

# Off-Street Parking and Loading Regulations Update

Terms of Reference

February, 2025



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## 1. OVERVIEW

This Terms of Reference (ToR) defines the scope of work and planning process for a comprehensive review and modernization of the District of Saanich's Off-Street Parking and Loading Regulations, contained in Section 7 & 8 of Zoning Bylaw, 2003, to align with current best practices and respond to evolving community needs.

This review is supported by actions identified in the District of Saanich's 2023 – 2027 Strategic plan and policy directions from the Official Community Plan (2024) that address housing supply and affordability, active transportation and road safety, and climate change. Moreover, additional actions and objectives identified in other key District Plans, including the Active Transportation Plan, Climate Plan, and Housing Strategy, also support this work.

## 2. BACKGROUND

At a Committee of the Whole Meeting on March 18, 2024, Council passed a motion directing staff to propose a Terms of Reference for a modernized off-street parking and loading regulations update. The District of Saanich seldom receives a proposal for a multi-family development that does not propose a parking variance. One of the primary reasons for this is because the District of Saanich's parking requirements are outdated. Updating the District of Saanich's parking requirements has been in the work plan for quite some time. However, competing priorities and staff limitations to-date have resulted in this work not yet being completed.

Off-street parking and loading spaces are provided on private property and included in residential, commercial, industrial, institutional, and mixed-use developments. In the District of Saanich, off-street parking and loading is regulated through Zoning Bylaw, 2003, Sections 7 & 8. Section 7 addresses the minimum number of off-street parking spaces to be provided based on residential and non-residential land uses. This section includes basic regulations for parking stall dimensions, location, and design, as well as minimum provisions for visitor parking and accessible parking spaces. Section 8 of the Zoning Bylaw, 2003, includes regulations for the minimum number of off-street loading spaces based on land use zoning and total floor area.

Since the adoption of Zoning Bylaw, 2003, the District of Saanich's planning and policy framework has undergone a significant shift that supports modernizing its off-street parking and loading regulations. The recently updated Official Community Plan (2024) calls for "right-sizing" parking requirements to support active transportation, enhance affordability, and improve land use efficiency. This direction is reinforced by the District of Saanich's 2023 – 2027 Strategic Plan, which emphasizes the need to support compact development and sustainable transportation modes. This work also aligns with other District initiatives, including the Active Transportation Plan (2024), Housing Strategy (2021), and Climate Plan (2020), as well as the Centre, Corridor, and Village (CCV) planning approach that Council endorsed in 2022 as part of the CCV work plan.

It is important to note that parking components of the Zoning Bylaw, 2003, have been amended over the years but have not been comprehensively updated. The most significant amendments in the recent past are outlined in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: Recent and relevant amendments to Zoning Bylaw, 2003.**

Year	Amendments
2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduced parking requirements for secondary and garden suites.</li> <li>Included regulations for energized off-street parking spaces and required electric vehicle supply equipment for charging.</li> </ul>
2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduced regulations to align with legislated parking requirements for Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing (SSMUH) and designated Transit-Oriented Areas, and updated language referencing "accessible" parking stalls.</li> <li>Reduced the minimum number of parking spaces required for residential developments of 12 or less dwelling units, set maximum requirements for residential or mixed-use developments of 13 or more dwelling units, required standardized TDM requirements for new developments, and required on-site loading spaces for residential and mixed-use developments of 13 or more dwelling units.</li> </ul>
2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minimum bike parking requirements are being developed and will be presented to Council in 2025.</li> </ul>

While recent interim amendments to the Zoning Bylaw, 2003, adopted by Council on November 18, 2024, introduced lower parking minimums, parking maximums for certain types of development, Transportation Demand Management (TDM) requirements, and on-site loading requirements, a comprehensive review of the off-street parking and loading regulations is still needed.

Growth patterns and the nature of development have changed significantly in the District of Saanich since its first zoning bylaw was adopted in 1937 and its first parking minimums in 1972, at a time when greenfield development of residential neighbourhoods and separated, stand-alone commercial uses was common and widespread across Canada. Over time, development and the planning theory behind it has evolved, now with increased focus on urban centres and villages with mixed-uses and more diverse housing forms situated within walking distance of services and amenities.

