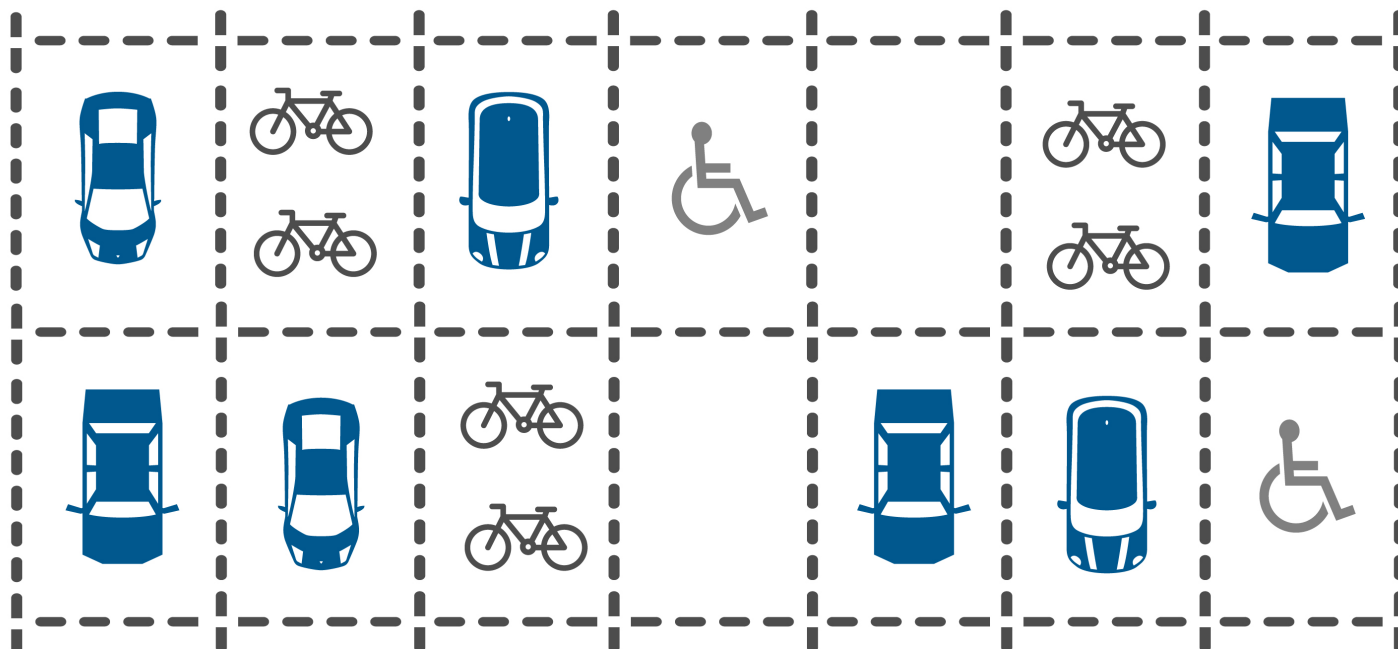




Review of Parking Requirements for New Developments

Public and Stakeholder Consultation



Public Meeting Summary

September 27, 2021
3:00-5:00 PM

*Prepared by Gladki Planning Associates
for the City of Toronto,
October 2021.*



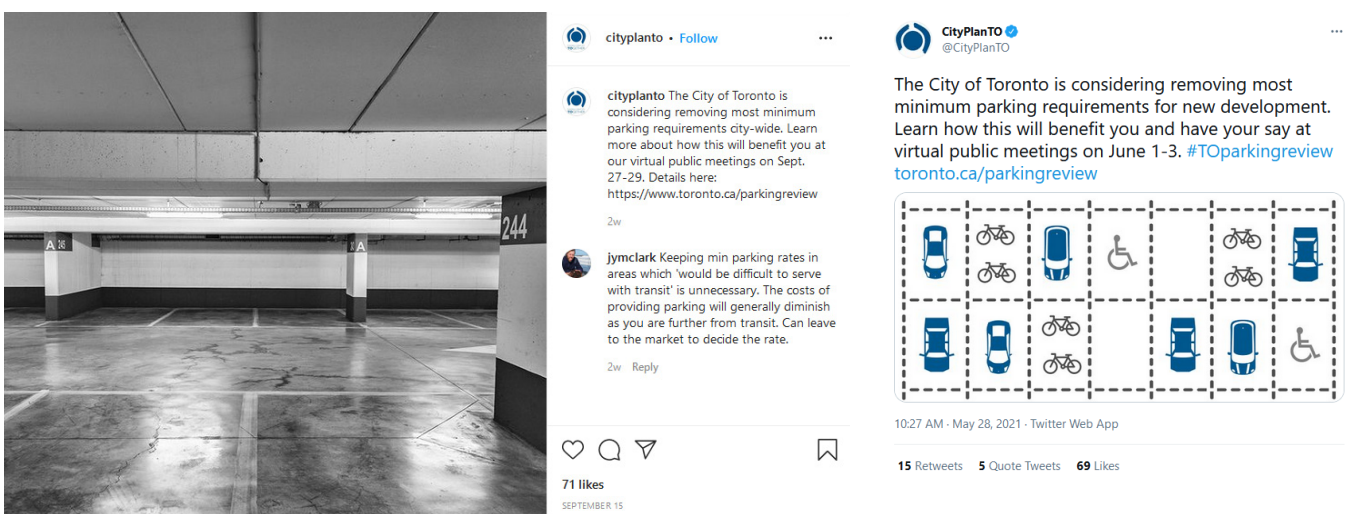
Background

Requirements for automobile and bike parking in newly erected or enlarged buildings are identified in the city-wide [Zoning By-law 569-2013](#). On January 19, 2021, [Planning and Housing Committee \(PH20.4\)](#) asked staff to review these requirements to better align them with the objectives of the City’s Official Plan. The Review is guided by the principle that parking standards should allow only the maximum amount of automobile parking reasonably required for a given use and minimums should be avoided except where necessary to ensure equitable access, such as for accessible parking or in areas which would be difficult to serve with transit.

Meeting Overview

On Monday, September 27, 2021, the City of Toronto hosted a public consultation meeting to summarize initial findings from the City’s Parking Review, present draft proposed changes to the parking standards in the Zoning By-law and gather feedback that will inform revisions to the proposed changes. Based on the expert advice of the City’s