FINAL DRAFT

DOWNTOWN ACCESS, MOBILITY AND PARKING PLAN

Vancouver has experienced rapid growth over the past two decades, transforming its downtown in the process. That growth is expected to continue for the next 20 years, significantly changing the look, feel, and use of downtown once again. While the growth in people living and working downtown has made Vancouver a more vibrant and livable community, we recognize that the options for people to access and move around our city center must adapt to facilitate this growth. Central to this effort is a new approach to the City's management of its existing parking assets and our support for options for individuals seeking alternative modes of transportation beyond the use of a car.

The Downtown Access, Mobility, and Parking Plan (the "Plan") is a critical next step for the City of Vancouver to respond to these transformative changes and support mobility and access for the range of stakeholders who live, work, shop and recreate downtown. This Plan is an attempt to leverage not just the public facilities and properties owned by the City, but also the many underutilized private assets to create a modern, connected system for traveling to and within downtown that enhances ease of access and meets the ambitious climate and equity goals adopted by the Vancouver City Council.

This Plan was developed by City staff and Walker Consultants, nationally recognized experts in parking and mobility strategies, with significant input and contributions from the full range of downtown stakeholders. The engagement on this plan touched all aspects of downtown life by connecting with residents, business and property owners, employees, visitors and others committed to contributing to the future of downtown Vancouver. In addition to wide ranging community engagement, the project team performed an extensive inventory and assessment of the existing parking assets downtown.

The full list of actions in the Plan reflects an ambitious vision for serving the mobility and access needs of downtown stakeholders. The implementation of the Plan will require a commitment of public and private resources over the next five years as well as collaboration with community partners throughout downtown and the City. We look forward to working with you to realize the essential vision of the Plan.

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About this Plan

The purpose of this Plan is to set a vision for parking and mobility downtown through implementation of prioritized actions. This Plan is organized into three Pillars, or broad areas of focus that must be accomplished if the Plan is to be successful:

- Pillar 1: Adopt New Pricing Practices for Parking
- Pillar 2: Expand Public Parking Supply Through Shared Parking
- Pillar 3: Enhance Downtown Mobility Options

Within these three pillars are 16 specific actions – new policies, initiatives, or investments – designed to help the City achieve Plan goals. The Plan requires a five-year implementation period, which may be extended in some cases due to the complexity and scale of an Action and available resources.

Overview

The City of Vancouver's Parking Services Division embarked on the development of a five-year Downtown Access, Mobility and Parking Plan to position the City to better manage public parking assets, and create an environment that enhances mobility and parking options for residents, businesses, and visitors. This transformation is directed by City climate and transportation policies, which aim to reduce greenhouse gases and traffic congestion while meeting the needs of people and businesses. The larger vision of City policies goes beyond climate and transportation. The goal is to create a livable place designed for people with jobs, businesses, housing and activity for residents, employees, and visitors, all within a high-functioning, easy-to-traverse, 15-minute downtown.

One of the first steps in this process was to conduct a comprehensive assessment of Vancouver's downtown parking district, assets, and policies. Data trends and community perspectives were captured through the following efforts:

- Downtown stakeholder & community engagement
    - Online survey (2,500+ respondents)
    - Three distinct small group discussions (people with disabilities, tourism & hospitality stakeholders, and downtown businesses)
    - Presentations to public boards & commissions (Parking Advisory Committee, Transportation and Mobility Commission, Center City Redevelopment Authority, and City Council)
    - Engagement with the Downtown Stakeholders Forum & neighborhood associations.
- Parking supply and utilization data analysis
- Evaluation of parking payment technology and permit programs
- Assessment of existing access mobility networks and services
- Review of existing transportation and parking related policies

The following key findings emerged from this outreach and analysis, and informed and grounded the development of the Plan:

- Occupancy and utilization data does not support the oft-expressed assumption that downtown needs more parking.
- Event- and visitor-based surges in City parking demand are typical of most active downtowns where parks and meeting spaces have programmed events. Vancouver's parking occupancy numbers indicate that the parking supply is adequate even at peak use periods.
- The number of unoccupied spaces during most days and times suggests that existing parking could be better utilized or dispersed throughout the district.
- The low on-street occupancy rates suggest that the City could consider strategies that address diverse, curbside use for activities other than parking.
- The number of designated ADA spaces is low (24 on-street within the district).
- Low to moderate occupancy suggests that many off-street parking lots could be candidates for development projects and/or shared parking agreements with the City.
- New housing, commercial, and mixed-use projects may be especially feasible if parking requirements are reduced and shared parking in nearby off-site locations is accepted by the marketplace, consumers, investors, and financiers.
- The use of a single smartphone app and physical pay stations at the curb and in the Park 'n Go garage should serve the City well into the future.
- The public at large is unfamiliar with City policy on climate, transportation, and downtown and might be more receptive to non-car choices if fully informed of options and accessibility.

The full findings and analysis of from this assessment can be found in the Plan's Existing Conditions Report.

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Pillar 1: Adopt New Pricing Practices

Purpose

Adopt new demand-driven pricing strategies to create a user-friendly "park once" environment that benefits people who drive downtown, encourages people to walk between destinations without moving their car, and maximizes utilization of the on-street parking supply.

Benefits to People (metrics)

Increase

- Parking turnover, which creates more opportunities for people to access spaces near their destination.
- Use of the low-occupancy on-street parking supply in the downtown.
- Visits downtown by people who might traditionally face barriers, including those with disabilities and low-incomes, historically marginalized communities, families with children and seniors.
- Visibility and accessibility of information guiding people to parking places and destinations, including signs and internet tools.
- Simplicity of parking rates, time limits, and communication about parking that make parking choices easier for people.
- Options for people to "Park Once" and walk or use car-free transportation.
- Access for low wage employees and low-income households to affordable parking and mobility options.
- Infrastructure to better meet the mobility needs of residents, employees and visitors with disabilities.

Reduce

- Driving time needed to find a parking space.
- Parking congestion caused by cars circulating to find parking.

Actions

1. Enforce Paid Public Parking Seven Days a Week.

- On weekends, on-street parking turnover is infrequent in high demand areas of downtown, including the Waterfront, creating access challenges for customers and visitors in one of the city's busiest shopping and restaurant districts.

- By extending paid parking and enforcement to include Saturday and Sunday, the City will encourage increased turnover and create more opportunities for customers to find parking at their desired destination.
- The City will require and enforce paid parking from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. seven days a week. Rollout and communication with community members and stakeholders will include advance notice to ensure effective implementation.
- Hours and rates will be monitored and evaluated over time to keep pace with the market, changing customer behaviors, and demand from people visiting, working, and living downtown.

2. Simplify On-Street Parking Regulation

- The imbalance of on-street parking occupancy, with predictable "hot" and "cold" spots, suggests that the City should consider various strategies to redistribute parking throughout downtown. The range of different parking rates, durations and other restrictions creates challenges for visitors to find the parking that works best for their needs and budget.
- Streamlining the rate and duration options of regulated on-street parking spaces will simplify the rules for customers and achieve a better distribution of parking use.
- The City will prioritize short-term parking in high-activity, high-demand parking areas (High Demand Areas or HDAs) that are concentrated around large offices, retail and restaurant clusters, and Esther Short and Waterfront Parks. In HDAs, parking rates will be based on market and demand to achieve maximum turnover, and permit parking will be eliminated to focus on short term hourly parking.
- The City will provide longer parking durations in areas with historically low utilization (Low Demand Areas or LDAs). In LDAs, parking rates will be based on market and demand, which will be lower than in HDAs, and permit parking will be reduced or eliminated over time to encourage alternate transportation options. To allow for affordable long-term parking, a maximum daily rate may be implemented.
- The boundaries of HDAs and LDA and rates for each area will likely change over time based on the level of parking activity within each area.
- Advance notice of changes in parking rates and boundaries will be provided to the broader community and downtown stakeholders to ensure effective implementation.

3. Evaluate Tier-Based Progressive Pricing

- Tier-based pricing, where hourly rates escalate for longer duration parking, has the potential to give customers more flexibility and control over how long to park a car. To better understand the impacts of this tool and encourage further change in parking decisions, the City will evaluate the use of tier-based pricing as an option for High Demand Areas (HDAs) downtown.
- Progressive pricing encourages active turnover of parking spaces and provides more flexibility for customers who may have needs for parking within HDAs longer than two hours.
- Progressive pricing will only be implemented after in depth evaluation of the efficacy of the pricing changes for HDAs and LDAs described above to address any ongoing utilization dynamics.