Parking requirements can also add unnecessary costs to developments, resulting in higher construction and purchasing costs. A single parking stall can cost as much as \$60,000 (2021 est.) per stall to construct and high minimum parking requirements can impact the viability of constructing housing, especially more affordable and non-market housing. The most recent District of Saanich Housing Needs Report (HNR) (2024) found that, based on the affordability threshold of housing costs being no more than 30% of gross household income, a single-detached home is out of reach for *all* households making the median income, even couples with children and other census families who tend to make higher incomes than other household types. Eliminating or reducing certain minimum parking requirements – while maintaining recently updated accessible parking requirements – can help to lower the cost of certain housing types.

With increasing amounts of development transforming the community’s landscape as it grows, it is critical that the District of Saanich update its off-street parking and loading regulations to support walkable, complete communities, sustainable transportation, and GHG emissions reductions.

### 3. PURPOSE

The purpose of this project is to comprehensively update and modernize the District of Saanich's off-street parking and loading regulations based on a review of current best practices, technical analysis, and engagement. The goal is to develop a technical and regulatory framework that aligns with Saanich's strategic policies and objectives, as articulated in the OCP and Strategic Plan.

Modernizing off-street parking and loading regulations will help to reduce the need for parking variances, generate cost savings during development that is often passed on to owners/tenants, improve development application processing times, and support broader community goals around housing affordability, sustainable transportation, and GHG emissions reduction.

### 4. GOALS

The goals of this project are to:

1. Support the efficient and cost-effective delivery of diverse and affordable housing types.
2. Support business growth and sustainable economic development in employment areas while optimizing land use and the District of Saanich's transportation network
3. Reduce development processing times and the number of variance requests.
4. Support the District of Saanich's mode shift targets, prioritizing walking, cycling, micromobility, and public transit.
5. Reduce GHG emissions and total vehicle kilometres travelled (VKT) within the District of Saanich.

### 5. SCOPE OF WORK

The project to update and modernize Saanich's off-street parking and loading regulations aims to bring the present standards into alignment with the District's goals for housing affordability, climate action, and sustainable transportation. It will be guided by current provincial, regional and District policies, regulations, and guidelines and will involve a process to research best practices from other municipalities and jurisdictions, engage with stakeholders and the public, and propose updated parking and loading requirements that reflect local needs and objectives. A summary of the key tasks to be undertaken in this project include:

- Reviewing existing parking regulations, to identify strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for updates
- Aligning with the provincial, regional, and District policy framework
- Investigating best practices as they relate to such things as:
  - Parking maximums and the elimination of parking minimums
  - Open parking policies that enable applicants to provide parking at the rate of market demand
  - The application of regulations based on a specific geography versus District-wide applications
  - Bundled versus unbundled parking costs
  - Shared parking facilities among multiple land uses and owners
  - Flexible requirements based on unit tenure, affordability, and/or age or ability of residents
- Analyzing relevant data and the technical and design aspects of the regulations, such as stall dimensions, locations, access, visibility, safety, and aisle width
- Refining Transportation Demand Management (TDM) requirements
- Refining bicycle parking requirements, including but not limited to:
  - Minimum required bicycle parking spaces
  - Bicycle parking, storage and locker specifications and dimensions
  - End-of-trip facilities

- Refining the recently introduced on-site loading requirements
- Refining accessible parking space requirements
- Engaging stakeholders and the public on the proposed regulations
- Proposing different regulatory options for consideration that contribute to the efficient and cost-effective delivery of housing, and a shift to more sustainable transportation modes that support public health and climate action
- Preparing amending bylaws for Council's consideration for the proposed off-street parking and loading regulations as well as other District of Saanich bylaws that may be impacted
- Exploring streamlined variance process guidelines for efficiency and clarity

### **Out of scope**

On-street parking requirements are out-of-scope for this current review. A review of on-street parking requirements may be pursued in a future project.

