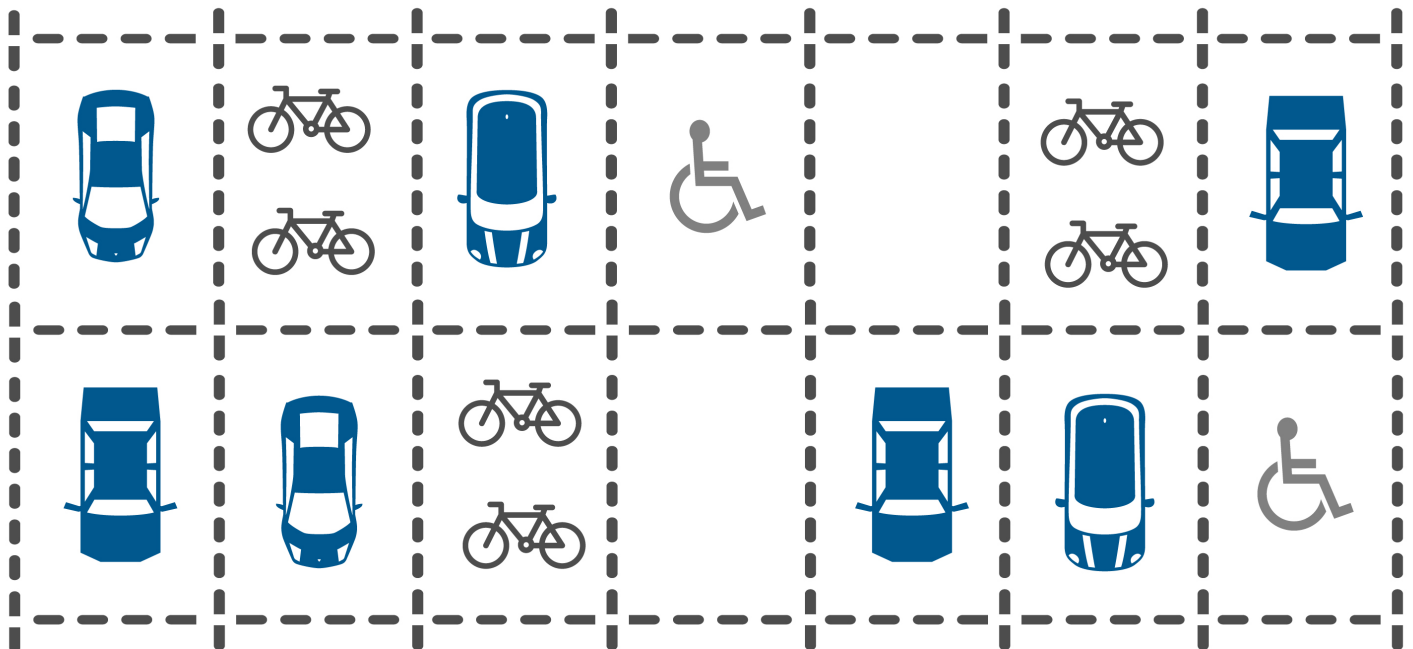




Review of Parking Requirements for New Developments

Public and Stakeholder Consultation



Public Meeting Summary

September 29, 2021
1:00-3:00 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 Wednesday, September 29, 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 third 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).

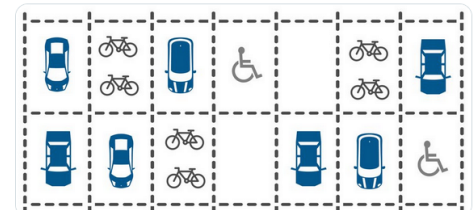
Over 27 participants joined the meeting. Attendees included residents, employees, business owners, developers, landowners and advocacy groups (see Figure 1) whose primary modes of transportation were public transit, driving, walking and cycling (see Figure 2). Some participants had already engaged in the project during previous public meetings in the spring, an online survey over the summer and through social media and email (see Figure 3).

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 36 questions and comments were received.