4. Expand Dedicated Parking and Lower Rates for Qualified Low-Wage Hourly Employees

- The lack of adequate parking for downtown employees, and hourly-wage workers in particular, has been identified as an ongoing challenge with the current parking framework.
- To support the growth of downtown businesses who rely on hourly employees, the City will increase the parking options for low-wage employees by offering affordable hourly rates within LDAs.
- Under this proposal, qualified low wage employees who enroll in this program will be eligible to pay a discounted hourly rate at any on-street space in an LDA.
- The City will partner with downtown employers to increase awareness of this affordable parking option and provide additional information on alternative commute incentives that can be offered to existing employees and job seekers.
- By offering reduced parking rates in combination with incentives to encourage use of transit, bicycle, or other mode alternatives, this action can reduce overall commute costs for low-wage employees.

5. Improve Parking Options for Persons with Disabilities

- Downtown is still underserved in terms of the number of designated parking spaces for persons with disabilities and many of the existing designated parking spots do not meet the size and accessibility requirements for ADA spaces.
- The City will inventory and evaluate all existing designated spaces to assess whether they meet ADA size and accessibility requirements.
- The evaluation of existing dedicated spaces will identify deficiencies in the allocated space and curb infrastructure and establish a multi-year plan for addressing any deficiencies with a focus on leveraging private investment in downtown development projects to upgrade infrastructure.
- The City will look for immediate opportunities to add new ADA spaces at the curb and in public lots without a significant reduction in non-ADA designated spaces. New ADA spaces will be added where navigating to and from the vehicle is the most convenient and, where possible, at mid-block.
- As part of the City's work to upgrade payment technology for parking customers, payment options for persons with disabilities will be enhanced. These enhancements include "pay by phone" and "pay by (license) plate" options so people can pay and extend their visit without coming to the pay station or returning to their car to put a pay receipt on the dashboard.
- The City will also replace non-ADA compliant parking pay stations so all equipment is accessible.
- In addition to addressing the supply and accessibility of ADA spaces, the City will broaden communication about the availability of ADA parking and increase public awareness about ADA uses of public parking, including the rights of people with ADA placards to park in any legal parking space and load and unload in any loading zone designed for passenger loading such as at hotels and convention centers.
- All communication about accessible parking will be made in multiple languages and in collaboration with community partners to address the barriers that have historically restricted access to downtown for some communities.

6. Establish Buffer Zones Between Residential and Commercial Areas

- Rapid development and the expansion of commercial activity within downtown Vancouver has resulted in increased demands on on-street parking in adjacent residential neighborhoods. While the City has historically allowed limited free hourly parking in residential permit areas, the need for additional street parking requires a more intentional approach to enforcement in these "buffer" zones.
- The City plans to expand existing parking buffer zones, including the current Parking Buffer Zone 3A permit, and add new buffer zones where commercial and residential areas meet, such as areas around Uptown Village, to maintain access for people in residential neighborhoods that may be impacted by spillover from parking in adjacent commercial areas.
- The City will also evaluate all blocks that are only available for permit parking to determine if a switch to paid hourly parking or blended permit and hourly parking approach is better suited for the commercial and residential parking needs of the area.
- Within residential buffer zones, the City would switch to paid hourly parking in addition to permit parking by neighborhood residents.
- The City will monitor the size and management of buffer zones to best meet the needs of areas downtown where development is occurring or planned.

7. Evaluate and Update Existing On-Street Permit Options

- While the City's permit programs serve a need within downtown for regular parkers, including employees and carpoolers, the "all you can park for a fixed price" nature of these permits discourages use of alternative commute options. This parking need could be better served by hourly parking programs and use of underutilized private parking.
- Prior to implementing a reduction in on-street permits, the City will study and develop alternatives to unlimited general access permits.
- The City will also work with downtown employers to adopt and offer Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) programs to encourage employees to use transit, and other mobility and commute options.
- Employers will be encouraged to use private parking, whether on-site or owned by a third party, for employee carpools. This parking option could be used as a benefit for employees and enhance the utilization of existing private parking.

