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Background

*ConnectEdmonton*, City Council’s Strategic Plan, and The *City Plan*, the City’s Municipal Development Plan (MDP) and Transportation Master Plan (TMP), envision a future Edmonton that is urban, environmentally resilient, and less dependent on private automobiles for mobility needs. These policy documents, together with recent changes to Edmonton’s Zoning Bylaw to remove minimum on-site parking requirements for new homes and businesses (Open Option Parking), present an opportunity to reflect on and reimagine how the City of Edmonton manages public parking, which includes curbside parking and other City-owned parking facilities.

Purpose

This report presents the key learnings and actions resulting from the Public Parking Action Plan Development Project — serving as a groundswell of background information and policy rationale to support future and ongoing changes to Edmonton’s public parking programs and services. Working in tandem with a Public Parking Implementation Advisory Group consisting of internal City subject matter experts, a series of actions were explored and drafted to help modernize the City of Edmonton’s approach to managing public parking.
Developing the Public Parking Action Plan

PROJECT RESEARCH

The City of Edmonton’s Public Parking Action Plan Development Project team undertook four stages of work, including a review of strategic policies, pertinent publicly-available engagement records, current practices in Edmonton, and practices in other jurisdictions. These stages of work helped in identifying four important ‘cross-cutting themes,’ which provide the foundation for each of the actions identified in the Public Parking Action Plan.

PROJECT TIMELINE

TRANSFORMATIVE PROJECT INPUTS
City Plan | Open Option Parking | Bike Plan | Curbside Accessible Parking Project

PROJECT RESEARCH
Strategic Policy Alignment
Engagement Alignment
Jurisdictional Scan
Current Practices in Edmonton

CROSS-CUTTING THEMES

PUBLIC PARKING ACTION PLAN

IMPLEMENTING THE PUBLIC PARKING ACTION PLAN

2020 PHASE 1
2021 PHASE 2
Below is a brief summary of how each report supported the development of the actions in the Public Parking Action Plan. For further information, please see the appendices.

**Strategic Policy Alignment**
Strategic policies related to public parking and mobility within ConnectEdmonton and The City Plan were consolidated and reviewed to establish the policy foundation for how future public parking programs and services should be aligned.

**Engagement Alignment**
Previously-published public engagement reports (also referred to as ‘What We Heard Reports’) were reviewed for feedback shared about public parking, mobility and transportation needs, and other relevant city-building considerations. This review helped provide an understanding of the baseline expectations of the public when amending or creating new public parking programs and services.

**Current Practices In Edmonton**
A review of Edmonton’s public parking programs, tools, and tactics was facilitated to establish the baseline of challenges and opportunities facing the City’s current public parking management approach, and to assess whether these programs, tools, and tactics align with policies and public feedback/input identified in the stages noted above. Understanding gaps in current practices will help in deciding upon whether programs, tools, and tactics should be continued, refined, or retired.

**Jurisdictional Scan**
Parking programs, tools, and tactics in select North American municipalities who have undertaken an ‘Open Option Parking’ approach similar to Edmonton were reviewed and assessed against alignment to policy and public engagement themes established in the stages above. This analysis helped to identify public parking management practices that could potentially be adapted and/or refined to work within Edmonton’s context.

**Cross-Cutting Themes**
Major themes arising from the background research undertaken were reviewed and categorized, with the following cross-cutting themes emerging:

- Strategically manage municipal assets to maximize utilization for a variety of users and uses to achieve The City Plan
- Develop a connected mobility system that supports all modes of transportation, and provides residents with convenient options.
- Ensure the mobility system is accessible, safe, efficient, and barrier-free for all Edmontonians
- Encourage modal shift by providing opportunities for transit or active transportation

**Public Parking Implementation Advisory Group**
To support the analysis of the background research noted above and the development of potential actions to modernize Edmonton’s public parking management approach, a group of subject matter experts from within Administration were assembled to form the Public Parking Implementation Advisory Group (the Advisory Group). The Advisory Group was instrumental in developing and refining the set of actions contained in the Public Parking Action Plan.
Public Parking
Actions