Medical Officer of Health to practice physical distancing to help reduce the spread of COVID-19 and protect the health and safety of Toronto residents and City staff, the meeting was held online and phone-in only via WebEx Events.

The meeting was the first in a series of meetings for the public in September 2021, promoted on the City of Toronto website and through the City’s social media channels (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram).



Sample social media posts from the communications campaign promoting the meetings

Over 54 participants joined this first meeting. Attendees included residents, employees, developers, landowners and advocacy groups (see Figure 1) whose primary modes of transportation were driving, walking, cycling and public transit (see Figure 2). Some participants had already engaged in the project during previous public meetings in the spring, an online survey over the summer and through email and social media (see Figure 3).



Figure 1 What brings you to this public meeting? Select all that apply.

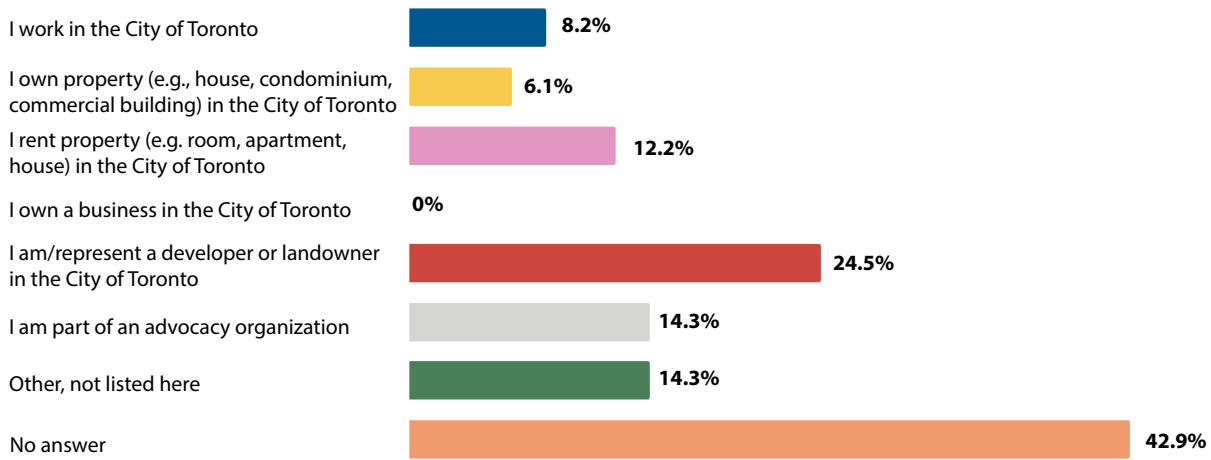


Figure 2 What modes of transportation do you most often use to move around the city? Please respond based on your activity prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and/or how you plan to travel post-pandemic. Select all that apply.

