



Interim Parking Strategy for Downtown

INFORMATION SHEET

Prince Rupert City Council has approved an Interim Parking Strategy to guide actions regulating parking in the downtown core over the next 1-3 years, with longer term parking management included as part of the Connect Rupert Transportation Plan. Note that this interim strategy is intended to inform further policy development—and that policies like the removal of minimum parking requirements in certain areas would require a Zoning amendment and associated public process.

So, how does the City currently regulate parking in downtown Prince Rupert, vs what is being proposed in the new Interim Parking Strategy?

Strategy	Existing Policy	Proposed Action	Next Steps
<p>Parking Minimums— A minimum required number of off-street parking stalls per business, based on the floor area and/or type of business.</p> <p>Removing minimum parking requirements is recommended as a best practice to create efficient use of existing parking, remove barriers to development, and support densification.</p>	<p>Parking minimums are in effect for downtown businesses. However, these minimum requirements are not applied to businesses that existed before the regulations came into effect, which are considered 'existing non-conforming'. If the current minimum standard was imposed on existing businesses, we would need an additional 5,105 stalls—which is out of step with actual community need.</p>	<p>To remove parking minimums from a parking specified area (PSA) downtown, <u>providing there is no loss of existing spaces</u>. This would mean developers are no longer required to provide the specified number of parking stalls or pay in-lieu fees. This does not prevent developers providing additional off-street parking if desired and does not affect existing businesses. In addition, pay in lieu would continue to be required outside of the proposed PSA.</p>	<p>Any change to parking regulation would require a Zoning Bylaw Amendment, which will include a process for receiving community input, including a public hearing.</p>
<p>Shared Parking Agreements— Shared parking agreements can be developed by implementing opportunities for existing businesses to rent out their required stalls for commercial or public use through arrangements administered by the City</p>	<p>The City does not currently have this type of program in place.</p>	<p>Council to encourage shared parking agreements between private businesses, or between private businesses and the City, to optimize existing off-street parking. This can be done through the establishment of a Commercial Stall Lease License or other format administered by the City.</p>	<p>Staff to draft any associated policy or regulatory changes required to enable shared parking agreements, and to return to Council for additional consideration.</p>

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<p>Longer-term Parking Options Downtown –the intent would be to strategically support high demand areas for parking. Having both short and long term parking options can assist with ensuring that access to parking is prioritized for those who need it most—delivery and service vehicles, disabled customers, and customers—with options for employee parking available elsewhere, ideally off-street</p>	<p>Local perception is that on-street parking, especially on 3rd and 2nd Avenues leaves something to be desired, with employees taking up significant on-street parking. The City currently has limited options for parking longer than 2 hours downtown for employees.</p>	<p>Maximize parking on 2nd and 7th Streets, using tools such as changing time restrictions, to serve longer term users and free up street parking along 2nd and 3rd Ave;</p> <p>Seek opportunities to develop public parking lots in the City Core as needed to serve longer term users through land acquisition or conversion of municipally-owned lots.</p>	<p>Acquisition of potential lands for parking lot development. One lot location has been suggested for Lot 9, the lot adjacent to George Hills Way and owned by the City's Development Corporation, Legacy Inc.</p> <p>Staff will explore options to reconfigure parking on 2nd and 7th with 4 hour parking to be considered for longer term users.</p>
<p>Parking Wayfinding— an integrated electronic or signage system that indicates where parking lots are located and identifies regulations and pricing for each location. These systems can support locals and visitors find parking, reduce frustration at lack of parking, and shift thinking about the parking shortage.</p>	<p>The City of Prince Rupert does not currently have a parking wayfinding system in place. For instance, the City has a number of spaces for rent along Fulton Street and directly adjacent to 3rd Avenue, as well as in the Rushbrook parking lot, however these lots and their availability is not well-advertised.</p>	<p>Council should direct staff to develop and implement an Interim Parking Wayfinding Strategy - which would include improved advertising of existing downtown spaces, especially as an option for downtown employees.</p>	<p>Staff to develop Interim Parking Wayfinding Strategy. Any product of the wayfinding strategy will be advertised and rolled out publicly.</p>

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Strategy

Maximization of Street Parking in Existing Areas in Downtown Core – On-street parking is a form of shared parking which serves many destinations, does not compete for developable land or greenspaces, and can provide traffic calming.

Implement Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure—EV Charging infrastructure implementation encourages residents to adopt electric cars and also accommodates travelers using EVs

Effective Ticketing Processes/Parking Enforcement—Parking management benefits from increased enforcement and increased compliance.

Existing Policy	Proposed Action	Next Steps
Currently, parallel parking is available downtown. This parking is subject to time restrictions, but currently serves customers, loading areas, accessible parking spots, and employees.	Staff to continue to work with the Province to redesign 2nd and 3rd Avenues W to add angled parking and implement a bike lane.	Staff are currently working with the Province and have developed some preliminary designs. Approval from the Province is needed for any work to begin on 2nd Ave W as it is a provincial highway.
Currently there is one EV Charging station located across from Mariners Park, with two more planned to be installed in the City Core in the next year.	In addition to existing plans for EVs, EV charging infrastructure can additionally be implemented in both private and public parking spaces. This management action may include increasing the required minimums of electrified stalls within our zoning bylaw, or by identifying areas within the City for new charging stations in order to direct new development.	City staff will continue to implement planned EV stations and seek opportunities for new locations as well.
Currently Bylaw enforcement of parking sees minimal payment of tickets, and the opportunities for payment are limited.	Staff to investigate how to increase enforcement actions. This can include updating parking management to provincial collections process, increasing options for payment, and increases to fines and discounts for early payment.	Council approved moving to a Provincial collections process, and staff will investigate additional recommendations for improvements to parking management.