Current energized parking requirements and accessible parking requirements in Zoning Bylaw, 2003, are also out-of-scope for this comprehensive review.

## 6. PLANNING PROCESS & TIMELINE

The planning process to update and modernize the District of Saanich’s off-street parking and loading regulations are intended to be completed within a period of approximately 16 months over four phases. This timeline proposes a September 2025 start date to focus on other planning work priorities.

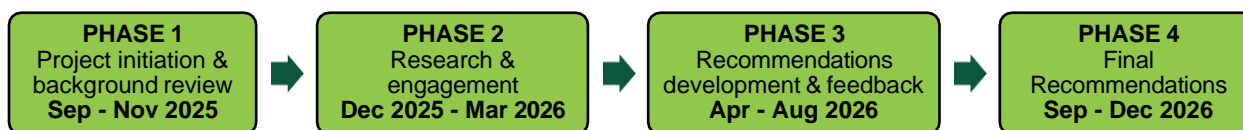


Figure 1: Timeline of planning phases.

Note, this timeline does not include the time needed for bylaw adoption. A detailed process of each project phase is outlined in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Planning phases, related activities, and deliverables.

Phase	Activities	Key Deliverables
<b>PHASE 1</b> Project initiation & background review (Sep – Nov 2025)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Kick off” project initiation with consultant team</li> <li>• Review relevant regulatory and policy documents</li> <li>• Develop Communications Plan and Engagement Strategy</li> <li>• Stakeholder engagement</li> <li>• Begin research and technical analysis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communications Plan and Engagement Strategy</li> <li>• Draft background technical report</li> </ul>
<b>PHASE 2</b> Research & engagement (Dec 2025 – Mar 2026)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gather data on the supply and demand for off-street parking and loading</li> <li>• Complete research and technical analysis</li> <li>• Conduct online survey to gather public and stakeholder input</li> <li>• Host staff and stakeholder engagement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final background technical report</li> <li>• Engagement summary</li> <li>• Communications materials</li> </ul>
<b>PHASE 3</b> Recommendations development & engagement (Apr – Aug 2026)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop draft recommendations for off-street parking and loading regulations</li> <li>• Organize and host stakeholder and public engagement to present recommendations and seek feedback</li> <li>• Conduct follow-up survey to seek input on draft recommendations</li> <li>• Present Council with draft recommendations and community feedback for information sharing and final direction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Off-street parking and loading regulation recommendations</li> </ul>
<b>PHASE 4</b> Finalize recommendations (Sep – Dec 2026)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporate public and stakeholder feedback into recommendations</li> <li>• Work with internal advisory groups and planning staff on review and revisions of updated recommendations</li> <li>• Finalize off-street parking and loading regulations bylaws</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final engagement summary</li> <li>• Updated Draft Bylaw Regulations</li> <li>• Staff report and presentation to Council</li> </ul>

## 7. CONSULTATION & ENGAGEMENT

A comprehensive engagement plan provides opportunities for members of the public and stakeholders to become actively involved in the planning process and gain an understanding of the current issues regarding off-street parking and loading.

Members of the public and stakeholders will be consulted and engaged with throughout the process to identify issues and opportunities, provide feedback, and test ideas and recommendations. A detailed list of both internal and external stakeholders is outlined in Appendix A and may be supplemented as required through the planning process. At a high-level, the stakeholder groups identified for this project include:

- Saanich Council and Committees
- Saanich internal departments
- Government and local organizations
- Educational institutions
- Non-profit developers and housing providers/agencies
- Building development industry and business
- Community-serving organizations
- Community members

The District of Saanich adheres to the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) spectrum of participation which identifies the level of community involvement in decision making. Table 3 below describes the level of public participation for each phase and the engagement tools to be used to engage with stakeholders and the public, ensuring opportunity to participate in the planning process. These strategies may be adapted or supplemented as the project evolves.