Removing parking minimum standards will give flexibility to new developments. Interested in how this will impact you? Join us at virtual public meetings this week (Sept. 27-29) and share what you think! Details here: toronto.ca/parkingreview



11:40 AM · Sep 27, 2021 · Twitter Web App

4 Retweets 8 Quote Tweets 25 Likes

Sample social media post from the communications campaign promoting the meetings



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

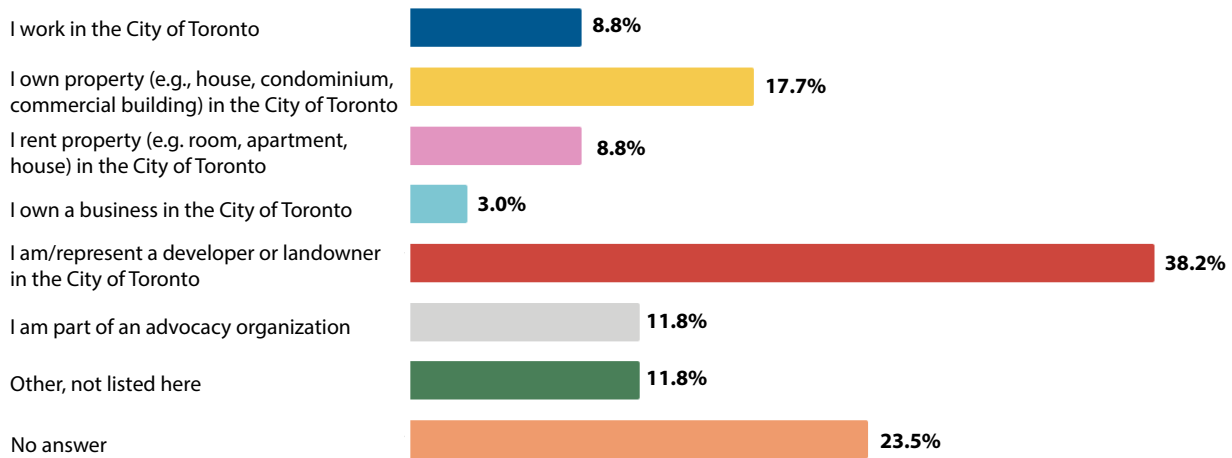


Figure 2 What modes of transportation do you most often use to move around the city? Please respond based on your activity prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and/or how you plan to travel post-pandemic. Select all that apply.

