

Downtown Area Parking Plan

Engagement summary

January 2019



Background

As part of the City-wide Parking Management Strategy – which was endorsed by Council in January 2014 – the Downtown Parking Area Plan responds to issues such as parking supply, demand, and development impacts on neighbouring residential areas.

This report summarizes results of public engagement undergone in November 2018. The purpose of engagement was to receive feedback on some of the draft recommendations for improving downtown parking. These draft recommendations were developed in consideration of public input received from 3,248 people in 2017 and are supported by parking occupancy data, best practices and Council direction received in 2017.

Timeline



Method

Kelowna residents and businesses were invited to learn about and share feedback on some of the proposed recommendations for downtown parking. A public online survey was open for three-and-a-half weeks, from November 5 to 28, 2019. Engagement was promoted through two City news releases, three City in Action notices in The Daily Courier newspaper, and social media advertising. While public engagement in 2017 included both an online survey and an in-person open house, this secondary round of public engagement was offered solely in an online format.

Please note that results from open surveys such as this are a collection of opinions and perceptions of interested or potentially affected residents and do not represent a statistically significant, random sample of all Kelowna citizens. This report contains results from an open public survey; therefore, due to the opt-in and open method, results are qualitative in nature and cannot be said to represent views of all Kelowna citizens.

Platform

The City's online engagement platform, getinvolved.kelowna.ca, was the primary tool used for engagement. Whereas an in-person open house offers an opportunity for residents to ask questions, view information and graphs, and complete a hard-copy survey, within the Get Involved project platform participants could: asked questions; view a summary of the project, draft recommendations, and past consultation; as well as share feedback by completing an online survey.

Engagement objectives

The primary objectives of engagement were to:

- ▶ *Consult:* Obtain input, listen to and acknowledge feedback, and report on how public input has influenced decisions.
- ▶ *Inform* residents of the Downtown Area Parking Plan draft recommendations and process.

Participation rates

The public engagement process saw varying levels of participation, as shown in the accompanying graphic. Aware participants include those who visited the project page, whereas informed participants include those who downloaded a document, viewed a video or photo, or contributed their input. Engaged participants include those who asked a question or completed the survey.



Key takeaways

Based on a combination of comments and answers to survey questions, there remains a common desire among respondents to improve parking availability in the downtown area. Respondents recommended varying ideas as to how to increase parking supply, through either rates increases; public rental of private residential, commercial, and industrial parking; increased parking infrastructure; or improved/increased alternative transportation options such as transit, car sharing, and active transportation corridors.

Results indicate a contradicting perception that there is not enough parking downtown and that it at times takes too long to find parking, but also that parking rates are too high and there should be no time limits. This perception indicates an opportunity for the City to clarify how and why parking supply is managed through the use of restrictions such as rates and time limits.

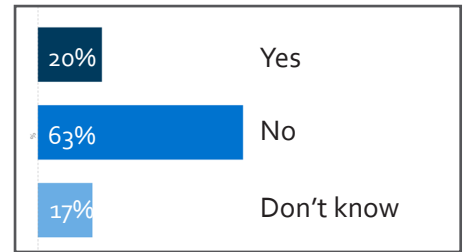
What we heard

Because the draft recommendations are informed by past public consultation, Council direction, parking data and best practices, the purpose of this recent survey was to help refine the recommendations rather than make significant changes or omissions. As such, most survey questions intentionally did not ask for overall support or non-support of recommendations.

Ultimately (I) would like to see a parking strategy that encourages more efficient use of land and more alternative transportation use. Also would prefer that the true cost of pricing/parking is reflected in parking fees. Often parking fees in the Okanagan are too low and do not reflect true costs of their use. – Survey respondent

Did you participate in the open house or survey in 2017?

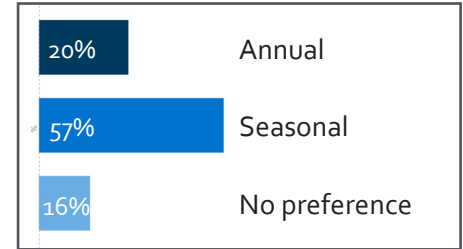
The majority (63 per cent) of respondents indicated that they did not participate in this project’s open house and survey in 2017. Those who indicated as such were directed to a separate survey page with a reminder of how the recommendations had been developed, as well as a reminder to review the summary of draft recommendations and past consultation.