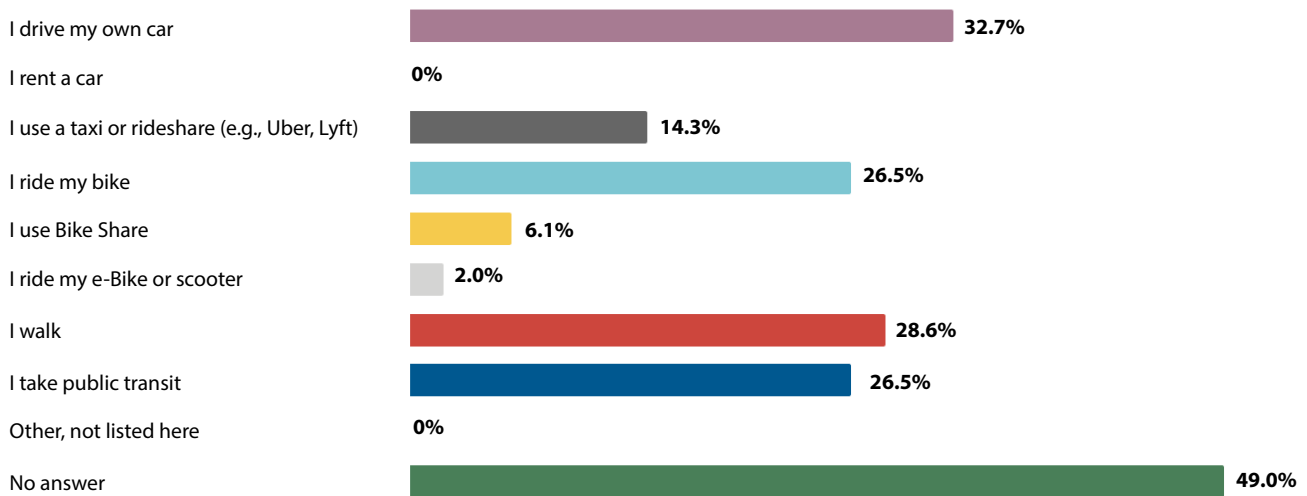
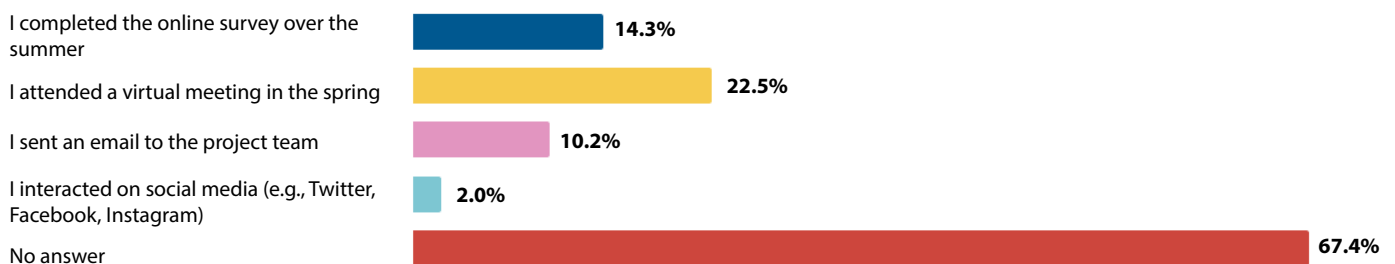


Figure 3 Have you engaged with this project before today's meeting? Select all that apply.





Following opening remarks and housekeeping by Gladki Planning Associates, Michael Hain spoke on behalf of the Transportation Planning, Policy and Analysis unit within the City Planning division. His presentation spanned current and shifting conceptions of parking rates, research findings, public and stakeholder feedback and details on the City's proposal. The presentation is available on the [project website](#).

Participants then had an opportunity to ask questions and share their thoughts. Feedback was accepted in writing through the Q&A function on WebEx and verbally through the Raise Hand function. Over 26 questions and comments were received.

Questions & Answers

The Q & A portion of the event gave rise to a number of main question themes from the public:

- Driveways and garages
- Cycling and e-bikes
- Transit
- Electric vehicles
- "Missing Middle" and affordable housing
- Transition
- Miscellaneous

A full list of the questions received is below, accompanied by answers.

