades, customer service applications, replacement of existing infrastructure, promotion of alternative modes of transportation, etc.

1. Increase parking rates from time-to-time in consideration of rising infrastructure costs, inflation, managing increasing demand, residents' appetite for shifting infrastructure costs from general revenue to parking, and balance with transit fares. Proceeds of rate increases should go towards:
 - a. Offsetting the need to use general property tax revenue to fund road maintenance. Based on previous years' parking revenue, a meter rate increase from \$1.25 an hour to \$1.50 would save each dwelling unit in the city an estimated \$50 per year on average in property taxes.¹³

¹³ Already in 1995 the City of Nelson Integrated Transportation Strategy recommended increasing meter rates to \$1. Accounting for inflation since 1995, \$1 is now \$1.58.

If the hourly rate is increased to \$1.50, 15-minute meters may need to be changed to 20 minutes given that the minimum meter coinage is 25 cents.

- b. Improving transit services – a 25-cent increase could generate approx. \$200,000 per year
 - c. Funding active transportation projects, as per the Active Transportation Plan
 - d. Consider the parking benefit district model which, upon the consent of the area residents or business owners, increases parking rates and reinvests all new revenue directly into that neighbourhood (e.g. improved parking enforcement, sidewalks, green space, lighting, etc.)
- 2. Adjust meter rates with the objective of maintaining 85% parking spot occupancy. This target achieves the triple benefit of keeping downtown busy, ensuring there are always a few available spaces, and encouraging turnover.
- 3. Pilot progressive pricing that prioritizes short stays while allowing for longer stays at a premium price. Paystations, unlike conventional coin meters, can support this approach as well as various kinds of discounts. For example, until recently in Aspen, Colorado, the first hour of parking costs \$3, \$4.50 for the second hour, \$6 for the third, and \$7.50 for the fourth. Kamloops, BC also uses progressive pricing: the first and second hours are \$1.25 and the third is \$2.50.
 - a. Alternatively, consider peak-hour surcharges in paystation areas. For example, Aspen’s new system charges a 50% surcharge between 11am and 3pm (increasing from \$4 to \$6), while also offering 15 minutes of free parking per licence plate, per day (a recommendation from Nelson’s 1995 Integrated Transportation Strategy).
- 4. Encourage transit use over vehicle trips into the downtown by implementing a parking pricing strategy that is more favourable to transit. Transit trips are currently \$2.25 per direction, while parking is \$1.25 per hour. For two people to come downtown by bus, it would cost \$9 in cash fares round-trip. That price is nearly double the all-day parking rate of \$5.
 - a. If transit fares increase, parking meter rates should increase accordingly.
 - b. Prioritize transit improvements, but a summer pilot project for free transit on routes that run entirely within City limits (i.e. routes 1, 2, and 3) could be considered. Funding could come from parking revenue. Only bus runs that are not regularly at-capacity should be considered for the free transit pilot.
 - c. In order to free up parking for customers, individual businesses should consider incentivising their employees to not park downtown (e.g. free transit passes).
- 5. Review all free parking in the downtown vicinity.
- 6. Look into a paid parking area along Lakeside Drive that accommodates airport activities.

Boulder, CO: Transit passes for downtown employees

Boulder’s EcoPass program offers transit passes at around \$15 per month to employees of businesses in areas with metered parking. Contracts are negotiated directly with the business. Pass holders benefit from a Guaranteed Home Program: EcoPass holders who use any form of alternative transportation in their commute to work to a free taxi-ride home in the event of an emergency or an unexpected event.

Park-and-Ride

Objectives

- **Keep vehicles outside of the downtown core while facilitating more people coming in**
- **Make transit a more attractive option**

Several park-and-ride lots served by BC Transit already exist west and east of Nelson. However, average bus service frequency is once per hour at best. A monthly bus pass (\$60) costs more than most commuters likely pay for parking. Instead of relying on general bus routes, an alternative is to create a dedicated shuttle independent of BC Transit. It could be run by the City or contracted out, using multiple 15-passenger vans or a small bus.

Victoria, BC: Funding free transit for youth

Since May 1st, 2019, Victoria, British Columbia, has ended free street parking on Sundays in the downtown. Downtown parkades remain free on Sundays. The new revenue, expected to be \$500,000 per year, will fund about half the cost of a new transportation project: free transit passes to Victoria youths under age 18. The goal of the new program is to create lifelong transit users, make life more affordable for families, and provide youth with more independence to move about the city.

Survey respondents suggested that downtown employers, downtown parking revenue, and the Regional District of Central Kootenay could help fund a park-and-ride shuttle system. The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI) has been identified as a potential partner in identifying Crown land outside of City limits for new park-and-ride lots. Very little City-owned land would be appropriate for park-and-ride:

- The Railtown Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Plan does not plan for new public/commuter parking lots in that area.
- Lakeside Drive and the old transfer station are possible options in the future, but the rail crossing could interfere with scheduling.
- The two parking lots at Lakeside Park could be used during the winter. The existing trolley (currently summer-only) could be deployed to get commuters as far as Lower Hall Street.

The survey identified the following as necessary conditions for park-and-ride to be successful:

1. The entire service must be free and frequent (at least every 15 minutes and/or focused on peak periods like 8am to 9am and 4pm to 6pm) to compensate for the inconvenience of the wait, however short, and distance from the downtown core, and provide a comfortable waiting environment year-round, including benches and ideally a heated waiting area.
2. The “ride” component should be extended to bicycles, too: include secured bicycle parking.
3. Integrate carpooling for additional flexibility.
4. Electric shuttles are preferred.

BC Transit is working on identifying new locations for park-and-ride lots.

Objective

Make maximum use of the existing City parkade to the benefit of the most commuters possible, including people who bike

1. Move away from monthly permits towards day-rate parking to maximize use of parking stalls and to encourage alternative modes of transportation. Daily permits provide an immediate financial incentive to avoid driving into the downtown when convenient: you only pay for the days you drive.
2. Make payment more user-friendly through technology.
3. Make improvements to the parkade for beautification and user safety (e.g. lighting, washrooms, and emergency call buttons).
4. Install secured bicycle parking and electric vehicle charging.

Replace monthly permits with daily reservations: only pay for the days you need

It is common to see Nelson's on-street parking at-capacity while off-street lots are at half-capacity or less. A common complaint is that even though the parkade is fully subscribed, it often looks half-empty. Monthly permits do not make sense for part-time workers – according to the 2016 census, 65% of Nelson-area workers work less than full-time around the year. The space rented by a full-time worker is likely empty at least two days a week (and during vacation).

This survey found that only 47% of commuters “always” drive to work. At least one-fifth of respondents work fewer than 5 days per week downtown. In this situation, monthly parking passes are not efficient (pass holders might walk to work two times out of five) or ideal from a multi-modal sustainability perspective (once parking is prepaid, there is no incentive *not* to drive from time to time). Phasing out monthly permits, also recommended by Whitehorse's downtown parking strategy, will ensure that parking spaces are occupied more of the time. It creates an incentive to only drive on days when one needs to (even if it is every day) by not having to pay for days that parking is not needed. If reservable in advance, commuters benefit from the reassurance that they have a guaranteed parking spot on the days they need it; they do not need to waste time searching for parking. It would allow weekend and part-time workers to benefit from parking normally reserved for Monday-to-Friday commuters.