FROM IDEAS TO ACTIONS

Project Themes Summary

- Manage municipal parking assets in a strategic manner
- Promote access to and through the mobility system through various modes of transportation
- Prioritize equity by ensuring mobility systems can be accessed by everyone, regardless of housing context or demography
- Accommodate and support vulnerable populations through investments to public transportation infrastructure
- Demonstrate adaptability by accommodating and supporting emerging technologies
- Support the intensification of urban places
- Support the local economy, businesses, and other commercial activity by connecting places with people
- Encourage mode shift by providing more opportunities for alternative modes of transportation, including transit and active transportation
- Ensure the transportation system, especially the public transit and active transportation networks are well-connected, efficient, safe, accessible, affordable and barrier free for all Edmontonians of varying demographics and mobility capabilities
- Expand and enhance the transit and active transportation networks to provide attractive transportation choices
- Support the utilization of the public transit network as well as support major nodes, corridors and commercial areas through the provision of affordable and accessible parking opportunities
- Improve the accessibility, affordability and design of accessible parking spaces

- The City’s current Residential Parking Program is misaligned to the themes from the Background and What we Heard reports.
- Performance/Demand-based Pricing is a critical component to the effective management of on-street parking spaces
- Strategic management of on-street parking spaces has been made possible through technological advancements
- Equitable distribution of accessible on-street parking spaces serves all Edmontonians
- Explore and adapt to new technologies for payment options, as well as to collect data to adjust parking costs based on location/utilization
- Ensure adequate wayfinding and signage to educate the public on parking options/locations/prices through creative online/placemaking tactics
- Maximize utilization of a parking space through coordination between residents and business owners
- Develop frameworks to allocate the curb to commerce, people, public space, greening, and private vehicle storage based on location and land use (residential, commercial and mixed use, industrial)
- Allocate parking revenues to invest in community priorities and district enhancements
- Promote off-street parking options to support behavioural shift to long-term parking and/or multi-modal transportation (e.g. park-and-ride)
### ACTIONS SUMMARY

Actions in the Public Parking Action Plan were developed by the Public Parking Implementation Advisory Group upon thoughtful review and consideration of the background research undertaken, in addition to an assessment of alignment with the cross-cutting themes. The actions articulated in this report help to bridge the gap between The City Plan policy directions and intentions, and the necessary operational changes needed to modernize the City’s public parking management approach.

### Cross Cutting Themes
- Strategically manage municipal assets to maximize utilization for a variety of users and uses to achieve the City Plan
- Develop a connected mobility system that supports all modes of transportation, and provides residents with convenient options.
- Ensure the mobility system is accessible, safe, efficient, barrier-free for all Edmontonians
- Encourage modal shift by providing opportunities for transit or active transportation

### The Actions

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<tr>
<th>ACTION</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Alignment with Cross-cutting Themes</th>
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<tr>
<td>ACTION 1:</td>
<td>Prioritize how public parking spaces should be programmed and utilized in alignment with the City Plan, and amend any relevant City of Edmonton policies, guidelines, Bylaws, design and construction standards to reflect this.</td>
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<td>ACTION 2:</td>
<td>Align the current public parking pricing framework to City Plan policy directions</td>
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<td>ACTION 3:</td>
<td>Explore opportunities to enhance active transportation amenities in public and private developments</td>
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<td>ACTION 4:</td>
<td>Leverage technology to strategically manage parking assets and improve customer experiences</td>
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<tr>
<td>ACTION 5:</td>
<td>Explore opportunities to allocate parking revenues in support of local businesses and communities, active transportation and public transit</td>
<td>![downarrow], ![car], ![person]</td>
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<tr>
<td>ACTION 6:</td>
<td>Implement actions as outlined in the Designated Curbside Accessible Project Implementation Plan in fulfillment of Council Policy C602: Accessibility for People with Disabilities.</td>
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<td>ACTION 7:</td>
<td>Replace the existing Residential Parking Permit program with a modernized program that balances congestion management and broader city-building goals identified in the City Plan.</td>
<td>![house], ![car], ![person], ![bike]</td>
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PUBLIC PARKING
ACTIONS OVERVIEW

ACTION 1
Prioritize how public parking spaces should be programmed and utilized in alignment with The City Plan and amend any relevant City of Edmonton policies, guidelines, bylaws, and design and construction standards to reflect this.

CROSS-CUTTING THEMES

The City Plan provides strategic city-building direction related to Edmonton’s transportation network and accompanying land uses. This direction is supported by a set of guiding and regulatory documents, including the Complete Streets Guidelines, Main Streets Guidelines and Complete Streets Design and Construction Standards.

