

Summary of proposed changes to remove minimum parking requirements for new housing

Currently the Land Use Bylaw requires that a minimum number of on-site parking stalls are provided for all housing developments. The number of required parking stalls is determined by the housing type and, in some instances, by the number of bedrooms in the home. There are also reductions to the amount of parking required for rental apartment housing. The current number of required parking stalls varies from 0.75 parking stalls per home to 2.0 parking stalls per home.

The 2017 Municipal Census indicated that the number of vehicles associated with current housing varies greatly. This means that a large proportion of existing housing in Banff would either not have enough parking, or would have too much parking, if the current parking numbers are met.

The current on-site parking requirements substantially impact the development of new homes in Banff for a number of reasons:

- The size of properties in Banff – As the majority of properties in Banff are on rectangular lots, there is a limit to the maximum number of parking stalls that can be provided given the minimum size of stalls and the space required to maneuver vehicles, especially when building underground parking structures. This means that when determining how much housing can be built on a site, the amount of parking that can be provided limits the options for new housing.
- Groundwater – Banff is set within a gravel, riverbed valley where water tables are highest in the valley bottom, or in the very areas where housing is best suited (e.g. close to services and employment) and allowable densities are highest. Constructing parking in an underground format in a high water table environment is difficult and adds to extreme cost escalation and complexity.
- Surface Parking – As there are challenges associated with underground parking, another option is to construct surface parking on a site. Unfortunately, surface parking opportunities come with a direct conflict with housing in the form of site area and reduces the amount of the site that can be used for housing.
- Parking Costs - The cost of providing a parking stall is not insignificant with current estimates of over \$100,000 per stall for underground parking and \$8,000 for surface parking. These costs impact the cost of construction which typically get passed on to the occupant.
- Land Assembly - Because single lots are difficult to fit parking on, redevelopment is better delivered through the assembly of multiple lots. The ability to purchase, hold, and accrue additional property in Banff is limited to larger, capital-enabled developers and typically extends the time horizons and up-front costs as the land assembly process takes place.
- Working Around Existing Buildings – As 98.5% of all residential sites in Banff currently contain housing, when projects are proposed to add housing around existing buildings on a site, working with existing structures limits the availability of open space to provide on-site parking.
- Replacing Existing Housing - There are number of homes in Banff that do not comply with the current parking requirements. Sometimes these are heritage buildings or buildings constructed prior to parking requirements (pre-1966) or when they were

developed the parking requirements were less than currently (1966-1990) and in other situations where the reasons for no on-site parking are unknown. These existing homes which are “under-parked” (e.g. they don’t comply with today’s Land Use Bylaw) could not be rebuilt to the same level of housing should an unforeseen calamity (e.g. structure fire) occurred. In real terms, this means that several buildings in Banff couldn’t replace what exists right now. This could be a devastating blow in the aftermath of (for example) a natural disaster that affected multiple homes.

- Designing housing based on parking rather than community need – As the limitations of a site can have a direct impact on the maximum number of stalls that can be constructed, this determines how many units and the size of those units could be built. For example, an apartment building that contains 6, four-bedroom units (for a total of 24 bedrooms) would require 12 parking stalls, whereas an apartment building containing 24, one-bedroom units would require 24 parking stalls.

The proposed changes to the parking requirements through Bylaw 482 are to remove the minimum parking requirements for all types of housing development in Banff. This would mean that anyone that builds new homes could provide as much, or as little, on-site vehicle parking as they deem suitable. When on-site parking is provided, it would still have to meet the design requirements with regards to size and location of the stalls.

What are the potential impacts of allowing those creating housing to determine how much parking they will construct?

If there are no requirements to construct on-site parking stalls, new housing projects will fall in to one of three scenarios:

1. More parking stalls are provided on-site than the current bylaw would require;
2. The same amount of parking stalls are provided as would be required currently; or,
3. Less, or no, parking stalls are provided.

In each of these scenarios, the impacts will depend on the number of vehicles associated with the people that live in the housing.

In instances where more parking has been provided than is needed this would add unnecessary additional costs to the construction and may reduce the opportunity for outdoor amenity area or landscaping.

In instances where less parking has been provided than is needed, occupants with vehicles may either park on-street where parking is available, or may seek out housing options that provide parking, or may change behavior with respect to car ownership. The latter scenario may also increase demand for non-car based transportation solution such as sidewalks, cycling infrastructure, or public transit.