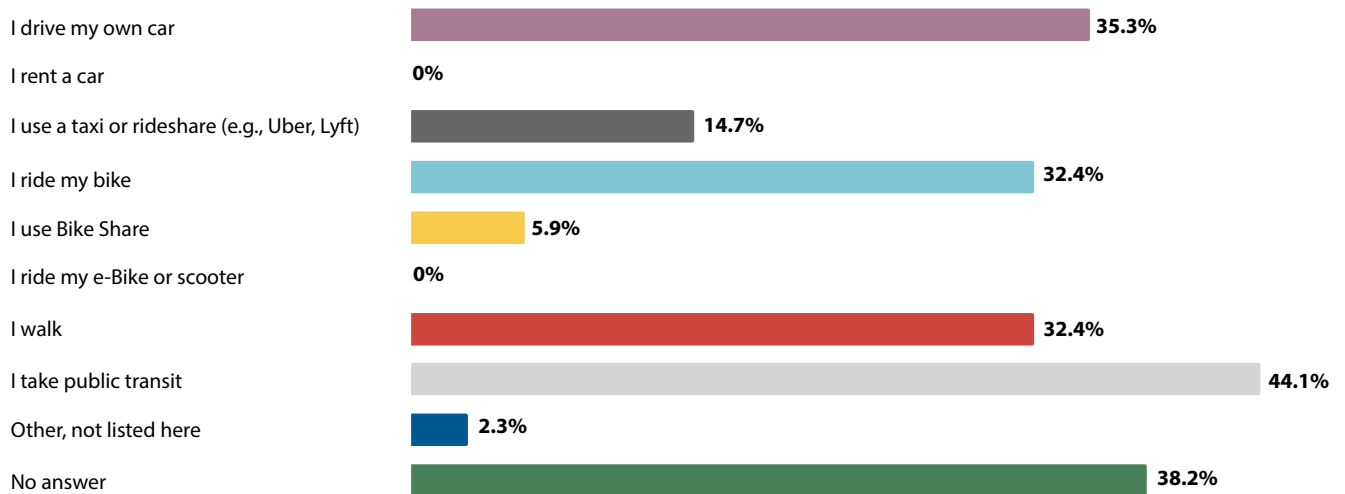
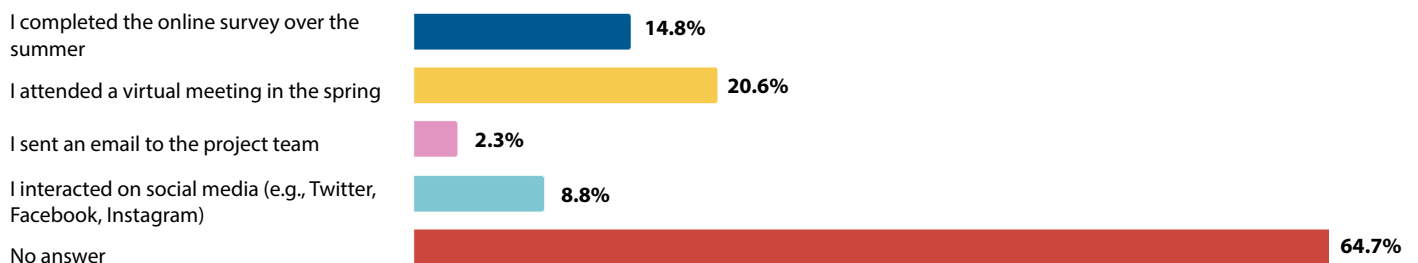


Figure 3 Have you engaged with this project before today's meeting? Select all that apply.





Questions & Answers

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

- Bicycle parking
- On-street parking
- Accessible parking
- Transit
- Implementation
- Transition
- Miscellaneous

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

Bicycle parking

- ***Are there any proposed requirements as to the style of bicycle parking? A locked room is very different than a bike rack.***

The Zoning By-law currently has two different types of bicycle parking: short-term and long-term. Each type has different requirements about how it has to look. In 2008, the City adopted a set of [guidelines for bicycle parking](#); these are outdated (e.g., e-bikes and cargo bikes have since become popular in Toronto). Upcoming work includes reviewing those guidelines to determine the level of security needed to ensure people feel confident locking their bikes.

- ***What does a bike parking spot require? Can it be a bike ring on the street or does it have to be indoor parking?***

This depends on whether the location is a short-term bike parking space or a long-term bike parking space. Requirements are laid out in [Chapter 230 of the Zoning By-law](#). In general, long-term spaces are intended for residents to store their own bikes and must be located on the first and second floor of the building or floors of the underground garage that are closest to the surface. Short-term bicycle parking spaces are meant for visitors and can be located either inside the building or on the exterior.

- ***With regard to the proposed payment-in-lieu of bike parking alternative: if we are building a 250-unit development, our preference is to integrate BikeShare so that the station is adjacent to the particular building, with easement on the site itself. Will this review get into that level of granularity of where BikeShare stations would be placed?***

Staff are still considering these details, including how to make on-site easements part of the building requirement of new development and the amount of money that could be expected from an individual development. This amount is typically not enough for a new BikeShare station by



itself so it is unlikely that the station would be located on site. It is possible that there could be cases where money is collected but a suitable location for a new station cannot be identified.

- ***How much does a BikeShare station cost?***

A standard BikeShare station costs about \$50,000.

- ***Has there been any exploration of whether the payment-in-lieu fund could be directed to making municipal bike parking available instead of relying upon BikeShare to make up the differences?***

The [online survey on the project website](#) includes a question about how/where the funding from this policy should be directed (e.g., bikes, BikeShare stations). Staff are open to considering other suggestions, particularly if the program is eventually extended to cover more uses and areas of the city, resulting in a larger pool of money.