While these documents provide useful direction, there are gaps in guidance for how curbside assets should be prioritized across different uses. For example, while pedestrian and active transportation activities are encouraged in multiple planning documents, there is no corresponding operational priority decision making system to identify when and where a certain mode or use should be prioritized within the curbside space.

As Edmonton continues to develop and mature as an urban city, it will be important to accommodate traditional curbside uses, like vehicle-for-hire services, loading and accessible parking, as well as non-traditional curbside uses, like curbside drop-off, electric vehicles, car-sharing and temporary patios, to name a few.

Through the review of existing planning tools related to roadway design and management, and in reflection of The City Plan, a prioritization matrix will be established to identify preferred curbside asset uses and applicable locations.

STRATEGIC POLICY ALIGNMENT
Prioritizing the use of curbside space is an explicit way to strategically manage municipal assets and enable non-automobile uses within curbside spaces. This supports The City Plan’s policy directions of enabling mode shift and encouraging active transportation and public transit uses. Additionally, through this work, non-transportation uses could be prioritized to enhance urban, social and natural environments.

ENGAGEMENT ALIGNMENT
Engagement records punctuate the importance of a well-connected transportation network with multiple options that support Edmontonians of all ages and abilities to navigate throughout the city. The expansion of the active transportation network and the public transit system was a sentiment shared across multiple engagement sessions and cited as critical steps towards achieving a more connected and urban city.

JURISDICTIONAL SCAN ALIGNMENT
The strategic utilization of curbside space and accessibility to a variety of users and uses was a common precedent in the jurisdictions explored. Many of the municipalities are opting to move away from automobile usage to more active and public transportation modes. In Seattle, a curbside prioritization system called ‘Flex Zones’ explicitly identifies modal priority and curbside space utilization preferences.
**ACTION 2**

**Align the current public parking pricing framework to The City Plan policy directions.**

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Public Parking spaces, which include curbside parking and other City-owned parking facilities, are depreciating assets that incur building, maintenance, and servicing costs. While hourly parking revenues are one way to help recoup costs, these revenues by and large do not compensate for the total upkeep and maintenance required of all public parking in the city. With this in mind, it is prudent to strategically manage public parking as a municipal asset and explore additional opportunities for revenue generation and curbside management subsidization.

This action should include a review of existing fees levied by the City for curbside use (e.g. temporary parking permits, On Street Construction and Maintenance (OSCAM) Permits, vending permits, carshare parking fee agreements, etc) and an exploration of any additional fees, not currently being levied, that are required for the effective utilization of curbside space.

This action should also include a review and modernization of existing pricing mechanisms the City uses to manage paid public parking (i.e. the current demand responsive pricing model). This review should include an examination of the pricing framework’s continued viability as a result of potential long term parking occupancy impacts of COVID–19 (the ongoing feasibility of best–practice occupancy thresholds for hourly parking rate increases and decreases), a review of hourly and other pricing rate restrictions stipulated in City Bylaw 5590, and a review of the relationship between parking and transit rates in support of mode shift.

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Reviewing how the City considers its public parking spaces through a financial lens, in particular the demand-responsive pricing model, supports the themes of strategically managing municipal assets while encouraging alternative transportation modes, including active transportation and public transit. Updating our public parking pricing framework would also support the local economy and businesses (especially in dense urban areas) by accommodating customers with various modal needs and preferences, and promoting short–stay turnover.

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Engagement feedback punctuates the importance for alternative modes of transportation, like active transportation and public transit, while also providing opportunities for single–use automobile choices. Reviewing the current demand-responsive pricing model would support this need.

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Demand–responsive pricing systems are a common tool utilized by many municipalities. Like Edmonton, many of the jurisdictions researched are striving to balance available parking in prime business areas while supporting broader city–building goals of urban intensification and mode shift.
### ACTION 3

**Explore opportunities to enhance active transportation amenities in public and private developments.**

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#### ACTION DESCRIPTION

The City Plan identifies a clear need and direction to encourage the use of active transportation and public transit networks. The provision of amenities like safe and secure bicycle storage, personal lockers, showers and washrooms, have been studied at-length and are deemed as necessary tool inclusions in the active and public transportation networks. Encouraging such facilities in both private development, at key public transit locations and within curbside spaces would help support ‘end-to-end’ amenities for users of these networks. The provision of such amenities may further reduce the need to provide on-site parking for private developments — encouraging more efficient utilization of land and building spaces. Working collaboratively with Edmonton Transit Services (ETS), Administration will explore opportunities to enhance the policy and regulatory environment to enable more and better active transportation amenities in the transportation network. Opportunities to pilot new initiatives will also be considered.

