

DRAFT ZONING BYLAW | SPRING 2025

The new Zoning Bylaw is currently under development to replace the existing Land Use Bylaw 1P2007. It will simplify the rules that determine how land is used and the form of buildings in Calgary. Learn more: calgary.ca/citybuilding

Parking Requirements

How is parking currently regulated?

	BUSINESS	RESIDENTIAL
AMOUNT OF PARKING REQUIRED	Open Option	0.3-2.0 Stalls per unit

- Businesses can provide the amount of parking that meets their customers’ and employees’ needs.
- New residential developments must provide between 0.3 and 2.0 parking stalls per unit, depending on the type of new housing and its location in the city.
- City Planners and Engineers frequently allow for more flexibility in meeting current parking requirements.

What are the proposed changes?

	BUSINESS	RESIDENTIAL
AMOUNT OF PARKING REQUIRED	Open Option	Open Option

- The new Zoning Bylaw is proposing an Open Option parking approach for all land uses.
- Open Option parking means that both business and residential property owners would decide how much parking is required to serve customers, employees and residents’ needs.

Why are these changes being proposed?

Research shows that requiring new homes to always provide a minimum parking requirement significantly increases housing costs ^{1 2 3 4 5}, reduces business formation and economic growth, reduces air quality, harms local water sources emissions ^{6 7 8} and overall public health^{9 10}.

Policy from the City of Calgary’s Housing Strategy and Climate Strategy recommend that minimum parking requirements be reduced or removed. This aligns with the goals of the Calgary Plan like accommodating more population growth in existing neighbourhoods.

Public Engagement on the new Zoning Bylaw has been on-going since October 2023. The project team has heard from thousands of Calgarians through in-person conversations, focused workshops and online surveys. Though this engagement Calgarians have expressed a desire for the City to prioritize housing affordability, economic growth, job creation and environmental sustainability when writing the new Zoning Bylaw.

Background - Parking requirements were first introduced in Calgary in 1957, but over the past 20 years have been continuously simplified and reduced. In 2020 the City of Calgary adopted an Open Option parking approach for all new non-residential developments. In 2022, requirements for Multi-Residential Development were significantly reduced. Adopting a full Open Option parking approach aligns Calgary with the most up-to-date method of regulating on-site parking.

How do other cities in Canada regulate parking in their Zoning Bylaws?

Most major Canadian cities have either adopted or are in the process of adopting an Open Option Parking approach for new developments.

	EDMONTON	TORONTO	VANCOUVER	SASKATOON	MONTREAL	OTTAWA
AMOUNT OF PARKING REQUIRED	Open Option	Open Option	Open Option	Open Option	Open Option	Open Option
YEAR OF CHANGE	2020	2021	2024	2024	Proposed for 2025	Proposed for 2025

Does an Open Option Parking approach mean there will be no parking constructed?

In cities that have moved towards an Open Option parking approach, the amount of parking built after the rule change is similar. For example, in 2022, the City of Calgary reduced minimum parking requirements for apartment buildings from 1.25 stalls per unit to 0.6 stalls per unit. New apartment buildings which are not located close to transit still build approximately 1 stall per unit - despite not being required to do so. With an Open Option approach, new homes built closer to transit may build less parking. This results in lower-cost homes which meet the needs of a growing number of households. Open Option Parking allows Calgarians to have more flexibility. This makes development approval timelines faster and removes a barrier to new housing supply.

Does an Open Option Parking approach mean more people will park on my street?

Street parking in the Calgary is a regulated public amenity, not an exclusive amenity for the occupant of a home. Current minimum parking requirements do not prevent residents from parking on the public street. Proactive parking management through permitting programs, time restrictions, enforcement or permit pricing is a direct solution to the challenge of parking congestion. Because parking is a valued amenity in Calgary, new developments will continue to provide parking for customers, employees, visitors, new owners and tenants.

What about Barrier-free or Accessible Parking stalls? Are those still required?

The provincial Alberta Building Code regulates the amount of Barrier-free parking (accessible) required for new developments. The Zoning Bylaw only affects the amount of Barrier-free parking stalls indirectly. For these reasons barrier-free parking will continue to be provided at comparable rates.

Citations

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