On-street parking

- ***I have a parking permit and often can't use it during the day because my street is overflowing with cars. The one-hour limit is never enforced and this is already a huge problem without decreasing parking. I am concerned that multi-unit buildings are being approved without lay-bys, which results in visitors, rideshare, delivery and service vehicles parking on the street and sometimes even blocking the movement of vehicles. What will the City do to require lay-bys in new developments?***

Staff have heard this concern quite a bit and recognize the lack of lay-bys was a growing problem before the COVID-19 pandemic and has been exacerbated since the onset of the pandemic. Lay-bys are short-term parking spaces outside of travel lanes used for pick-up and drop-offs. There are policies in the Official Plan that require some types of development to accommodate those pick-up and drop-off activities on site. Although this issue is not being addressed in the particular phase of work for this project, it has been recommended for review and examination in future phases.

- ***An important demographic change needs to be considered: the population is getting older; older people have trouble accessing transit. They will need cars to obtain groceries, etc. If no parking is available, they will need designated street parking. Won't this further squeeze City street parking?***

The City is aware of changing demographics and aims to make communities walkable for people of all ages and abilities while planning for the future. As well, planning for a carbon-reduced future in a much denser city includes discouraging car use and making it possible to live without a car.

Accessible parking

- ***Will accessible parking for people with disabilities be affected?***

The proposal will maintain the existing accessible parking requirements and may actually result in more accessible parking being provided.



- ***Corridors such as Bloor Street have little to no accessible parking. How is this going to be addressed?***

This is outside the scope of the current project but is being reviewed by Transportation Services under the residential parking strategy, which focus on the on-street parking permit system, boulevard parking and front yard parking.

Transit

- ***I'm very happy about the elimination of minimum parking requirements. I think it's time. What replacement regulations for transit will be put in place to ensure transit development occurs where coverage is needed?***

The City has a long-term commitment to transit expansion: [Map 4 of the Official Plan](#) shows the long-term, higher-order transit network. The City is also working towards general surface transit improvements and adjusted schedules approximately every six weeks to account for general transit demand. As transit continues to grow over time, additional commitments to transit improvement will require Council approval.

On a development by development basis, the proposed parking policy introduces explicit requirements for more bike parking as well as an option to trade off bike parking requirements in exchange for contributions to BikeShare.

- ***For areas around future protected Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs), do we have to wait for Council approval of those MTSAs before applying these proposed rates to those Parking Areas?***

The timing is still being determined but the new parking rates would come into place before most MTSAs are approved. Staff have settled on 400-metre walking distances from transit stations and 100-metres distances from transit stops as the area of influence for transit on a City-wide basis. The proposal that will be brought forth to Council will show the individual property boundaries. The team working on MTSAs may expand those boundaries to be more appropriate in individual contexts.

- ***With respect to the Policy Areas, why are GO Transit stations (especially along the frequent Lakeshore lines) not treated in a similar fashion to TTC subway stations?***

This proposal uses a 10-minute all-day service standard. Right now, no GO stations meet that standard.

- ***How about proximity to LRT stations, a huge infrastructure investment?***

Transit projects have been cancelled or changed in the City in the past. This study maintains a cautious approach and only looks at existing transit. Additional transit infrastructure may be added during future exercises.



- ***I work on the [Housing Now initiative](#) for affordable housing on City-owned sites. Currently the sites are immediately adjacent or within very close proximity to higher-order transit. Is the intent for affordable housing projects to have parking? Is it possible that some of these sites will have zero parking requirements if they are adjacent to transit?***

It is possible. There are some locations in the City that are so well-served by transit, there is no need for parking. However, not all affordable housing should provide no parking: some people who need affordable housing also need a vehicle to get to jobs, school or other critical activities.

Implementation

- ***What is the maximum parking rate the City is thinking of implementing for downtown developments?***

These details can be found on slides 13 and 15 in the [presentation](#) on the project website. Please have a look and complete the online survey to offer comments.

- ***Will these by-law changes impact only residential properties or will they impact commercial/office buildings as well?***

The proposal includes changes to all uses within the City that have parking.