Downtown Residential Streets

Generally defined as the R3 – Downtown Residential Zone

Objectives

- Increase parking enforcement
- Make the most use of existing street parking: support residents in Lower Uphill through the provision of residential parking while accommodating non-residential users as much as possible
- Better accommodate visitor parking (including tradespeople)
- Acknowledge the value of, and high demand for, street parking by charging for it and thereby shifting the cost burden from property taxes

Currently, the residential permit system consists of one free permit per dwelling unit that does not have off-street parking.

“Having off-street parking” is defined as the presence of at least one space per dwelling unit, or a previous building permit that required parking. For example, if there are three dwelling units on a lot and two parking spaces, only one dwelling unit is eligible for a permit.

More passes can be issued than there are parking spaces on a block. A survey of German cities found that it is generally fine to issue 1.5 residential parking passes per parking space, as entire neighbourhoods are rarely, if ever, all at home at the same time.¹⁴

1. Start charging a \$40 annual fee (\$3.33 per month) for residential parking permits to cover administration costs and to make a small contribution to road maintenance costs. The cost would be prorated if applied for later in the calendar year.
2. Consider the introduction of 2nd permits: residents of the downtown residential area should be consulted further on whether they favour the current one-permit cap or the allowance for a 2nd permit. A dwelling unit with no off-street parking would be eligible for up to two permits. A dwelling unit with one parking space would be eligible for one permit, charged at the cost of a 2nd permit. A dwelling with 2+ spaces would be not eligible for a permit.

A second permit isn't only for two-car families: many downtown-area homes are shared by multiple, nonrelated adults living together as roommates. But many residential streets are already congested and the City frequently hears complaints that there isn't enough parking as it is. Allowing for second permits could theoretically double the number of vehicles. While some may be happy that they can finally get a permit for a second vehicle, or for a roommate, finding a parking space would only become more difficult for everyone.

The proposed permit cost is \$180 per year (\$15 per month) in order to disincentivize uptake, as there is not the physical space for everyone to have two on-street permits. One option is therefore to only issue 2nd permits for blocks where there is room without overselling: if there isn't space available, no 2nd permits will be issued. They would be available first come, first serve.

¹⁴ Agora Verkehrswende (2019): Parkraummanagement lohnt sich: Leitfaden für Kommunikation und Verwaltungspraxis https://www.agora-verkehrswende.de/fileadmin/Projekte/2017/Parkraummanagement/Parkraummanagemet-lohnt-sich_Agora-Verkehrswende_web.pdf

A \$40 fee represents 0.4% of annual car ownership costs. A \$15 monthly permit fee would equate 2% of ownership costs, based on the cost of car ownership and use in British Columbia being estimated at \$10,000 by third-party organizations.

3. Consider replacing free commuter parking in the residential zone by gradually piloting a restricted number of commuter permits for residential blocks at \$50 per month (\$2.50 per weekday). These permits would be valid only from 8am to 5pm, Monday to Friday, on select blocks where there is demonstrated capacity during the day. The few resident-only blocks are often half-empty during the day. On residential permit-only blocks, occupancy is often less than 50% during the day when many residents themselves go to work. Boulder, Colorado, issues market-rate permits to commuters parking in residential areas for \$33 USD per month.

New revenue from residential and commuter permits would go directly towards improving parking enforcement. 228 residential permits were issued in 2018. If each were charged \$40 per year, plus 100 second permits at \$180 per year, plus 100 daytime commuter permits at \$50 per month, \$87,120 would be raised per year to increase parking enforcement, in addition to any resulting ticket revenue.

Additionally proposed:

4. Residential permits will be free for electric vehicles until the year 2025.
5. Permit-eligible households may also purchase a motorcycle/scooter permit for \$10 per year.
6. Allow residents to park in front of their own driveway by parking parallel to the curb or street, only if the licence plate is registered to that address. This is permitted in San Francisco in order to maximise space. This could be implemented by waiving parking tickets issued for blocking a driveway when the person the ticket was issued to can prove that they live at that address.
7. Amend the 2-hour parking restriction to allow for two hours of free parking only once per day in any 2-hour zone, closing the loophole that allows drivers to move a few metres every 2 hours to avoid a ticket.
8. Exclude new multi-unit buildings with 6 or more units from being eligible for residential parking permits.
9. Set a long-term goal of improving winter snow clearing in lanes, in order to improve access to off-street parking in the winter.
10. Make trailers, recreational vehicles, and other vehicles longer than 6.5 metres ineligible for street parking permits.
11. Introduce winter-only parking permits for households whose off-street parking is often not accessible during the winter months due to snow and ice. Up to 1 winter permit per household, issued at staff discretion.
12. Establish a clear opt-in/opt-out mechanism to change the parking restrictions on a given block. Following a review of parking petition practices in 8 Western Canadian cities (including Vancouver, Saskatoon, Lethbridge, and Red Deer), it is recommended that a standard petition template be created and that the petition must be signed by a property owner of at least 66% of the properties adjacent to the subject block. Then, an internal staff committee would review the request and accept or deny the request. Only one request every 18 months would be accepted per block.
13. Support neighbourhoods by considering a parking benefit district model for residential streets that could raise funds for street projects directed by neighbourhood residents.
14. Consider adopting a policy to guide requests to install accessible parking signage in front of individual homes who may need it.

Residential Guest Permits

Recommended policy: residents of block with restricted parking (2-hour, metered, or permit-only) may apply for up to 50 free guest permits per year for free (maximum one at a time, up to 1 week each). Eligible guests are out-of-town guests (out-of-town is defined as at least 100 kilometres, measured from Nelson City Hall to the address at which the licence plate is registered) or contractors doing work at their house. Properties holding a short-term rental business licence would not be eligible. This process can likely be done through the City's online permit software.

For greater convenience and spontaneity, pre-purchased day passes could be made available that can be spontaneously used by writing in the date and licence plate number in marker. Maximum 52 per year, per dwelling unit, \$5 per day (the same rate as all-day commuter parking in the downtown core). This visitor-voucher system is currently used in Melbourne, Australia.

Making Parking Easier through Customer Service

Objective

Making parking easier lessens enforcement requirements and supports active business areas

1. Improve wayfinding
 - a. Provide motorists with current, easily accessible information on parking and travel options in the downtown.
 - b. Find new ways to broadcast important parking restrictions, such as winter parking restrictions, without overcrowding streets with signage.
2. Provide multiple ways to pay for parking and obtain parking permits, including online. The public survey results say that the City should strive to offer more than one way to pay for parking.
 - a. Introduce a pay-by-phone payment option (engage with the public on whether the transaction fees, possibly over 35 cents per transaction, are a worthwhile expense for the community);
 - b. Replace parking meters with new parking technology in conjunction with major infrastructure upgrades;
 - c. Sufficient paystation density: survey respondents also said that paystations are a good tool only if there are at least two machines per block.