8. Enhance Technology Options for Parking Customers and Operators

- Currently, two-thirds of parking payments occur through the City's smartphone payment app, Parking Kitty, with the remaining one-third through pay stations and legacy coin meters. Outdated coin meters cause confusion for users and result in inefficient collections and data tracking.
- The City will continue to invest in technology, including digital payment options, user-friendly pay stations, license plate recognition, and other parking technologies to allow people to:

    - pay by cell phone;
    - extend parking sessions remotely; and
    - avoid displaying a pay receipt on the dashboard.
- New mobile app technologies could include ways to improve wayfinding and awareness of parking options.
- Technology enhancements will improve the ease of the customer experience, accuracy of parking data, document curb occupancy levels in real time, and increase efficiency of enforcement staff.
- The technology upgrades will occur over a 5-year period and be implemented after extensive public communications and to minimize disruption.

Pillar 2: Expand Public Parking Supply Through Shared Parking

Purpose

Expand parking supply available to the public through agreements with private parking owners to unlock underused parking for commuters, patrons and special events.

Benefits to People (metrics)

Increase

- Off-street parking options for downtown stakeholders.
- Occupancy at off-street parking locations to relieve parking demand in HDAs.
- Revenue opportunities for private lot owners with parking oversupply.
- Information available to downtown visitors seeking parking and mobility options.
- Land available for new housing and office development.

Reduce

- Time required for people to find parking.
- Congestion from excess driving to find available parking spaces.
- Need for new off-street public or private parking facilities.
- Cost of new development related to parking.

Actions

1. Pursue Agreements with Property Owners for Public Use of Private Parking

- Downtown Vancouver has 10,000 private parking spaces, most of which are underutilized due to single use agreements and other restrictions on public use. This supply of private parking offers an immediate opportunity to expand public parking without the addition of new public parking structures and lots.
- While many private parking owners have legitimate reasons for maintaining single use parking facilities, the lack of easy to implement solutions for managing public parking is likely preventing some parking owners from integrating other users into their facilities.
- The first step to unlocking private parking supply for public use is to engage with property owners downtown or in the immediate vicinity where satellite parking for commuters or attendees of events could be an option.
- The City will initially offer property owners third-party assessments to illustrate the opportunity to increase parking occupancy and maximize utilization through public use. This utilization analysis will identify the options and barriers to public parking on their facility. In addition, City staff will coordinate outreach to private parking owners with the implementation of the City's

planned tax on commercial parking operations and explore additional incentives related to the tax for participation in a shared parking arrangement.

- The City will also introduce a suite of parking management services and payment options to offer immediate solutions for parking owners to allow public use. Private owners may also be able to manage public use without the City's involvement including the use of third-party operators who provide parking management and payment services to other private parking owners.
- For private parking owners interested in partnering with City for public use, the parties will negotiate agreements that define the working relationship between the City and the private owners.
- The City will also support private parking facilities open to the public use through inclusion of these facilities in any physical or digital wayfinding.

2. Expand Parking Options for Public Events

- Visitors to downtown often experience challenges finding parking near public events, including the Vancouver Farmers Market and other events in Esther Short Park, the Historic Reserve, or the Waterfront. The lack of a coordinated plan that offers multiple off-street parking options and adequate information about those options for visitors is largely the cause of these challenges.
- The City will work with event organizers to evaluate challenges and pain points experienced by people attending events, and identify event-specific solutions and strategies to improve parking practices, reduce congestion to find parking, and encourage both off-site parking and car-free access to events.
- In addition to providing information about existing on-street and off-street public parking options, the City will identify private parking facilities that are willing to provide public parking on event days and facilitate partnerships between event organizers and private parking owners.
- Event organizers will also be asked to include additional signage and messaging about available parking, including multi-language signage to ensure optimal accessibility.