Driveways and garages

- ***It seems these changes are for multi-family developments. Will there be reductions in the allowance of single-family home parking requirements to avoid garages taking up the front of homes?***

The proposed changes include removing both minimum and maximum parking rates for most ground-related housing, as many of these residential developments have driveways and it is very difficult to control how many vehicles can be parked on a driveway.

- ***If you cannot control parking on driveways, will parking pads have the same probability of being approved? A driveway and a parking pad are the same in the end, but there should not be unfair access to getting a parking space on a parking pad vs. a driveway.***

A driveway cannot be considered a legal parking space due to the technical definition of a parking space. A separate study is being undertaken to explore residential parking, including the parking permit system.



- ***Almost no one parks a car in the integrated garage, but do park 1 or 2 cars in the front-yard driveway leading to the “garage,” which is used to store anything except an automobile. Why not eliminate integrated garages from most residential homes?***

Placement of a car is an urban design issue more than a transportation issue. This project has focused on the number of spaces required or permitted rather than where they are located.

Cycling and e-bikes

- ***How will you guarantee that bicycle storage in new development is convenient and safe?***

The City has heard loud and clear that security is a key issue around bike parking. The existing bike parking guidelines need to be, and will be, reviewed and updated.

- ***E-bikes use 120 volts for charging, but most e-bikes are quite heavy and do not always fit into certain types of parking facilities. Is there a way to emphasize this to developers so that e-bike parking can be designed appropriately and reflect the growing demand?***

Requirements pertaining to bike charging will be introduced during the review of the City’s bicycle parking guidelines next year. Cargo bikes are also generally too large to fit in standard parking racks. This concern has been highlighted in other projects; for example, the Waterfront Toronto Green Building Requirements now include guidelines for designing larger bike parking spaces.

- ***Will there be provisions for electric vehicles, including e-bikes? Electric bikes generally need indoor parking because the chargers work poorly in cold weather. It is difficult to provide that parking if it is not put in the infrastructure at the beginning.***

The bicycle component of this review will be extended into next year to cover bike parking requirements in more detail.

- ***Are you proposing to waive the requirement for bike parking if developers contribute to the BikeShare program? There remains a strong need for bike parking.***

Staff are willing to entertain a reduction in some (not all) of the bicycle parking requirement. The bike parking requirement will be increased and developers will be allowed to reduce the requirement by up to the amount of the increase if they contribute to BikeShare. This would not reduce the net amount of bicycle parking required on site.



Transit

- ***There is a plan to expand parking boundaries when new transit arrives. How close to new transit hubs would a new development have to be in order to be part of the expanded reduced parking rates?***

Staff are proposing a boundary of 400 metres from a higher-order transit station as the lowest parking category. However, the City is currently undertaking another exercise focused on zoning around higher-order transit stations, which may lead to an increase in this proposed boundary. The proposal to remove the minimum city-wide is a shift in how the Policy Areas are applied in the future compared to how they are applied today.

- ***When people can't find a commuter parking spot at a transit station, they often choose to drive the whole way to their destination. This contributes to congestion. If there will be transit-oriented development in the future, will you allow for commuter parking spaces?***

There is currently commuter parking at a number of existing transit stations, often on lands such as hydro corridors. It is not always possible to provide parking in a cost-effective way. There are very good bus connections to almost all subway stations. The City supports walking, cycling and transit trips, with a general policy to not provide commuter parking at transit stations.

Electric vehicles

- ***Under the current by-law, EV charging equipment in a parking space is not permitted: the space would need to be wider. Will the definition of a parking space be adjusted to allow EV equipment at the corner of a parking space?***

The City's planned approach is to introduce an exemption to how the parking space dimensions are calculated. This would allow the electric vehicle charger to be located within the space, with limits set to how large the charger could be and where it is mounted.

- ***The provincial government had eliminated the necessity for EV chargers in new developments. How will the City ensure that EV chargers will be part of new applications?***

Electric vehicles chargers are already required in some applications in Toronto through the Toronto Green Standard. There are no policies preventing the City from having even higher requirements in the Zoning By-law.



“Missing Middle” and affordable housing

- ***Developers have said that reduced parking rates gives them more space and money to build housing, which includes affordable housing. How will the City ensure that the reduced parking rates will translate into more affordable housing?***

This is determined by the market mechanism. Right now, it costs up to \$160,000 to construct one parking space. This is a significant amount that translates to the sale of new units. If that unit/parking space cannot be sold, it will discourage development of that unit type/price.