- ***Does the same policy apply city-wide? How are we taking into consideration the different demands of different neighborhoods?***

The proposal includes a basic structure applied city-wide, distributed in three different areas (two Parking Policy Areas and the rest of the City) with slightly different rates. Removing parking minimums is opening up the provision of parking so that individuals can provide the amount of parking that is appropriate to their needs. The review of parking requirements indicated quite significant variation in the amount of parking that individual uses will provide in different parts of the city. Big differences can even be seen block by block through individual developments. The proposal is intended to ensure careful thought is given toward the appropriate parking for an area and how travel demand measures can offset the impacts of higher parking provisions.

- ***Will there be a maximum for visitor parking? Will zero visitor parking spaces for a building be allowed?***

A maximum visitor parking is being proposed. Some building types would be allowed to have zero visitor parking, whereas communal structures like apartment buildings or mixed-use buildings would have a minimum visitor parking requirement set at a low level and intended to cover the building servicing needs.

- ***I have a proposal in my area for two fourplexes, two laneway suites and two garden houses. How much parking would be required for this?***

This discussion pertaining to a specific site is best taken offline. Please email carla.tsang@toronto.ca to be directed to the appropriate staff.



- ***Will the amount of parking required for new development be determined between the City and the developer, or will other stakeholders be able to provide inputs?***

Large development applications such as Official Plan Amendments or Zoning By-law Amendments are required by law to have a public meeting. Small developments may go directly to site plan approval or a building permit; there is not a public process for those.

- ***I am hoping to build a fourplex on a corner lot that is zoned R on a residential street, which could possibly also have a garden suite and result in five units. What would be required in terms of parking (including accessible, visitor, and bike parking)?***

This study proposes no parking requirements for most ground-related housing, including for secondary suites. However, the bike parking requirements would still depend on the location in the city. Under the proposed parking changes, you would be required to provide accessible parking if you are providing parking. Visitor parking would only apply to apartments, mixed use buildings and multiple dwelling unit buildings.

Secondary suites and garden suites have different categorizations within the zoning by-laws. Garden suites are part of the [Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods](#) study, which is currently ongoing and developing its zoning standards. It is likely that there will not be residential parking requirements.

Transition

- ***When will these changes be implemented city-wide and become applicable to new development applications?***

Recommendations will be given to Planning and Housing Committee on November 25 and, if approved, to City Council on December 15 and 16 for their approval. Staff are working through the details of transition.

- ***How will transitioning work for projects that are not yet zoning approved before the Council date in December?***

Staff are developing transition clauses for the draft Zoning By-law that will implement these new parking rates. There will be separate clauses for different application types such as rezoning, minor variance and building permits. The draft By-law will be posted publicly before the Planning and Housing Committee meeting is held on November 25.

- ***For new development applications that are going in prior to this parking reform, would it be reasonable to present some of the material discussed in this presentation as justification? Will Transportation Services and Planning staff be supportive of this approach?***

Prior to the enactment of the Zoning By-law and before it goes to Council, the existing zoning standards would still be enforced. Any new application would still require a parking justification



when requesting a reduction to the parking requirement if it does not meet those current standards. The directions of this study could be mentioned for consideration.

- ***These recommendations will be presented to Council on December 15 and 16. Can the Council decision be appealed? If so, would the policy not be in force?***

It is possible.

Miscellaneous

- ***In the figure on [slide 16](#), what are the white spots (holes) within the purple area designated as a Parking Policy Area?***

The white holes are areas covered by by-laws other than the City's comprehensive Zoning By-law 569-2013. The general intent is that all of downtown would be designated as a Parking Policy Area; however, there are some areas that are not included in that zoning by-law and remain covered by separate former municipal zoning by-laws.

- ***In the slide deck you showed an ArcGIS map of the proposed parking areas. Will those source files be made available on the City's Open Data site so we can incorporate them in our affordable housing planning maps?***

The map layers are currently provisional; the rough buffers around transit stations and stops will eventually identify individual properties. All City practices for sharing property-based individual zoning by-law maps will be followed.