In the public survey, many lamented that nickels and dimes are not accepted in parking meters. Many municipalities no longer accept them because the smaller coins more easily get stuck in meters. The programming of the meter to give 2 minutes and 23 seconds per nickel also becomes problematic.

Parking Requirements

Objectives

- **Expand opportunities for smaller parking spaces to make better use of space**
- **Implement the "Legalize Downtown" concept by creating opportunities to reduce parking requirements when impacts are offset**

The 2013 Official Community Plan states that "the City will consider reduced parking standards in Downtown and other areas located near commercial services and transit" and "will encourage the infill and redevelopment of

vacant or underutilized lands through a variety of means, including consideration of variances for off-street parking requirements when contributions to active transportation infrastructure or other broader community benefits are proposed, and include consideration of alternatives to single occupant vehicle use.”

Legalize Downtown – One of the five priorities established by Savannah, Georgia’s *Downtown Savannah 2033* master plan advocates to “Legalize Savannah”. How is that city currently ‘illegal’? “Current zoning [and parking] regulations make it difficult, and often impossible, to build the kinds of buildings that make up the bulk of Savannah’s historic neighborhoods.” The mixed-use core areas that are walkable and highly desirable places, made up of buildings that we now designate as ‘heritage’ and proactively seek to preserve, would nearly all be illegal to construct today for want of parking.

Most of the buildings that make Nelson successful are not allowed today and are considered legal nonconforming. A typical two-storey building on Baker Street would require between 15 and 22 spaces, which would take up over half the lot. The Medical Arts Building at the corner of Ward and Baker would require 28 on-site parking spaces if rebuilt today. Touchstones Museum at Vernon and Ward would require 45 on-site parking spaces today (or almost 90% of the lot). While underground parking could be built, the cost to construct underground garages averages \$50,000 or more per stall, significantly undermining the affordability of the building.

Many heritage homes in the downtown area sit on hard-to-access lots due to our steep streets, and in some cases the required parking would cost tens of thousands of dollars to create if the houses were to be rebuilt today – even then, many residents couldn’t even access their parking in the winter because it would be off of the lane.

Since 2005, about 120 American cities have removed parking requirements altogether.¹⁵ For example, in 2009, Sandpoint, Idaho removed all downtown parking requirements. Since 2001, British national policy directs cities to “not require developers to provide more spaces than they themselves wish”. Ontario’s 2016 *Climate Change Action Plan* states that the government will propose legislation towards the elimination of minimum parking requirements in the following five years, stating that they “are a barrier to creating complete, compact and mixed-use communities”.

Edmonton City Council abolished all parking requirements in that city in July 2020. Smithers, BC removed all parking requirements in the downtown and various uses like restaurants and retail citywide. Since 2017, London, England has a ban on new parking stalls for office and residential with good transit proximity, even if the property owners want more parking. New Zealand’s national government issued an order in July 2020 abolishing parking minimums in all cities over 10,000 in population. In most of these cases, municipalities can and do continue to require accessible and bicycle parking for larger development projects.

Unlike many other cities that are eliminating parking requirements outright, Nelson could take the approach to reduce them in exchange for active transportation infrastructure or carsharing. Nelson’s climate action plan, Nelson Next, calls for the elimination of parking requirements.

¹⁵ This article features a map of these cities: <https://www.strongtowns.org/journal/2019/11/24/every-city-should-abolish-its-minimum-parking-requirements-has-yours>

Recommended actions:

1. In the lead up to an outright elimination of parking requirements in order to “legalize downtown”, ensure that any future redevelopment can lower parking requirements by offsetting the transportation demand that it generates. The reduction options should provide a material benefit to the community, while being financially accessible enough so that parking variance applications are rarely, if ever, considered by Council.
 - a. For commercial developments: reduce the cash-in-lieu payment from the current \$10,000 per space to \$3,000. The funds received are directed, by bylaw and provincial legislation, into the City’s Active Transportation Fund.
 - b. For secondary suites and laneway houses: continue to allow residential units to be built in the downtown residential zone without parking only if a covenant is placed on title that prohibits that unit from being issued a street parking permit.
 - c. For multi-unit developments: continue to allow for parking relaxations when carsharing spaces are provided and the halving of parking requirements for mixed-use developments. Explicitly prohibit new multi-unit buildings from eligibility for residential parking permits.
2. Double the existing bicycle parking requirements for new developments from 0.5 spaces to 1 space per dwelling unit.
3. Require less parking for rental apartments than for condos. Studies have shown that renters own fewer vehicles. Many cities have adjusted their requirements to reflect this. For example, Victoria made the requirement for purpose-built rental developments 0.1 spaces less than for condos and New Westminster lowered requirements for downtown rental apartments by about 0.6 spaces compared to condos.
4. Regularly reconsider minimum parking dimensions. The current length of a conforming parking stall is 6 metres. Many other key service cities in rural, rugged areas already have a shorter minimum length (for example, Smithers and Prince George are 5.4 metres; Port Alberni and Red Deer are 5.5 metres; Cranbrook and Fernie are 5.8 metres). Vancouver’s parking length is 5.5 metres. However, the City should consider the length of the longest version of many popular vehicle models: a Ford F-150 can be up to 6.36 metres and a Toyota Tundra up to 6.29 metres. It is also important for active transportation safety that parking spaces be adequately long: a key concern of pedestrians and especially wheelchair users is when vehicles parked in a driveway encroach onto the sidewalk. In the winter, snow piles also take up room in many driveways and parking pads.
5. On any lot where three or more parking spaces are required, allow up to 50% of spaces to be “small-car only”. When a building requires over 10 spaces, the City’s bylaw already allows up to 30% to be designated as small-car only.
6. Decrease the length of a “small-car only” space from 5.3 metres to 4.8 metres. Smithers’ small-car spaces may be as short as 4.5 metres, however, and in Kelowna it is 4.8 metres. This strategy prioritises making the most of the parking areas that the City does have. While long trucks are common in our community,

To reconsider the example of rebuilding the Medical Arts Building (previous page): the 28-space parking requirement would be reduced by half by including as few as three dwelling units. With two Carshare stalls, it goes down further from 14 to 8 spaces. The developer could then choose to pay \$9,000 to the Active Transportation Fund for the three remaining required spaces.

sedans are just as prominent. A four-door Honda Fit is about 4 metres in length, a Toyota 4Runner is 4.82 metres, and a Toyota Prius or Hyundai Elantra is about 4.6 metres.

Veterans and Seniors Parking

The City of Nelson offers residents over the age of 65 the possibility of purchasing a seniors parking permit. This is a very unique program. Very few municipalities other than Nelson offer a seniors parking permit (in Canada and the US, it is believed to be only Cranbrook and Yellowknife). It costs \$90 per year and allows the permit holder to park downtown (except on Baker Street) for up to the maximum time posted on the meter. As of March 2020, there were 231 seniors parking permits issued. This number is expected to grow as the population ages: the number of seniors living in Nelson grew by 400 between 2011 and 2016, according to the census.