Variable on-street parking rates: Annual or seasonal adjustments?

With variable parking rates, on-street rates would adjust up and down (for example, in 50-cent increments) depending on demand. For example, rates in popular locations would increase to help free up parking spaces, and rates in underused areas would decrease to encourage use.

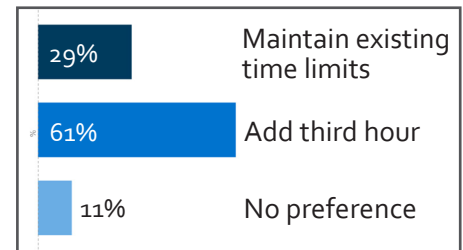
Based on this consideration, about 20 per cent of respondents support annual adjustments to on-street parking rates, while the majority support seasonal adjustments.



Variable rates should be monitored tightly in high-use street parking areas. Anything that can be done to encourage use of parkades rather than street parking should be encouraged. – Survey respondent

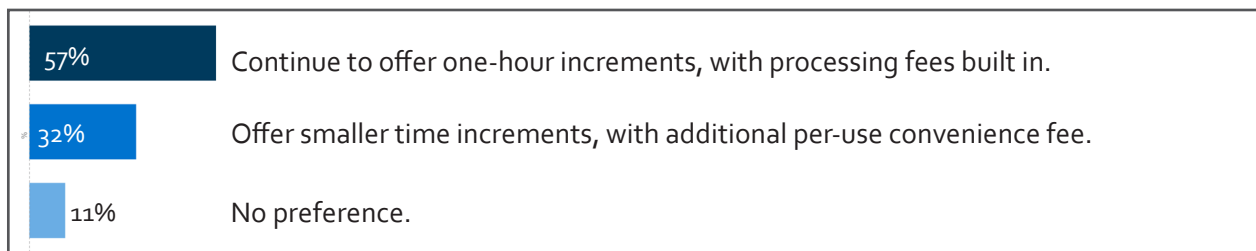
On-street parking length of stay

Participants learned that time limits and parking fees can improve parking availability in prime locations. While shorter time limits can increase parking turnover, longer time limits might decrease turnover but also offer flexibility to park longer when needed. The majority of respondents prefer to have the option to park on-street for a third hour, while one third of respondents prefer to maintain existing one- and two-hour on-street time limits.



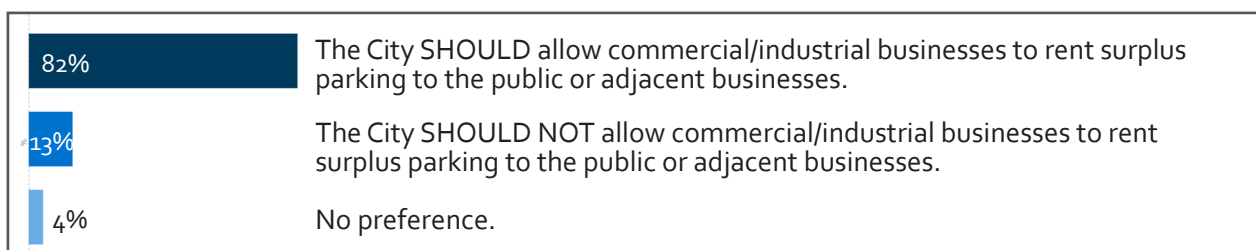
Mobile payment

Currently, parking fees paid via the mobile app are purchased in one-hour increments with no additional convenience (usage) fees. This minimum covers the cost of processing fees. The majority of respondents prefer that the mobile payment app continue to offer one-hour increments, with processing fees built in. About one third of respondents prefer that the mobile app instead offer smaller time increments with an additional per-use convenience fee.



Public use of excess parking on commercial and industrial properties.