3. Develop a Dispersed Parking Plan for New Light Rail to Downtown

- Current plans for the Interstate Bridge Replacement (IBR) project include two light rail stations in downtown Vancouver that may require up to two new structured parking garages with potentially 1,200 new parking spaces. Given the existing inventory of 14,000 parking spaces in downtown and low utilization of that inventory, a dispersed parking plan using existing parking supply to serve light rail users is a better option for serving downtown without utilizing valuable downtown real estate for new parking supply.
- Structured parking facilities exist within walking distance of both proposed light rail stations that could serve as the foundation of a dispersed parking plan. In addition, the broader constellation of private parking facilities and lots could also be options for parkers seeking different pricing and duration options.
- As part of the work to bring more private parking into the public supply, the City will identify strategic private parking facilities in proximity to proposed light rail stations and, in collaboration

with Interstate Bridge Replacement (IBR) partners, negotiate agreements to allow hourly and permit parking for public users.

- New downtown wayfinding signage will prioritize providing information about the shared parking locations for light rail to ensure that transit users utilize the parking locations best suited to their needs and budgets.
- Because the proposed light rail stations will serve as mobility hubs (see Pillar 3 below) that provide connections to various transit and mobility options, the City will highlight information about these options to reduce demand for park and ride locations over time.

4. Eliminate Parking Minimums and Facilitate Shared Parking Between Developers and Owners of Private Parking

- Required minimum parking ratios for new development encourage the construction of new parking even when existing parking may be available to serve that need. Parking minimums add unnecessary new parking supply downtown, reduce the amount of land available for new housing and office space, and increase the cost of development.
- This plan recommends eliminating minimum parking requirements for residential and commercial uses as part of the new Comprehensive Plan to be adopted by the City in 2025 to allow developers the flexibility to provide parking based on analysis of the market demand and costs of development.
- To assist developers who may want to minimize the amount of new parking in a project, the City will provide information to developers about nearby underutilized private parking and, if necessary, facilitate agreements with owners of existing private parking to serve new development.
- City involvement in negotiating shared parking agreements may assist developers in negotiating with lender and investors who may not be experienced underwriting development deals with off-site parking.
- To the extent that some form of parking minimums is maintained in the new Comprehensive Plan, the code should reduce the requirements for shared and offsite parking arrangements to meet the minimum ratios.

5. Improve Wayfinding and Navigation Systems

- Existing wayfinding downtown is limited and outdated. The lack of a modern wayfinding system is contributing to congestion and a perception of a lack of parking and mobility options.
- The City will develop and install a new wayfinding system that provides real time information on the availability of parking and the location of all mobility options, in addition to directions to downtown destinations and attractions.
- To ensure a new wayfinding system incorporates all current and future mobility options, the first phase of implementation will evaluate and recommend the scope and implementation timing of a new system. The evaluation phase will include a review of best-practice wayfinding signage and digital tools that handle both typical parking demand and peak demand such as special events. The build out of the new system will occur only after a proposed system is studied and fully designed.

- The phased implementation of new wayfinding will allow for alignment of the system around projected downtown growth and development, activation of private parking assets for public use, and the rollout of new transit and mobility options.

Pillar 3: Enhance Downtown Mobility Options

Purpose

Actively support and invest in existing and new options for people to adopt car-free behaviors to get to and around downtown and reduce barriers for people transitioning to car-free mobility.

Benefits for People (metrics)

Increase

- Options for reliable car-free movement to and around downtown.
- Amenities and services available for pedestrians, cycling, and other alternative transportation modes.
- Increase connectivity between transportation options.
- Use of curb space for enhancing access and mobility downtown.

Reduce

- Demand for car trips between downtown destinations.
- Obstacles to safe biking and walking downtown.
- Gaps in City-designated bike and pedestrian paths.

Actions

1. Invest in Alternative Transportation Initiatives

- The lack of reliable alternative transportation and mobility options undermines efforts to encourage people to reduce car use to and within downtown.
- The ongoing expansion of C-TRAN Vine service is critical to increasing transit ridership, particularly for people who are traveling to downtown. However, the lack of mobility options for moving within downtown limits the impact of public transit in reducing car use.
- The City will develop an investment strategy for deploying parking funds to establish or grow services that enhance the capacity of existing downtown parking supply by reducing the demand for parking.
- The City has identified the first investment opportunity under this approach: a circulator (shuttle) for short trips between key destinations and employers downtown to allow visitors, residents, and employees to move within the district without reliance a car. This service would allow people to use public transit to travel to downtown or park on the edge of downtown and have a reliable mobility option during their visit.
- By developing an alternative transportation investment strategy, the City will identify and evaluate a range of initiatives, in addition to the circulator, with the potential to support reliable

car-free mobility downtown for residents, visitors and employees. As described below, the strategy will focus on initiatives that have the potential to improve conditions for bicycles, pedestrians and alternatives for commuters and delivery vehicles.