On December 3rd, 2018, Council passed a resolution directing staff to consider free parking at metered stalls for vehicles bearing veterans licence plates. Most major Canadian cities do not offer year-round free veteran parking, but six major Metro Vancouver municipalities (excluding Vancouver), Kamloops, Saskatoon, Prince Albert (SK), and Hamilton (ON) do. Calgary gives veterans \$10 of free parking per month. Winnipeg offers 20 hours of free parking per year. Vancouver offers free parking during the Remembrance Day week.

Kingston, Ontario, is an example of a city that denied a request for free parking for veteran plate holders for two main reasons. One, Council felt that the money would be better spent on other commemorations: “designating a special education fund or dedicating a building in their name is a better way of expressing gratitude to veterans”. Two, the eligibility for veteran plates is too broad and includes any current member of the regular or reserve forces who has completed basic training (in Ontario, unlike in BC, current and retired RCMP members are also eligible). In BC, veterans plates may be used on vehicles under 5,500 kg as well as motorcycles and motorhomes.

Unlike many other cities, Nelson offers a discounted seniors parking permit for \$90 per year. It is recommended to continue to direct veterans to the seniors parking permit program, if they are eligible, because it already offers significant savings to seniors who drive downtown regularly, and not to introduce any additional fee waivers.

Carsharing

Kootenay Carshare Co-operative membership in Nelson increased 50% in 2018 to over 250 members, with another 34% membership gain in 2019. The carshare has 15 vehicles in its Nelson fleet, including an electric vehicle. Cities such as Vancouver and North Vancouver offer carsharing organizations permits for \$25 - \$77 per year, per vehicle that allow parking in 2-hour or residential permit-only spaces. The City of Victoria offers a permit option allowing for unlimited parking (on-street metered and non-metered) at a cost of \$2,000 annually per vehicle. Victoria provides free “carshare-only” reserved spaces in residential areas and a 50% discount on leased/reserved spaces elsewhere. Victoria also allows residents of a permit-only block to park a carshare vehicle on their own block for free.

Recommended actions:

1. New policy to allow a Carshare user that was issued a parking ticket for actively rented Carshare vehicle on a resident-only or 2-hour block to have the parking ticket cancelled when provided with proof of residence for that block, like in Victoria.
2. Allow City of Nelson seniors who do not own a vehicle to obtain a Seniors Parking Permit that is valid for Carshare vehicles only.
3. Provide one or more designated Carshare parking stalls, considering the City of Victoria’s policy.
4. Promote the use of carsharing and other shared fleet models.

Tradesperson and Commercial Delivery

There have been requests to create a new type of annual permit for tradespeople, contractors, service providers, and delivery companies to allow them to park at downtown metered spaces while servicing downtown businesses and properties. Trail's \$75 annual permit is sometimes cited.

However, staff do not recommend the creation of such permits. City staff could not find any North American example of such permits other than Trail. (Edinburgh, in the UK, does have such a permit, at \$2,278 CAD per year). Rather, most cities offer what Nelson already offers: eligible individuals may purchase an annual commercial vehicle decal that allows them to use any loading zone, including special "Commercial Loading Zones", for up to 10 minutes for free. The concern with providing trades parking passes is the potential for abuse, as Bylaw Enforcement Officers cannot know whether the vehicle is parked due to a service job or for personal errands.

Currently, trades and other service providers can purchase either a meter hood to block off a single metered space for \$20, or they may pre-purchase dashboard permits at \$20 each that are valid for one day and allow them to move from one parking space to the next.

Recommended action:

1. Keep the meter hood rate at \$20, but reduce the pre-purchased dashboard permit rate from \$20 to \$10 per day, valid for the entire day.

Effective Enforcement and Increased Compliance

In Nelson, parking tickets are currently \$10-\$20 if paid within 14 days (depending on the type of offence), \$25-\$50 thereafter, and \$50-\$100 after 28 days. Fines have not increased in over 5 years. Already in 1995, the City of Nelson Integrated Transportation Strategy recommended increasing parking fines to \$20.

Smithers: \$25 if paid within 24 hours, \$40 if paid within 7 days, then \$60

Revelstoke: \$50 if paid within 30 days, then \$100

Penticton: \$20 if paid within 14 days, then \$40

Banff, AB: \$50 to \$55

Kelowna: \$20 if paid within 14 days, otherwise \$30.

Kamloops: \$10 if paid within 24 hours, \$20 thereafter, \$40 after 30 days

Nanaimo: \$22 within 14 days, then \$35, then \$43 after 28 days

Duncan: \$20, then \$25, then \$31

Harrison Hot Springs: \$90 if paid within 14 days, then \$100

1. Increase compliance with posted time limits, aiming to ensure parking enforcement equally reaches residential and commercial alike at least three times per day, whether through increased human resources or technology such as licence-plate-recognition software.
 - a. Because parking fines in residential areas are higher than at metered spaces, enforcement frequency at metered spaces should continue to be prioritised so as to not create an incentive for commuters to park at metered spaces (i.e. less of a chance of getting a fine).
2. Continually equip parking enforcement officers with efficient, reliable technology.
3. Develop mechanisms for follow-up on after-hours parking complaints.

4. Increase enforcement as resources allow (for example, when meter rates increase).
5. Consider alternative payment options. Los Angeles recently launched its Community Assistance Parking Program which allows individuals to pay off unpaid parking tickets in the form of community service, or agree to receive services such as job training or substance abuse counselling. The Department of Transportation says this has led to a 90% payment rate - compared to just 40% with a standard three-month plan.
6. Increase parking fines for the two lowest fine categories in order to improve enforcement:

	Current (early/standard/late)	Proposed (early/standard/late)
Category 1 (incl. Expired meter)	\$10 / \$25 / \$50	\$15 / \$35 / \$70
Category 2 (incl. exceed 2 hours in 2hr zone or parking in a residential permit area)	\$15 / \$35 / \$70	\$20 / \$50 / \$80

Prince George, BC:

"The vision that drives [Prince George's parking] strategy is that downtown on-street parking is for customers. The strategy is aimed at penalizing chronic parking abusers as opposed to people who only get one or two parking tickets per year. An analysis of 34,000 parking tickets written in one year showed 80% of the ticketed vehicles (tracked by license plate number) only got one or two tickets in any given year."

This rate is similar to the City of Nelson's.

Staff investigated the possibility of progressive fines. Progressive fine rates make ticketing lenient for accidental, occasional offences but create a strong deterrent for repeat violations. In Claremont, California, the first parking ticket in a calendar year is \$35, the second \$70, and the third \$105. For illegally using a disabled/accessible space, the first ticket is \$325, the second \$650, and the third \$975. However, the British Columbia Community Charter currently does not allow for this. Should this provincial regulation change in the future, the City should consider a progressive fine structure going up to \$80 fines for regular violators.