*Table 3: Level of public participation at each phase.*

Phase	Level of Participation	Engagement Tools	Primary Engagement Goal
<b>PHASE 1</b> Project initiation & background review ( <b>Sep - Nov 2025</b> )	Inform	Project web page, stakeholder meetings	To provide information that will keep stakeholders and the public up to date and raise awareness of the project. To engage with stakeholders.
<b>PHASE 2</b> Research & stakeholder engagement ( <b>Dec 2025 - Mar 2026</b> )	Inform Consult	Stakeholder meetings, survey	To obtain public and stakeholder feedback on issues and priorities and receive key input on potential future recommendations.
<b>PHASE 3</b> Options development & engagement ( <b>Apr - Aug 2026</b> )	Inform Consult Involve	Stakeholder meetings, survey, webinars, in-person engagement, Council meeting	To gather and incorporate feedback from engagement. To present recommendations to advisory groups, stakeholders, the public and Council, and incorporate feedback.
<b>PHASE 4</b> Finalize options & Council presentation ( <b>Sep - Dec 2026</b> )	Inform Consult	Council consideration	Work with advisory groups and planning staff on internal review and revisions of recommendations. To present the final proposed recommendations to Mayor and Council.



## **8. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

This Project will be managed and delivered by a Project Team made up of District staff and a consultant(s). The following is an outline of the roles and responsibilities of Project Team members:

### **District of Saanich Staff**

District staff from Planning and Engineering will manage the project to completion and will ensure that key deliverables are received on time and within budget. Saanich Staff will also oversee the work of the external consultant.

### **Consultant**

The consultant will manage and deliver the project in accordance with an approved workplan, timeline, and budget. They will work closely with the District of Saanich's Project Manager.

## 9. RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER INITIATIVES

Key provincial and Saanich plans, policies and initiatives will help guide development of the updates to off-street parking and loading regulations. Specific Bills, policies and actions are outlined in the table below.

Table 4: Related initiatives and their directions, strategies, and actions.

Related initiatives	Directions, strategies, initiatives, and actions
Recent Provincial Housing Bills & Housing Target Orders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Provincial Housing Supply Act gives the BC government the authority to make Housing Target Orders. The District of Saanich was one of the first ten municipalities to be given a housing target order in 2023. The five-year housing target for the District of Saanich is 4,610 net new completed housing units. As of the end of the first year of the targets, Saanich had seen only 338 units completed, below the first-year target of 440.</li> <li>Bill 44, which introduced province-wide requirements for small-scale, multi-unit housing (SSMUH), prohibits municipalities from requiring minimum parking spaces for SSMUH developments on lots greater than 280 sq. m. within 400 metres of frequent transit stops. The District has updated Zoning Bylaw, 2003, to reflect these requirements.</li> <li>Bill 47, which designated 52 transit-oriented areas (TOAs) across the province and introduced minimum allowable height and density limits within set radii of TOAs, also prohibits municipalities from requiring minimum residential parking spaces for developments within designated TOAs. The District has updated Zoning Bylaw, 2003, to reflect those requirements.</li> </ul>
District of Saanich Council Strategic Plan (2023-2027)	<p><b>3.3.1</b> Modernize our standards for vehicle parking, bicycle parking, and end of trip facilities.</p> <p><b>3.4.1</b> Evaluate and respond to the Housing Targets set out in the Provincial Order as part of the work to update the Official Community Plan and Centre, Corridor, and Village Plans.</p> <p><b>4.2.2</b> Support higher density, mixed use development that promotes active transportation in centres, villages, and along rapid and frequent transit corridors.</p>
Saanich Official Community Plan (OCP) (2024)	<p><b>7.3.3</b> Support development In Centres and Villages that:</p> <p>c. Support transit and other forms of sustainable transportation.</p> <p><b>8.3.2</b> Attract, support, and incentivize non-market housing development through the application of municipal tools such as:</p> <p>d. Reducing parking requirements.</p> <p><b>9.8.6</b> Update off-street vehicle/bicycle parking standards to limit the total amount of vehicle parking required and reflect current development practices while improving land use efficiency, including through:</p> <p>a. Reviewing off-street parking and loading area regulations in relation to Transportation Demand Management strategies; and</p> <p>b. Updating off-street parking and loading area standards in relation to the function of Primary Growth Areas as identified through detailed planning.</p>
Saanich Housing Strategy (2021)	<p><b>4.3 (A)</b> Undertake a comprehensive review of on-site parking requirements in the Zoning Bylaw in order to reduce barriers to development of affordable housing, rental housing, infill and multi-unit housing.</p> <p><b>2.1 (B)</b> Assessing ongoing amendments to regulations (i.e. parking requirements) to remove barriers to the construction of new units.</p> <p><b>2.2 (A)</b> Develop a range of incentives (such as reduction of parking requirements, bonus density, and/or financial incentives) for a diversity of housing types (such as townhouses and apartments).</p>
Climate Plan (2020)	<p><b>M2.2</b> Support increased residential density along public transit routes.</p> <p><b>M2.4</b> Investigate and consider updating off -street parking requirements to support a mode shift towards active transportation.</p> <p><b>M2.8</b> Develop policies and resources for parking management and enforcement.</p>
Active Transportation Plan (2024)	<p><b>1B</b> Encourage active transportation with safer streets</p> <p><b>2A</b> Ensure infrastructure is accessible for all users</p> <p><b>2B</b> Provide more bicycle parking and other end-of trip facilities</p> <p><b>2C</b> Ensure land use supports active transportation</p>
Road Safety Action Plan (2024)	<p><b>2.</b> Build multi-modal streets that include transit priority and infrastructure for walking, rolling, and cycling.</p> <p><b>12.</b> Reduce the density of driveway accesses on major and collector roads.</p> <p>1. Encourage increased transit ridership to reduce private vehicle use and VKT.</p> <p>1. Prioritize road safety in community plans and policy documents.</p>

