

Minimum Parking Rates – Draft 2 Update

Parking rates in Ottawa have evolved over time since approval in 2008 of the current Zoning By-law 2008-250. At the time it was approved, Zoning By-law 2008-250 included reduced parking rates for many land uses.

In the years since its approval, various amendments have been made to ease parking space rates to support housing construction, small businesses and economic development. In 2016 a [review of parking rates](#) was completed, and parking space rates were further reduced or eliminated for residential and non-residential uses in areas throughout the city. Those amendments have been in effect for **nine years**.

To support discussion about minimum parking rates in Draft 2 of the new Zoning By-law, this document includes the following information:

- A map showing where parking is currently not required or rates are reduced under the current Zoning By-law 2008-250,
- A map showing where provincial legislation prohibits municipalities from requiring parking,
- A review of development applications from 2016-2024 concerning the number of parking spaces provided,
- A review of parking rates in other Canadian municipalities and feedback from Canadian municipalities that have eliminated or reduced minimum parking rates.

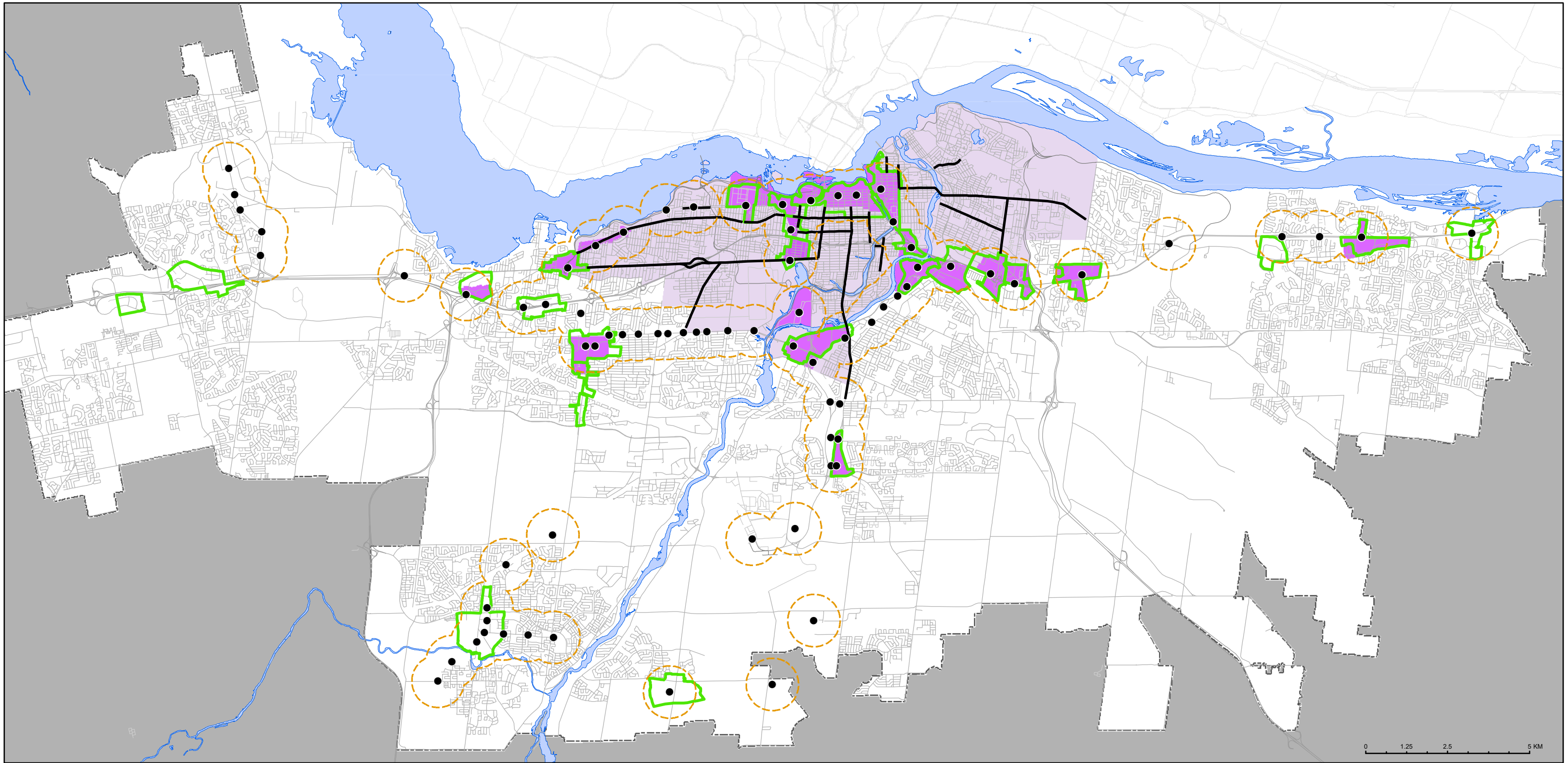
Where parking is currently not required or rates are reduced under the current Zoning By-law 2008-250

In the current Zoning By-law, parking is not required or parking rates have been reduced in various areas of the city:

In Area X, no parking is required for the first 12 units in a residential or mixed-use building. No parking is required for the first 200 square metres of floor area on the first floor of a building for non-residential uses.

In Area Y, no parking is required for residential uses in buildings that are four storeys or less. No parking is required for the first 12 units in buildings five storeys or higher. No parking is required for most non-residential uses having a floor area of 500 square metres or less.