Objective

Contribute to facilitating electric vehicle adoption

The City has a strong interest in supporting the transition to electric vehicles (EVs): better air quality, quieter streets, and a long-term reduction in the city's carbon footprint.

The Provincial government recently adopted the Zero Emissions Vehicles Act, which regulates that by 2025, 10% of new cars sold in this province will be required to be electric, 30% by 2030, and 100% by 2040.¹⁶ The infrastructure and homes being built today will long outlive these targets. We can therefore expect that every home being built today will one day be home to an electric vehicle. The City already has electric vehicle charging requirements for new buildings. The municipality has a responsibility to future-proof today's projects.

EV charging is the main municipal action taken in most cases, along with adding EVs to the municipal fleet. More and more cities are doing their part:

- Dorval, Quebec offers residents \$500 towards a charging station
- Laval, Quebec offers residents a \$2,000 rebate to buy an EV
- The City of Montreal ordered 100 electric cars for its fleet
- Edmonton, Toronto, Calgary, City of North Vancouver, Kamloops, and Kingston have adopted or are working on a standalone electric vehicle strategy
- Toronto and Vancouver are undertaking pilot projects for residential on-street EV charging stations in order to help residents who do not have off-street parking to purchase an EV
- In Europe, Oslo and London offer free or reduced parking rates for EVs; Amsterdam offers residential parking permit priority.

Recommended actions:

1. To encourage turnover, maximise usage, and signal the value of the service, charge fees for EV charging (typical costs are \$1 per hour of Level 2 charging and \$5-18 per hour of Level 3 charging).
2. Implement the 8 charging stations proposed by the Downtown Urban Design Strategy:
 - a. Baker Street: At least 2
 - b. Victoria Street: One in the 400 and 500 blocks between Stanley and Josephine Streets
 - c. Vernon Street: One in the 500 and 600 blocks between Ward and Hall Streets
3. Provide EV charging in key parking areas where people regularly park for several hours at a time, including the parkade, park-and-ride lots, the curling club lot, Cottonwood Market and/or the 610 Railway Avenue lot, and Lakeside Park. Consider installing Level 3 fast-charging where demand would justify the costs (up to \$75,000, compared to a few thousand dollars for Level 2).
4. Develop options for overnight EV charging for downtown residents who do not have off-street parking and currently rely on street parking.

¹⁶ <https://vancouver.sun.com/news/politics/b-c-expects-to-exceed-its-zero-emission-vehicle-targets>

5. Explore partnerships with private land owners to install EV charging.
 - a. Employers and churches with off-street parking could install charging stations for their employees during the day, and rent them out to downtown residents without off-street parking at night.
 - b. Encourage hotels to install EV charging.
 - c. Work with workplaces, including schools, colleges, and other institutional partners, that have significant off-street parking to install EV charging for their students and employees.

The upfront costs of electric vehicles remain high, and although higher-level governments offer incentives up to \$8,000, the price tag is still a barrier for many shopping for a new car. This strategy proposes to offer three parking rate incentives until the year 2025 to incentivise early adoption:

6. No charge for seniors or residential parking passes for an electric vehicle
7. Free all-day commuter parking April 1st until September 30th in the Curling Club lot.
8. For City of Nelson residents only, introduce an “eco-pass”:

Kelowna offers an ‘eco-pass’ to new electric vehicle owners: for the first year that they own an EV, they are entitled to a free permit that allows them to park in the downtown up to 2 hours per day for free. EV owners are only eligible to have the permit for one year, the vehicle would have to be purchased since the launch of the program, and the permit is non-renewable.

It would operate much like the current seniors parking passes. The permit would be free, valid for one year, and only one permit would ever be issued per VIN. That means that used EVs could be eligible too, if the vehicle was bought from someone who hadn’t previously received a Nelson Eco-Pass. It would allow for free parking at any meter, up to the posted time. Eligible vehicle models are those that are recognised by the Canadian Automobile Association or the provincial government’s CleanBC program as being electric. Proof that the vehicle is registered to a City of Nelson resident would be required.

An eco-pass could translate into significant savings for some. If someone parks downtown two hours per day, four days per week, you would save \$520 over the year. Commuters parking at the \$5-per-day commuter meters on Cedar Street who buy an electric vehicle would save \$1,200 if they park 5 days a week, 48 weeks a year.

Appendix A: Implementation

How to read this table: the numbers in each square refer to the action numbers listed under each theme in the strategy's "Recommended Actions". For example, the only action recommended in the short-term for Financial Sustainability is #4: "Encourage transit use over vehicle trips into the downtown by implementing a parking pricing strategy that is more favourable to transit".

The implementation table is intended to serve as a guide only and should not be considered as binding. Implementation will depend on available staff resources. Furthermore, it is expected that over time, Nelson's parking priorities and needs will evolve. Some of the recommended actions will require further consultation, and in many cases they will need to be adjusted to reflect future needs.

	Short-Term (2021-2023)	Mid-Term (2023-2027)	Long-Term (2028+)	Ongoing/ Continuous
Maximize Current Parking Assets	1b, 2(b,d), 4, 7	2(c,e), 3, 6, 9	2f	1, 1a, 2a, 5, 8
Financial Sustainability	4	3, 5, 6	1d	1, 2
Park-and-Ride		<i>Partner with BC Transit, if possible, and implement park-and-ride</i>		
City Parkade	2, 4	3		1
Downtown Residential	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 14		9, 13	
Residential Guest Permits	<i>Implement</i>			
Making Parking Easier		1, 2		
Parking Requirements	1, 2, 3, 5, 6			4
Carsharing	1, 2	3		4
Tradesperson and Commercial Delivery	1			
Enforcement	6	1, 3	5	2, 4
Electric Vehicles	6, 7, 8	1, 2, 3, 4, 5		

Roles and Responsibilities

Development Services will coordinate implementation of the Downtown Parking Strategy.