## **10. BUDGET**

Funding for the Off-Street Parking and Loading Regulations Update comes from the District of Saanich's successful application to Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's (CMHC) Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF). Included in the project budget are costs for consulting services, and engagement activities. The budget also incorporates a contingency to enable additional research, analysis, and engagement as required.

## **11. DELIVERABLES**

The key deliverables for this project will include the following:

- Communications plan and engagement strategy
- Background report that includes technical analysis and best practices research
- An engagement summary
- Updated off-street-parking and loading regulations

## APPENDIX A: KEY STAKEHOLDER LIST

The following table provides a draft list of stakeholders. As the project expands and develops, the below list will be amended to reflect new stakeholders.

Key Stakeholders	
<b>Saanich Council and Committees</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mayor and Council</li> <li>• Transportation Advisory Committee</li> <li>• Economic Development Advisory Committee</li> <li>• Housing Affordability Standing Committee</li> </ul>
<b>Saanich Internal Departments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning Department</li> <li>• Engineering Department</li> <li>• Sustainability Division</li> <li>• Parks, Recreation and Community Services</li> <li>• Finance</li> <li>• Corporate Services</li> <li>• Legislative and Protective Services</li> <li>• Saanich Fire</li> <li>• Saanich Police Department</li> </ul>
<b>Government and Local Organizations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capital Regional District</li> <li>• Local municipalities</li> <li>• BC Transit</li> <li>• ICBC</li> <li>• Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure</li> <li>• BC Housing</li> <li>• Neighbouring First Nations Governments</li> </ul>
<b>Educational Institutions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School District 61 and 63</li> <li>• Private Schools</li> <li>• University of Victoria</li> <li>• Camosun College</li> </ul>
<b>Non-profit Developers and Housing Providers/Agencies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-profit housing providers (e.g., developers, operators, churches)</li> </ul>
<b>Building Development Industry and Business</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commercial landlords/Rental and strata property management</li> <li>• Construction and design industry</li> <li>• Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>• South Island Prosperity Partnership</li> <li>• Car-share companies</li> <li>• Market developers</li> <li>• Urban Development Institute</li> </ul>
<b>Community Members</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Associations</li> <li>• SCAN (Saanich Community Association Network)</li> <li>• General public and residents</li> </ul>