Bicycles

- The City can help address logistics and security issues cyclists face when doing daily errands by investing in a coordinated network of bike racks, lockers, and corrals.
- The training, repair, supplies, and services of organizations such Bike Clark County could be augmented to expand their reach, especially to new users.
- The strategy should revisit the feasibility of a bike share or rental program serving downtown and adjacent neighborhoods.
- These actions should complement existing requirements in City development regulations for bike facilities in new developments.

Pedestrians

- The infrastructure for pedestrians can be enhanced through improved signage that provides walking time and distance, information on downtown business offerings, and seating in more locations, including some covered benches for inclement weather.

Commuters and Delivery Services

- The strategy will consider ways to enhance support for commute trip reduction (CTR) programs offered by downtown employers to encourage people to use transit and other non-car modes.
- The City will initiate conversations with private companies offering freight delivery by bicycle to explore the applicability of this model for downtown Vancouver. These companies use satellite warehouses for large freight deliveries which are broken up for smaller “last mile” deliveries by e-bikes to reduce truck traffic and loading zone activity downtown.

- A critical consideration in identifying initiatives suitable for City investment will be the presence of partners capable of launching and managing such initiatives, building effective alliances and support among downtown business and community stakeholders, and developing sustainable funding models.

2. Use Downtown Curb Space to Promote Mobility

- The on-street curb space downtown is a valuable public asset that should be utilized to intentionally promote the goals of this Plan. The City will establish a framework for how to prioritize competing uses of the curb and begin a transition of some dedicated on-street parking to support the use of alternate mobility options.
- The framework will be developed in consultation with downtown and community stakeholders, as well as City transportation and planning officials. Repurposing of existing on-street parking will be targeted to underutilized blocks and high foot traffic areas.

- The framework will aim to meet desired access and mobility goals by incorporating and prioritizing a range of existing and new curb uses such as:

  - Loading zones for local businesses and buildings;
  - Access points for alternative mobility options (e.g., bike corrals, circulator stops, bike rental hubs);
  - Temporary restaurant seating areas that attract new visitors and enhance the pedestrian environment;
  - Benches where people (pedestrians, bicyclists and transit riders) can rest, repack purchases items or gear, and visit as they move around downtown; and
  - Mobility lanes that increase safety for people on bikes, scooters, skateboards, and skates.

  In order to maximize the use of limited curb space, the framework will encourage solutions that combine complementary uses, such as space for loading in morning hours and drop off or short-term parking in the afternoon and evenings.

- One priority of the framework will be to identify existing gaps in downtown bike routes (as designated in the City's Transportation System Plan) that could be addressed by repurposing parking spaces. The repurposing of existing parking would occur after evaluation of existing utilization of the parking spaces and the availability of alternative parking nearby.

3. Develop a Mobility Hub Network Plan

- Movement between alternative transportation options is hindered by a lack of coordination to facilitate transfers between different modes. Co-location of mobility options would increase use of non-car options to get to and around downtown.
- In collaboration with transportation and mobility partners, including C-TRAN, the City will develop a plan to establish a network of mobility hubs to enhance transit and alternative transportation connections throughout downtown.
- Mobility hubs can be as simple as co-location of two or more mode options or comprehensive transit-oriented development hubs.
- Existing public transit hubs (e.g., Turtle Place) will serve as the foundation for a mobility hub network. The City will seek to enhance existing hubs through improvements to bike parking and potential co-location of new mobility options such as stops for the proposed circulator, bike rental stations, and pedestrian amenities.
- New mobility hubs will be identified in the plan based on existing downtown traffic and pedestrian patterns and potential satellite parking locations that may serve as transition points to other transportation modes.