City Council

- Makes decisions on parking permit fees, meter rates, and ticket amounts
- Enacts bylaws (including permit allocation, parking requirements, and other development requirements) and decides on variances
- Adopts the parking strategy, provides direction, and approves funding for capital projects

Development Services

- Prepares parking strategy and bylaw amendments
- Conducts public and stakeholder consultation
- Reviews development applications, including enforcement of parking requirements and restrictions on driveway accesses/curb cuts (with the goal of protecting public street parking and safe sidewalks)
- Assists Finance in approval of parking permits (confirming eligibility)

Finance

- Approves and issues parking permits
- Payment of parking fines
- Capital project and operational budgeting

Public Works

- Maintains parking infrastructure and implements signage changes

Youth Centre

- Manages the parkade

Bylaw Enforcement

- Parking enforcement and issuance of fines
- Parking signage and meter changes

Information Technology

- Technology implementation

Internal Parking & Traffic Committee *(Public Works, Bylaw Enforcement, and Development Services)*

- Makes decisions on parking operations (e.g. signage updates, allocation of municipal land for parking, and various short-term decisions that do not require a bylaw amendment)
- Responds to and decides on requests and suggestions from the public

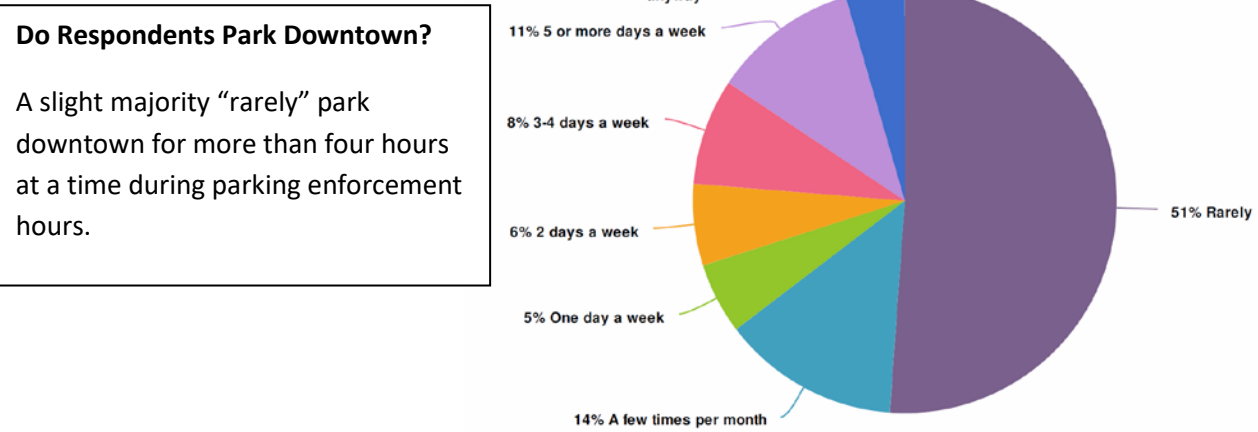
Appendix B: 2019 Survey Results (Summary)

To view the 11-page report, visit: www.nelson.ca/DocumentCenter/View/3125/

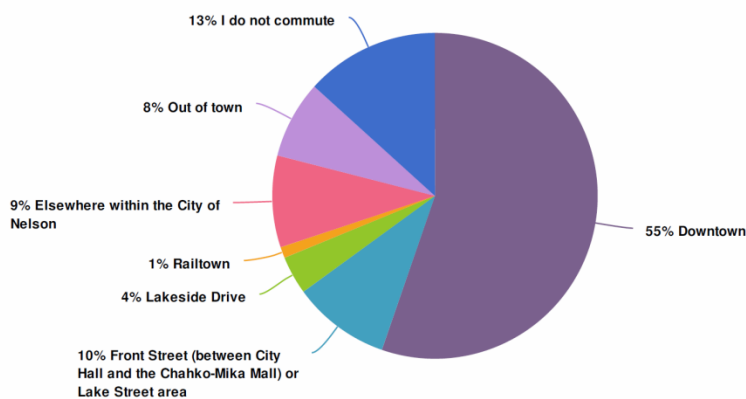
To view the full results (26 pages), visit: www.nelson.ca/DocumentCenter/View/3124/

Who Responded?

68% of respondents report living within City limits. Approx. 12% of all respondents live within the downtown area.



Over half of respondents commute to the downtown most days:



Most days, just over half of respondents commute by car (alone or with others). 23% of respondents typically use alternative transport to commute or a combination of means that included walking or transit, with cycling being common in the summer. The majority of respondents make use of other means of transport at least once per week.

“What do you think is working well, or well enough, with respect to parking in and around downtown Nelson?”

45% of responses to this question were positive.

- 24% of all respondents said that parking is overall adequate in the downtown.

- 10% appreciate the current parking meter durations, and the variety of meter durations (i.e. 15-min., 2-hour, all-day, etc.).
- 8% said that they can usually find parking within a reasonable distance of their destination.

31% were written in a more neutral tone, pointing out particular aspects that they appreciate.

- 13% appreciated the new parking spaces recently created downtown, as well as the new angle parking and the new paid commuter parking.
- 6% appreciate the availability of some free parking still.

23% said that they think nothing is working well.

“And what isn't working? In your opinion, what are the top 5 parking issues in Nelson?”

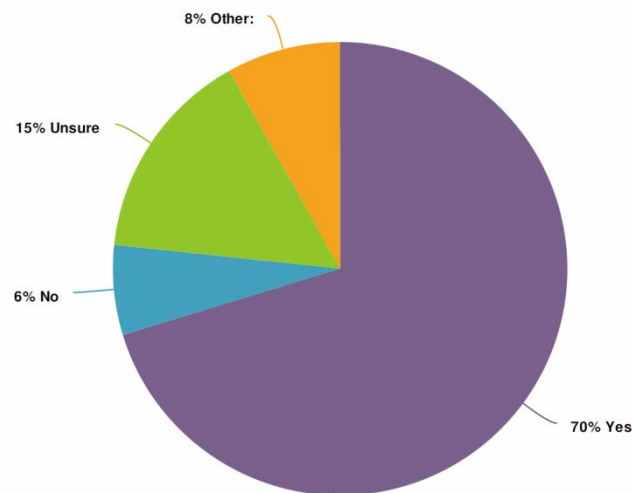
The most common theme was the lack of commuter, all-day parking, which was cited by the vast majority of respondents. There was lots of interest in a shuttle or park-and-ride system. There was also tension between City of Nelson residents and non-residents, often with each group believing that they should have easy or free parking whereas the other should have to pay.

- 90 people (10% of total respondents to the survey) said that parking is too expensive and/or should be free.
- 86 people (10% of total respondents) want better transit.
- 74 (8% of total respondents) want better bike infrastructure.
- 66 (7% of total respondents) said that long trucks (often with snowmobiles) parked in angle stalls are a problem.

Other responses supported by at least 30 respondents:

Need better snow clearing, esp. for sidewalks	There are too many cars and/or keep more cars out of downtown
Keep commuters' cars out of downtown core	Bylaw Enforcement not strict enough (esp. in Uphill)
Parking is too easy and/or too cheap in Nelson	Angled parking is dangerous
Unhappy with paystation	Bylaw Enforcement too strict (and tickets too expensive)
There are too many patios taking up parking	

“To prepare a strategy, we need to talk about solutions. ... One goal of the strategy could be more reliable, better allocated parking, so that people know where they can go to find parking and they can be sure that a parking space will be waiting for them there. Do you agree?”



Of the 69 “other” responses, the most common theme was to invest in improving transit, walking, and cycling infrastructure.










“What makes sense for commuter parking? What are your thoughts on where and how downtown workers should park, and at what price?”

There was a fairly even split between those who are calling for free versus paid commuter parking.