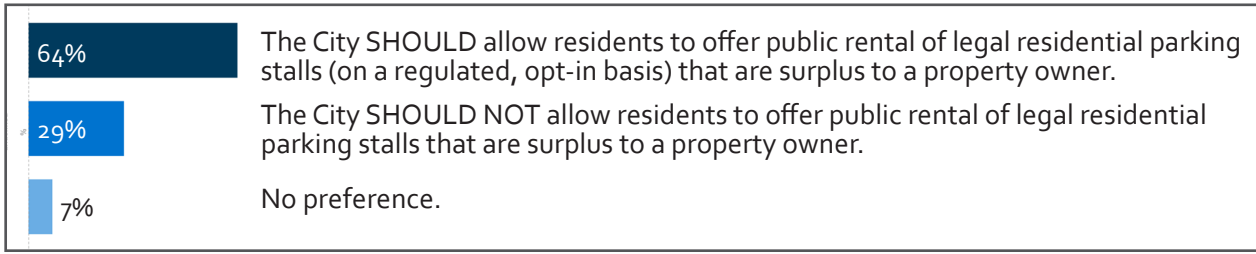
The majority of respondents indicated that the City should allow commercial and industrial businesses to rent surplus parking to the public or adjacent businesses, while 13 per cent oppose this option.



Public rental of excess parking in single-family and multi-family residential housing

The majority of respondents support the City allowing residents to offer public rental of legal residential parking stalls, that are surplus to a property owner, on a regulated, opt-in basis. Some open-ended comments noted concern for this option, suggesting that this system, if implemented, be properly regulated to minimize impacts on neighbours.

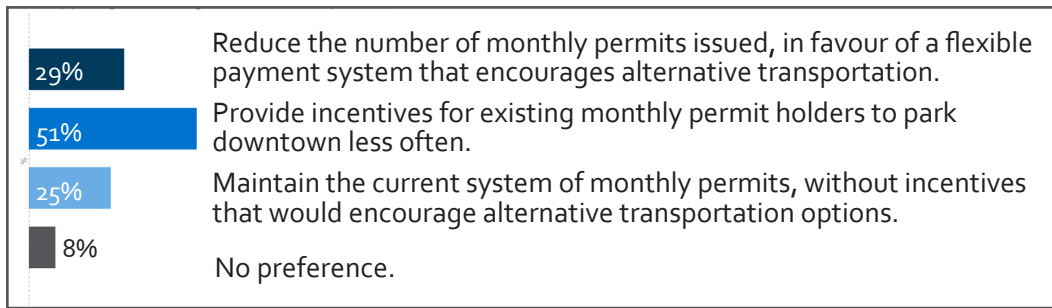
My concern is if we allow neighbours to rent out spots it's going to congest the streets even more, and getting parking in front of my house will be harder and harder. – Survey respondent



How the City should free up parking availability and encourage other forms of transportation

Alternatives to monthly parking would offer incentives to reduce use of monthly parking passes in City-owned facilities. An alternate model would offer flexibility to those who want to sometimes get downtown by other means, such as by carpooling or riding a bicycle, but feel obligated to drive because they've already paid for one month. Related open-ended comments suggest that Kelowna's alternative transportation systems need to be improved to become a viable option for those traveling downtown.

Existing monthly parking permits should be honoured...Offering incentives to those who have other options available is a good solution...If monthly parking permits are to be reduced, this should be done by way of attrition. – Survey respondent



I'm not sure if reducing the number of monthly permits is the answer, unless you replace it with another system for the part-time users...Winter parking is always a problem because I don't have a monthly pass. – Survey respondent

Comments

Common themes include alternative transportation, parking fees, and parking supply. The most common topic, improving alternative transportation, had a total of 40 comments, which indicated a desire to improve transit service, particularly in outlying areas. Seven respondents want improved or increased active transportation infrastructure.

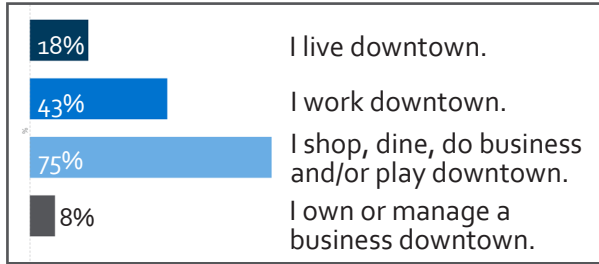
Next, 26 comments relate to parking fees. 14 respondents prefer either a decrease in parking fees or no fees at all, either all or some of the time. Comparatively, 11 people prefer that parking fees are either maintained or increased, with two people recommending that the City not offer free parking at all.