- ***If a builder is addressing the “missing middle” and building a 6-unit building, it appears they must include a visitor and disability parking spot. Two spots would be hard to do, given no underground parking, so could those be parking pads?***

In a ground-related housing, there is no parking requirement, so there is no accessible parking requirement either.

- ***Will there be parking rates for people in new affordable housing developments who need a car to support jobs in a gig economy?***

Staff recognize there is a need for parking in affordable housing, and encourage the City to consider this need as it undertakes its own development of affordable housing.

Transition

- ***What transition is being contemplated?***

There are a number of regulations in the Zoning By-law which require that existing lawful parking not be reduced. This is inconsistent with the guiding principle of the Parking Review but reduces the risk of sudden reductions in parking supply. Requirements will be maintained in the short term to monitor ongoing need.

- ***What about rezoning applications or site plan applications currently submitted?***

These applications are still subject to the existing requirements until the new requirements come into force. In the draft Zoning By-law that will be submitted to the Planning and Housing Committee in November, there will be transition clauses for applications already submitted and in process, such as site plans, rezoning, minor variances and potentially building permits.



Miscellaneous

- ***How will you stop residents in new developments from applying for on-street parking?***

The City is undertaking a separate review about residential parking, including the on-street parking system. Current Official Plan policies speak to accommodating parking on-site. Staff do not support new developments trying to undersupply parking and force parking onto streets. Teams are working together to prohibit new developments from participating in the on-street parking system and ensure new developments provide the amount of parking that is actually required.

- ***UCLA Professor Donald Shoup wrote a book called “The High Cost of Free Parking.” Have you looked at payment for parking?***

One of the expected outcomes of removing parking minimums is that there would be no forced subsidies for oversupply of parking. Any parking being supplied would be sold at cost or for a profit; this is a departure from current circumstances where developers have revealed they are often left with excess parking they are unable to sell. With respect to on-street parking, the City is reviewing how its pricing structure can be adjusted to better manage supply and demand.

- ***There will be shared parking spaces for bikes and probably for cars as well. How will that allocated time be properly and equitably distributed by property owners?***

The City's Zoning By-law can govern that the required spaces be available for a particular use; however, it does not govern the allocation of parking spaces across different users of a building in terms of time or availability. This would more likely be governed by the building's by-laws.

- ***There is a surplus of seniors living in large homes as empty nesters. As seniors age and choose to downsize, they will need parking. Will there be provisions for seniors as they downsize to apartments, or for people working in the gig economy who require a vehicle for work?***

No recommendations are being made to remove parking from any existing development. There is already a lot of housing available that has parking. This proposal pertains to parking requirements for new and expanded development. Removing the minimum requirement does not remove the ability to build new parking. There will continue to be parking constructed with new housing, but it is expected to be at a rate the market can support relative to costs of construction.

- ***With this proposal, could the parking requirements be zero?***

The parking requirement could indeed be zero in some cases. However, it is expected that buildings will still provide parking, as there remains quite a strong demand. Rather, there is more likely to be a slight decrease in the parking provided.



- ***Will the new city-wide regulations for multi-tenant housing impact parking rates for new and existing multi-tenant applications (since many multi-tenant housings are currently illegal)?***

The parking requirements will apply to legal multi-tenant housing.

- ***Once a new development is approved, can the parking rates for accessible parking be adjusted upward if need applies?***

There is no limit to how much accessible parking can be provided, up to the limit of total parking. This is not expected to be a constraint.

- ***How will these changes be applied to properties that remain under former municipal Zoning By-laws (e.g., Etobicoke, Scarborough) or site-specific by-laws, instead of the current comprehensive Zoning By-law?***

The current phase of this project focuses on the city-wide Zoning By-law 569-2013. The review has indicated that the By-law applies to the majority of properties across the City of Toronto. About 5% of properties are subject to former municipal by-laws; consideration is being given to amending the formulas for those by-laws in a later phase.

Comments & Feedback

The following comments were submitted during the meeting:

- *We don't need payment in lieu of bike parking. We need more bike parking.*
- *With respect to transition, there is no reason to delay implementation.*



Next Steps

This report is not intended to be a verbatim transcript of the virtual meeting, but instead provides a high-level summary and answers to consolidated questions from participants. The next steps include refining the proposal during October 2021 and presenting to the Planning and Housing Committee on November 25 and City Council on December 15-16.

Please visit [the project website](#) for more information, materials, and meeting notices, and to take part in an [online survey](#). You can also subscribe to receive periodic e-updates about opportunities to participate throughout the duration of the City-wide Parking Review.

You can continue to contact City staff to provide your comments or ask questions directly:

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