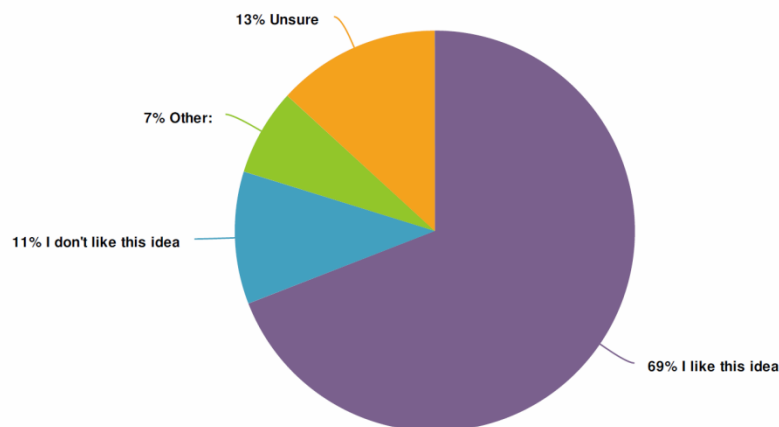
Designated commuter parking out of downtown	20%
Park and ride	18%
Build new parkade, without increasing taxes (user-fees)	11%
Don't spend on parking, but transit and alternative transport	9%
\$5 daily rate is good	7%
Promote 'airbnb' private parking	2%
Status quo / new parking provision should be left to private sector	2%

“Do you think that commuter/employee parking should be ... (Check all that apply)”

Most "other" responses were in favour of free parking. There was a key interest in diversity of options: some reservable parking, some not, and some all-day and some 4-hour parking for part-time workers.

made available/charged on an hourly basis? (Only pay for the amount of time you use)		25.8%	214
made available/charged on a daily basis? (Only pay for the days you use, without paying days when you do not drive)		49.3%	409
made available/charged on a monthly permit basis?		45.7%	379
reservable?		24.5%	203
first-come-first-serve?		22.3%	185
sold using an online/smartphone permit platform?		41.0%	340
physical paper permits sold at City Hall?		18.6%	154
Other ideas:		18.7%	155
Unsure		10.5%	87

“What do you think about using parking revenue to invest in more frequent public transit and park-and-ride in Nelson?”



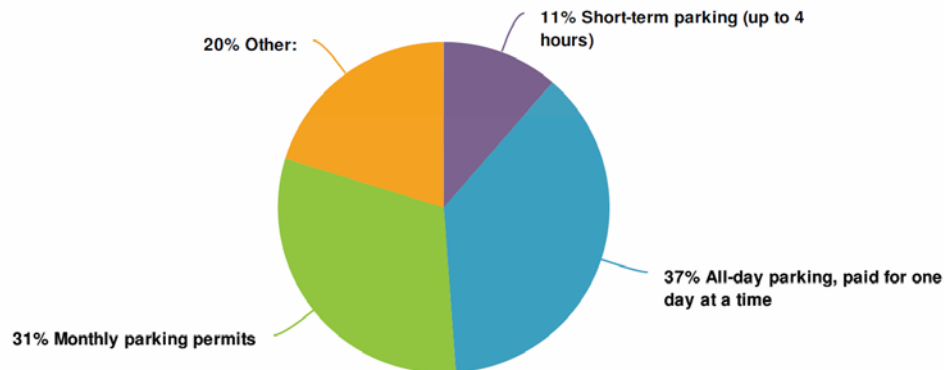
“Do you have ideas on how to make park-and-ride and transit attractive and cost-efficient for our city?”

Respondents generally expressed that park-and-ride needs to be free and frequent, with bus or shuttle service running every 10 to 30 minutes, with peak hours between 8am and 9am and then 4pm and 6pm. Many people suggested that small shuttle buses or vans should be used instead of full-sized buses; ideally, they would be electric. There is lots of interest in having secured bike parking at the park-and-ride where regular commuters can store their bicycle, so that some ride buses and others ride bikes into town.

Other ideas included:

- Use and improve existing bus routes that integrate with park-and-ride
- “Ask downtown businesses to chip in”, because they will benefit from more available parking for customers
- Have a quality carpool website and incentives for carpooling

“Do you think that the parkade should be used primarily for ...”



“Other” responses were generally “all of the above”: in support of a mix of all options.

Many respondents expressed frustration with the current monthly permit situation, as people see many empty parking spaces despite the parkade being fully sold out:

“” *Users have had permits for years not fair make it buy use every month to let more drivers have chance at getting a spot*

“” *Too many empty monthly spaces not being utilized that could be used for daily.*

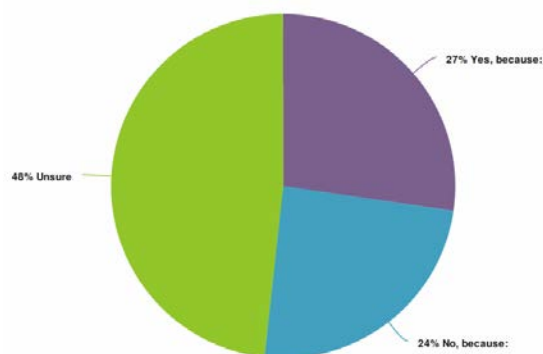
There is also an interest in beautification of the parkade, calling it a “huge eyesore”.

“Overall, do you agree with the current residential parking permit program?”

Of those who agree with the current policy, about 90% like it because they think it’s fair and about 7% like it because they see it as a disincentive to own a second vehicle.

Of those who disagree with the current policy, 30% want to allow for more permits per household, 10% said that the current system is bureaucratic or otherwise undesirable, 9% want to limit the number of permits issued per block (no overbooking), and 6% believe that people should be responsible for providing private off-street parking and not rely on street parking.

Other suggestions include: more frequent parking enforcement in residential areas, not restricting residential permits to a specific block, plowing alleys in order to maintain winter access to off-street parking, and better accommodation of residents’ guests.



Opinions of those who live on a residential permit block

	Agree	Disagree
Only one permit per household	43%	51%
Only issue a permit if that household has no off-street parking at all	51%	38%
Residential parking permits should be free	81%	10%
There should be no limit to the number of permits issued	40%	37%

Of the 11% of respondents who indicated that they live in a residential parking permit area:

- 49% do not agree with current policy
- 29% agree with the current policy
- 17% are unsure

“Do you have ideas on how to improve the residential parking permit system to better meet people's needs and ensure that they have a parking space to come home to?”

The consensus amongst respondents is to limit the number of permits issued per block and to consider issuing second or even third permits if space is available (after ensuring that each household has at least one permit, even if they have one off-street parking stall).

Other ideas include:

- Improve visitor parking (perhaps 1-hour) and have some designated commuter parking on blocks that can handle it. Issue each household a handful of visitor day passes per year.
- Issue a second class of residential permits that are not valid Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm.
- Improve lane access in the winter, or have winter-only permits in some cases.
- Making one side of the street residential-only and the other side available for visitors and commuters.

“What are your thoughts on the use of parking technology in Nelson? For example, paystations replacing coin-operated parking meters, online parking permits, or pay-by-phone.”