Does this strategy include residential parking, and what are the rules in residential areas?

This interim strategy does not currently include residential areas, though that will be covered in the later Prince Rupert Transportation Plan, currently underway. Parking in residential areas is covered by our Traffic Bylaw, which places a 48-hour limit on on-street parking in residential areas.

What are you doing to stop employees from parking in front of their workplaces?

This interim strategy proposes several management actions to begin addressing the shortage of available longer-term parking options that is at the root of employees parking in front of their work. These may include maximizing parking along 2nd Street and 7th Street, which have double-lane width, by changing time restrictions to allow for 4-hour parking, or by seeking opportunities to develop public off-street parking placed strategically downtown. Providing longer-term parking options for employees and improving enforcement of time restrictions in front of businesses along 3rd Ave will help maintain availability of parking for customers closer to storefronts.

Are there places downtown to park now without time limits?

Yes! You do currently have options for longer term parking. Certain streets, like 1st Avenue, Fulton Street and other adjoining streets in the downtown core do not have maximum parking time limits. If you don't see a sign designating a parking limit, you can park for longer stints. This may not be directly in front of your business or where you are going, but part of the intent of this strategy is to ensure that businesses have high turnover parking out front to encourage better traffic flow.

In addition to existing areas without parking limits, the City has a number of stalls for rent in behind 3rd Avenue on Fulton Street and behind Coast Mountain College. Contact City Hall for details on availability.

Who will get priority for parking?

No one type of parker is getting priority across the board, however this strategy attempts to ensure that different areas prioritize different types of parkers in order to lessen conflict. For example, street parking close to storefronts should be prioritized for loading and accessible parking, followed by customers. This helps increase turnover in front of storefronts. Employees or longer-term parkers are prioritized in areas that do not take up customer parking, which may be a bit farther away or be off-street, but allow for longer parking without being penalized.

How will parking for future residential development downtown be managed?

Based on the direction provided in the adopted strategy, City Council will consider the removal of parking minimums for a Parking Specified Area (PSA) downtown through a Zoning Bylaw Amendment that will come before Council in the near future. This Bylaw Amendment will consider whether it is best to retain parking minimums for residential development in the proposed PSA, which will be subject public consultation and Council feedback. Residential development outside of the PSA will continue to be subject to the existing standards for parking in residential developments.

What is a Parking Specified Area and where is it being proposed?

The Interim Strategy proposes to remove parking minimums from a parking specified area (PSA) downtown, providing there is no loss of existing spaces. This would mean developers are no longer required to provide the specified number of parking stalls or pay in-lieu fees, in order to encourage redevelopment and densification of the City's core. This does not prevent developers providing additional off-street parking if desired and does not affect existing businesses. In addition, pay in lieu would continue to be required outside of the proposed PSA.

See below for the area currently proposed to be included under the Parking Specified Area (PSA).



What will this mean for businesses that have already paid into the Pay in Lieu system?

Businesses that have already paid into the pay-in-lieu program will continue to not have to provide any additional parking – nothing will change for them. The proposed policy to remove minimum requirements only applies to new developments or change in use of the building. With any Zoning or policy change, existing non-conformance will be permitted to remain. Pay-in-lieu funds that have been collected may go toward the development of City parking lots.



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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Will there be more parking overall?

None of these changes will result in loss of parking, and additional public parking is proposed to be put in as needed. However, this strategy is not meant to increase parking exclusively, but rather ensure that the right type of parking is available in the right location to promote healthy, accessible, and vibrant communities.

Why aren't shared parking agreements already permitted? What are the next steps to allow them?

Shared parking agreements are currently not in place due to the risk of losing required spots from businesses. However, the City could ensure that spots that are rented out are in excess of those required by the business.

I have a disability – how will this strategy benefit me?

Accessible on-street parking close to a destination is very important, and should be prioritized to ensure we have an accessible downtown. The changes in this strategy that propose providing more options for longer term parking, for example changing time restrictions along 2nd and 7th Streets, and looking for public off-street parking options downtown, will help free up locations in front of storefronts. Additionally, the reconfiguration of 2nd and 3rd Avenues W will maximize street parking which will result in more dedicated accessible parking spots.

Is the City supportive of EVs?

Yes – the City has been working with the Charge North network, as well as BC Hydro to install charging stations locally, and encourage private partners to do so as well. One EV station has been installed in front of Mariners Park, and two more are planned to be installed within the year.

Is more going to be done?

Yes! The City is currently working towards a Transportation Plan that will house a more permanent parking strategy within it.

Looking for more information on the proposed parking strategy?

Contact the Planning Department:

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Email: planning@princerupert.ca