19 respondents would like to see an increase in parking supply, whether by adding new parking infrastructure or through alternative means, while two respondents oppose the City building new parking infrastructure. Seven comments received urged that accessibility be a priority in both parking infrastructure design and payment options (for example, placing payment machines in convenient locations and understanding that the mobile payment app is not necessarily accessible for all).

I would visit the downtown more often if there was more free parking. I'm okay with pay parking Monday to Friday from 8am-5pm. Once the parking is free on the street they fill up fast, and I really don't want to pay for the parkade. – Survey respondent

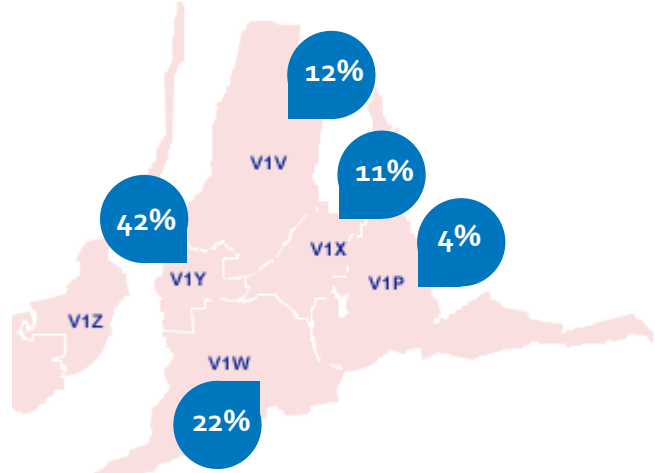
Who we heard from

Respondents' reason(s) for traveling downtown



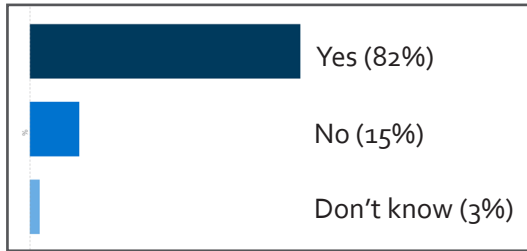
In total, 348 people completed the survey.

Survey respondents by postal code

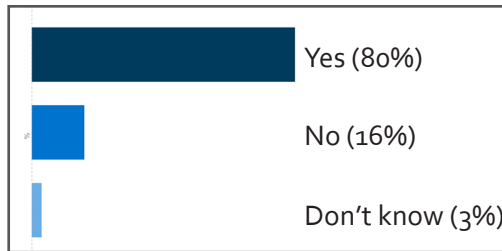


Feedback on the engagement process

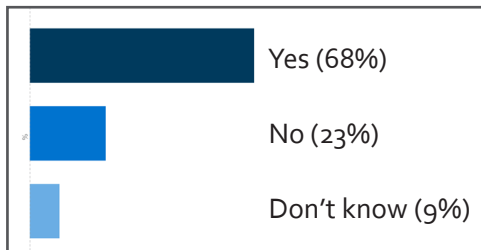
Was the information presented clear and understandable?



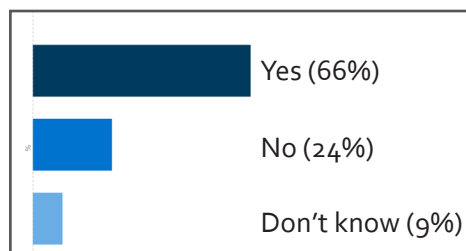
Did you learn something new about recommendations for parking downtown Kelowna?



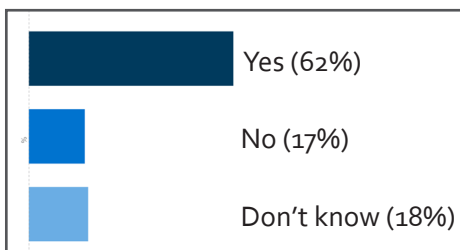
Did you understand how public input was used?



Did the material present enough information for you to provide an informed opinion on the nature of the Downtown Area Parking Plan?



Was participating a valuable experience for you?



Next steps

Next steps include Council consideration of the Downtown Area Parking Plan for endorsement. Should the Plan be endorsed, steps to implement the Plan will begin in 2019. The engagement results have helped staff refine the parking recommendations and finalize the Downtown Area Parking Plan. Results support all but one of the proposed recommendations that were open to public input, and results help to clarify how to proceed with some recommendations.