#### STRATEGIC POLICY ALIGNMENT

The pertinent policies identified through the strategic policy review noted that both ConnectEdmonton and The City Plan support the development of comprehensive transit and active transportation networks to provide options and encourage active mobility.

#### ENGAGEMENT ALIGNMENT

Engagement feedback assessed highlighted the importance for physical infrastructure (e.g. dedicated bicycle and bus lanes), as well as the inclusion of supportive amenities like showers, lockers and secure bicycle parking is of importance in lending to improved safety and accessibility of the mobility network.

#### JURISDICTIONAL SCAN ALIGNMENT

Through a review of municipal best practices, active transportation infrastructure and amenities were all identified as top priorities. In European cities, well-connected mobility systems are supported and complemented with active transportation amenities.
## ACTION 4

**Leverage technology to strategically manage public parking assets and improve customer experiences.**

### CROSS-CUTTING THEMES

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<td>Currently, the City of Edmonton uses a wide array of tools and techniques to educate and share information about parking in the city, and to manage curbside assets. To help make informed decisions to better manage public parking spaces, improvements to existing tools and an exploration of other best practices and leading technologies will be undertaken. This action may include improvements to the EPark paid parking system, automated enforcement improvements and enhanced wayfinding and educational materials found on the City’s website. Integration of existing tools for parking, active transportation and public transit will be explored and encouraged to improve service delivery while concurrently reducing expenditures. To support improved decision-making around the strategic management of public parking spaces, collection and analysis of data should be a top priority. This action should consider how technological advances can simultaneously support data retrieval.</td>
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### STRATEGIC POLICY ALIGNMENT

Policies in ConnectEdmonton and The City Plan concerning the strategic management of curbside space and a more connected and accessible mobility network can be achieved through the use of technology.

### ENGAGEMENT ALIGNMENT

Engagement feedback reflects the need to improve the user experience for those navigating Edmonton’s various mobility networks while also improving the efficiency and accessibility of said networks. Utilizing technology is but one way of achieving this.

### JURISDICTIONAL SCAN ALIGNMENT

All cities that were reviewed incorporated technology to improve the user experience, with respect to education, wayfinding, and electronic payment options. Some cities also utilized technology to better manage parking assets through tools like demand-responsive pricing and electronic enforcement for public parking spaces.
### ACTION 5

**Explore opportunities to allocate parking revenues in support of local businesses and communities, active transportation and public transit.**

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<td>When parking is paid for at a City-owned parking meter, the fares help pay for a number of city-building activities and support the maintenance of public infrastructure. A community benefit model of paid parking presents opportunities to leverage increased parking fees in specific areas to support local businesses and communities, district improvements and/or related city-building activities. Such improvements may include enhanced sidewalk amenities like benches and lighting, new bike lanes, park space activations, and public art.</td>
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#### STRATEGIC POLICY ALIGNMENT

Policies in The City Plan outline the importance of strategically managing municipal assets, encouraging active transportation and public transit, enhancing the local economy and nurturing local nodes, corridors and districts to support residents. To support this policy direction, parking revenues obtained could be allocated to programs, initiatives and infrastructure upgrades in the same community from which the fees were obtained.

#### ENGAGEMENT ALIGNMENT

Engagement feedback reviewed noted the importance of the shift toward the utilization of active transportation and public transit, while also echoing the need for local nodes and corridors to foster thriving communities and districts.

#### JURISDICTIONAL SCAN ALIGNMENT

In the jurisdictional review undertaken, several cities utilized a ‘Community Benefit Model’ of public parking fare collection and allocation wherein fees collected in specific areas would be invested back into the same catchment area to improve the public realm.
**ACTION 6**

Implement actions as outlined in the Designated Curbside Accessible Project Implementation Plan in fulfillment of Council Policy C602: Accessibility for People with Disabilities.