- ***Will the City increase parking reductions through carshare?***

With the elimination of parking requirements, there is no need to further reduce them with carshare. The City already considers carshare for offsetting some parking requirements and staff encourage developments to continue to provide that kind of share in the future if it is something that could be useful for a particular project.

- ***Given the desire to minimize the City's parking footprint in general, will a provision be made for stacked or tandem parking spaces in the future?***

Tandem spaces are already permitted in the Zoning By-law, but they do not count towards satisfying the minimum requirements for most uses. This study proposes removing those requirements. Stacked spaces are sometimes permitted but have challenges associated with their operation. They are generally not suitable or appropriate for visitor or accessible parking. As different technologies become available, and as regulations related to those pieces of equipment change, it may eventually become satisfactory for those uses.



- ***Are there any policy limitations for car elevators?***

This is outside the scope of the current project. The Zoning By-law contains minimum size requirements for parking space sizes, and depending on how parking stacks are configured, relief may be needed from the By-law in terms of a vertical clearance of a parking space.

There are currently no provisions in the Zoning By-law for stacked automated garages, specifically, but a number of applications with them have been approved in the past. They require site-specific Zoning By-law Amendments.

- ***I live in a neighbourhood with a lot of multi-unit houses, including laneway suites. Most of them have parking and most of them have cars. If I understand correctly, would no parking have to be provided in the future? I am concerned as there seems to be an issue with what is being proposed here and what is actually happening in the neighbourhood. Not everyone has the ability to get around through alternatives like cycling.***

The details of this specific location would need to be reviewed but, in general, it sounds like there would be no parking required in that case under the proposed changes. However, removing the minimum does not mean removing parking entirely, or removing people's ability to provide parking. If there is desire for parking, it should be provided. Individuals have personal responsibility to find housing, work and other destinations that meet their needs, including appropriate parking availability.

Staff in Transportation Planning are working closely with staff in Transportation Services to exclude new development from participating in the residential parking permit system. Removing the ability to offload parking demand to the street should push the need for parking back to individual sites.

- ***Where there is required parking, could this be provided in the form of a parking pad? There should be some discussion regarding the discrepancy between garages and driveways vs. parking pads.***

These issues are more appropriate under the residential parking strategy, a study being conducted by Transportation Services. Although the Zoning By-law speaks to where parking is allowed to be located, the scope of the current project is on parking rates and the amount of parking required (as opposed to its locations).

Driveways are not allowed to count for the parking requirement, but the Zoning By-law also says that driveways can be used for parking in some contexts. This introduces some challenges with respect to regulation and calculation of parking provision. The current proposal includes neither parking maximums nor minimums for housing that would typically have driveways, such as ground-related detached and attached homes.



- ***Decarbonizing the economy has nothing to do with future car numbers. If we get electric power, won't we get even more cars?***

Although electric vehicles would be powered by electricity, not all electricity in Ontario is produced by green sources. There are still emissions associated with constructing electric vehicles, so from an environmental perspective, the objective remains to reduce the overall number of vehicles on the road. Separate from the environmental impacts, there is also a mobility benefit to having smaller vehicles or more people in vehicles, which generally reduces the number of vehicles on the road.

- ***I'm in a neighbourhood group trying to build relationships between neighbours. Parking issues are extremely divisive. Removing all restrictions puts a burden on the community to enforce this problem. With this proposal, is the City backing out of its responsibility?***

Staff recognize that there are neighbourhood disputes associated with enforcement and are working through ideas such as prohibiting new developments from participating in the street parking permit system. Part of the direction towards removing parking minimums is recognizing that there are a significant number of households that do not already have cars, and the cost of constructing and maintaining parking is quite high. Forcing households that do not need a vehicle to pay for parking is not fair.

Comments & Feedback

The following comments were submitted during the meeting:

- *I'm really happy to see the scope of this project expanded to be city-wide rather than just in areas around transit.*
- *Discouraging car use and completely eliminating the ability of someone with mobility issues are two completely different things. It has been proven that if you make parking an option, a developer will go toward the cheapest option.*



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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