The consensus amongst respondents was to implement pay-by-phone technology and to not rely on only one way to pay. Lots of respondents are not pleased with the current Hall Street pay station and say that if the City is to have pay stations, there needs to be more of them so that they are easier to get to.

Appendix C: Perspectives on Parking

Quotes highlighting contrasting perspectives on parking amongst respondents to the January-February 2019 online survey:

- “ I have lived both in and out of town. I think that parking is fine, it's the people that need to shift their ideas around convenience.*
- “ I don't think you're doing enough (or visibly, anything to be honest) to encourage people to get to downtown by means other than vehicle.*
- “ I park all over downtown for meetings and honestly, never have an issue finding a spot.*
- “ Baker Street business owners/workers park in front of my house. If I move my car I am forced to park quite a distance from my house. At my age groceries are hard to manage.*
- “ I feel that you should think of the surrounding residential taxpayers when you make decisions around the parking issue. We already pay water, sewer, and garbage and property tax to take care of the city many costs. I don't have current surveys but years ago 15,000 cars entered Nelson from the North shore, Salmo, and from The Castlegar area and all the cars leave in the afternoon. They need to pay for the parking in one form or another*
- “ Thanks for having such a thriving downtown!!!!*
- “ The current arrangements mostly work, so please don't screw them up. If it ain't broke don't fix it.*
- “ Residents that work and live in Nelson should have access to cheap parking, commuters should be taxed much more, the cost of living in Nelson is high regarding to many area out of town*
- “ As a business owner on Baker St. It really bothers me when people that I know say they never shop downtown because they can never find a place to park so instead they shop at the mall or in Castlegar. Nelsons parking problems have been bad for years so in my opinion whatever solution(s) is adopted, the sooner the better. I would be in favor of almost any solution, just get on with it!*
- “ I do not like the idea of paying \$5 a day to go to work. I travel from out of town and already pay in gas to get to work. \$25/week, or \$100/month affects my budget too much as I don't get paid especially well. I will always need a free spot to park to make working in Nelson viable*
- “ Too many residential parking spots that are empty during the day and could be used by the workers that have to commute and park in Nelson during business hours*
- “ Frankly, the current system works well. Nelson is a victim of it's own success... lots of new residents into the existing infrastructure! Not a bad thing, just reality*

- “” *Sorry, if you are talking about commuters from out of town that choose to work in a town where they don't pay tax, they should pony up for parking. My taxes are very high, and should not rise to pay for a parkade so they can come to Nelson to work.*
- “” *Free permits for residential city of Nelson's property owners who can prove they work full time downtown. I pay enough in taxes to pay the same to park as tourists and RDCK peeps*
- “” *It's more equitable if all residents are charged for parking permits. Residents that live on the edges of town drive to work shouldn't be expected to pay for parking that other residents get for free (especially because they already live within a closer walking distance to all amenities)*
- “” *As a store owner I have always wanted to offer our regional customers a place to park for a day when they come instead of the hassle of 1-2hr street parking. If they are worried about their meter they don't relax and shop and eat. It's rush rush. I would have no problem paying \$5 parking for a good customer to spend the day in Nelson.*
- “” *Build parkades and give free transit to downtown workers*
- “” *If I need to have my vehicle with me (errands, appointments, transporting children) and take it to work, it's difficult to find full day parking. I don't mind having to move my car every two hours but it can be hard to find a new 2 hour spot when I do move it.*
- “” *I need a job but pay too much to park*
- “” *I don't agree with free parking causing troubles, but do agree that reliable, better allocated parking options are a good idea. It is not ok that I need to pay for parking in order to go to work, or shop locally.*
- “” *It's normal that residents shouldn't have to pay for parking in the street they live. works well in our street, I mostly find space free when I need to park my car.*
- “” *Keeping carborne meter free for days I need only a couple hours of parking. I like free parking within a 10 minute walk to Ward and Baker.*
- “” *I like the .25c meters. It is affordable, so I don't hesitate to use them when I need to (shopping, heavy items, quick stops), yet enough that I don't take my car if I don't need to. I also like that there is lots of free parking on the surrounding streets uphill. I live on Silica, near gyro park, and can always find street parking within a block of my house.*
- “” *You choose a house with no parking that's your choice. I don't think we need to guarantee parking*
- “” *Cars cost the city a lot of money. If people choose to own a car, they need to pay back into the system.*

- “” *The city needs to require homeowners downtown to have off-street parking. Otherwise, homeowners without parking on their property need to lease city space, rather than apply for a "permit".*
- “” *\$5.00 per day is still way too much for those who aren't making a lot of money but work full time. I have no excess money for paid parking so end up walking 5-20 minutes so I can have free parking. I am not young and with arthritis in my knees but a need to work to put food on the table.*
- “” *Again, I'm not sure there really is a parking problem in Nelson. I'm guessing the business community is pushing this idea, when in fact, they only pay 25% of Nelson's taxes. We should not be making parking easier. Where in the world is parking getting easier?! Nowhere. This is a backward direction to be going. Instead, we should be encouraging alternative transport options. Nelson is way behind the times on this.*
- “” *Nelson's taxes are high enough that we should not be paying for meters at all. How is Castlegar meter free but Nelson is not? Feeling gouged by the city when we come spend money there.*
- “” *what about residents who pay high taxes who can't get parked near their own house without getting ticketed.*
- “” *Residents deserve the parking they need. It shouldn't cost as they already pay taxes*
- “” *Why not build a parkade with leased business space for revenue. Increase taxes to pay. Increase parking all over town to pay for it.*
- “” *I feel like it should be free for the workers because they have to work and they shouldn't have to pay for parking to do that. There should be a card that hangs in the window, so bylaw officers know it is a worker.*

Appendix D: Further Reading

European Platform on Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans

- Parking and Sustainable Urban Mobility Planning: www.eltis.org/sites/default/files/parking_and_sustainable_urban_mobility_planning.pdf

Sightline Institute

- “Parking? Lots!” Series: www.sightline.org/series/parking-lots

Victoria Transport Policy Institute

- Parking Costs (March 2019): www.vtpi.org/tca/tca0504.pdf
- Parking Requirement Impacts on Housing Affordability (March 2019): www.vtpi.org/park-hou.pdf
- Reforming Municipal Parking Policies to Align with Strategic Community Goals (January 2017): www.vtpi.org/vpr.pdf
- Parking Management: Comprehensive Implementation Guide (March 2019): www.vtpi.org/park_man_comp.pdf

Donald Shoup

- Book: The High Cost of Free Parking (2005)
- Book: Parking and the City (2018)
- Web links: www.shoupdogg.com/publications

The Parking Reform Network

- The network is a non-profit organization with a mission to educate the public about the impact of parking policy on climate change, equity, housing, and traffic.
- www.parkingreform.org

Paul Barter

- “Walkable Parking: How to Create Park-Once-and-Walk Districts”: www.reinventingparking.org/2018/01/walkable-parking-how-to-create-park.html
- “Reinventing Parking” blog: www.reinventingparking.org