### CROSS-CUTTING THEMES

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<tr>
<td>The City Plan envisions a well-connected city that is welcoming to people of all ages and varying mobility capacities. While the use of the active and public transportation networks is encouraged, this may not be practical for all Edmontonians, especially those who may have mobility needs that would be best supported by designated accessible curbside parking spaces. To support these needs, designated accessible curbside parking spaces should be located and designed to best support those in need of these spaces. Council Policy C602: Accessibility for People with Disabilities and the Complete Streets Design and Construction Standards will be utilized to help improve accessible curbside parking spaces. This may include the positioning of design at curbside parking spaces on the near and far sides of intersections where sidewalk ramps exist, or improving the demarcation and visibility of designated accessible parking spaces for easier acquisition. Universal Design recommendations should also be made for new infrastructure and renewal projects.</td>
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### STRATEGIC POLICY ALIGNMENT

The ‘Urban Places’ and ‘Healthy City’ strategic goals within ConnectEdmonton supports the improved design, function and location of accessible parking spaces for Edmontonians with limited mobility needs. Furthermore, The City Plan supports this action as it achieves the policy directions of designing, building and maintaining infrastructure to facilitate movement in all seasons, while also advancing equity through access to universally accessible spaces and transportation networks.

### ENGAGEMENT ALIGNMENT

The engagement feedback reviewed contained themes relating to accessibility to the mobility network, including for people with limited mobility. Engagement feedback suggested that the design, location and function of accessible parking spaces could be enhanced to better support Edmontonians who have limited mobility.

### JURISDICTIONAL SCAN ALIGNMENT

In all the cities reviewed, accessible parking was provided in some fashion. In San Francisco, accessible parking spaces were enhanced by painting the accessible parking spaces clearly so that they could be easily seen by users. Tactics of this nature will be considered as part of this action.
### ACTION 7

**Replace the existing Residential Parking Permit program with a modernized program that balances congestion management and broader city-building goals identified in The City Plan.**

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<td>The City currently utilizes several approaches to managing curbside spaces, including the Residential Parking Permit program. This program restricts parking in residential areas based on specific criteria, like building form and type of use (residential, commercial, etc.). Given that this program was last updated in 1998, it is a pertinent time to explore opportunities to align the program to achieve new city-building goals established in the The City Plan. This action may include the updating of eligibility criteria for the program, the exploration of fees to utilize the program and consideration of non-residential applications of the program to support local businesses.</td>
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<tr>
<td>This action supports the Urban Places, Healthy City and Climate Resilience strategic goals within ConnectEdmonton. This action supports The City Plan through policy directions that speak to the need to: manage curbside spaces in a strategic way; operate public infrastructure to facilitate movement and universal accessibility in all seasons; manage roadways to be adaptable to future mobility and land use needs; support the local economy; and to advance equity through access to universally accessible spaces.</td>
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<td>The engagement feedback reviewed identified the need for accessibility to important areas in the city, including the North Saskatchewan River Valley and ravine system, as well as local business areas. In addition, feedback observed included the need to shift away from automobile usage to other mobility methods, like active transportation and public transit. A reimagined parking permit program could be used to help provide equitable access to these and other areas.</td>
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<td>Through the jurisdictional scan review process, it was observed that a number of the cities reviewed had some form of parking permit program. The programs ranged from being utilized in specific residential areas adjacent to major civic entertainment venues or major transit hubs, to also being used in commercial areas to support local business activities. In almost all cases, permit holders were required to pay to utilize the permit system.</td>
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Next Steps

The plan is targeted to go to the Urban Planning Committee for review and feedback in the first quarter of 2021. Following review and feedback by the Urban Planning Committee, the City will outline a comprehensive implementation plan and execution timeline that will begin in the second quarter of 2021. Opportunities for public participation and engagement on specific actions will be assessed as part of the forthcoming implementation plan.
Appendices

**APPENDIX 1**
Strategic Policy Review

**APPENDIX 2**
Engagement Review

**APPENDIX 3**
Current Practices Review
Current Practices Gap Analysis Matrix

**APPENDIX 4**
Jurisdictional Scan
Municipal Practices Gap Analysis Matrix

**APPENDIX 5**
Cross Cutting Themes Report
Cross Cutting Themes Chart