In Area Z, no parking is required for any land use.



Areas where minimum parking cannot be required

- Higher-order transit station or stop
- 800m buffer (maximum extent of future Major Transit Station Area where minimum parking cannot be required)
- Existing Protected Major Transit Station Areas (PMTSA)

Areas where parking is currently not required or rates are reduced under the Zoning By-law 2008-250

- Area X - No parking is required for the first 12 units in a residential or mixed-use building. No parking is required for the first 200 square metres of floor area on the first floor of a building for non-residential uses.
- Area Y - No parking is required for residential uses in buildings that are four storeys or less. No parking is required for the first 12 units in buildings five storeys or higher. No parking is required for most residential uses having a floor area of 500 square metres or less.
- Area Z - No parking is required for any land use.

Recent legislative changes prohibiting minimum parking rates

Bill 185, the Cutting Red Tape to Build More Homes Act, 2024, received Royal Assent on June 6, 2024. Bill 185 mandated that municipalities cannot require parking in Protected Major Transit Station Areas (PMTSAs) and other areas within 500 metres to 800 metres of an existing or planned higher order transit station or stop. The provincial legislation supersedes the parking requirements in the current Zoning By-law 2008-250. The map below illustrates the location of PMTSAs and areas within 800 metres of higher order transit stations or stops where parking cannot be required under provincial legislation.

Review of development applications for parking implications

In December of 2024, staff analyzed data for minor variance, zoning by-law amendment and site plan control applications from 2016 to August 2024. In this time period, there were 87 minor variance applications and 152 zoning by-law amendment applications seeking to reduce the number of on-site parking spaces provided.

Staff further analyzed site plan control applications to assess the amount of parking provided in new low-rise residential development in the central part of the city, where the 2016 review impacted the minimum space requirements. The following is noted about the amount of parking provided for low-rise residential development subject to site plan control:

- 24 per cent provided parking even though none was required (31 proposals),
- 57 per cent were not required to and did not provide parking (72 proposals),
- 19 per cent were required to provide parking but did not as a result of submitting a minor variance or zoning by-law amendment application (24 proposals).

The numbers above do not include the proposals that did not submit a *Planning Act* application and obtained only a building permit. Accordingly, these numbers may be higher if building permit data were included. However, this data offers a small but important glimpse of development shifts within the Central Area of Ottawa and illustrates the fact that removing minimums does not equate to no parking being provided.

Parking rates and feedback on the outcome of eliminating minimum parking rates other Canadian municipalities

Several Canadian cities have eliminated minimum parking rates for all uses citywide. Even more cities have reduced the parking rates for various uses in specific locations.

Further details on the cities that have eliminated parking rates entirely or partially is detailed in the tables below.

In late 2024 and early 2025, staff communicated with planners from Toronto, Edmonton and Calgary to discuss the impacts of their respective removals of minimum parking requirements. Findings of those communications are summarized below.

Edmonton

In 2020, the City of Edmonton approved an Open Option Parking approach across the city which removed minimum parking rates from the Zoning By-law. Based on discussions with staff in Edmonton in the fall of 2024, major parking challenges have not been reported as a result of removal of parking minimums.

The Open Option Approach allows developers, landowners, and businesses to determine how much on-site parking they provide based on their particular operations, activities, or lifestyle. This approach meant treating parking spaces as marketed goods, rather than a regulated amenity, where parking spaces can be shared among users and be regulated by those who provide them.

Calgary

Also in 2020, the City of Calgary approved amendments to the Land Use By-law to eliminate minimum parking rates for non-residential uses, so property owners and businesses may choose how much parking to provide. Minimum parking rates for residential uses continue to apply.

In speaking with staff at the City of Calgary, it is understood that there have been minimal issues as a result of eliminating minimum parking rates for non-residential uses. The City of Calgary is currently working on a new Zoning By-law, scheduled to be approved in 2026, which could result in further changes to the parking rates.

Vancouver

In June of 2024, the City of Vancouver approved amendments to their Parking By-law removing minimum parking space rates citywide for all land uses. The City of Vancouver had previously eliminated minimums in certain areas only (for example, in the Downtown) prior to eliminating them completely. While on-street parking issues have not yet been identified, Vancouver staff will explore the expansion of existing on-street parking permit programs to mitigate potential on-street parking shortages.

Toronto

In 2021, the City of Toronto adopted amendments to Zoning By-law 569-2013 for the citywide removal of minimum parking rates for all uses, excepting minimum visitor

parking and loading regulations, and established new maximum parking standards for new developments.

Staff communicated with staff at the City of Toronto in the fall of 2024 and winter of 2025 to discuss the impacts of the citywide removal of parking minimums. Toronto planning staff could not confirm a significant increase in complaints since removal of parking minimums.

A recent City of Toronto staff report provided an update on the parking monitoring program. This report captures the evolution of parking in new developments from 2016-2024. Since the removal of parking minimums, less than ten applications have proposed more than the permitted maximums in the Zoning By-law.

Toronto is working to develop requirements that would ensure developers note to potential purchasers or renters of residential units how much visitor parking the development has and where the nearest public parking is available. Toronto is also currently in the process of creating a city-wide parking strategy to manage motor vehicle public parking, both on-street and in parking lots.

Complete Elimination of Parking Minimums in Canadian Cities

City	Use
Edmonton, Alberta	All uses
High River, Alberta	All uses
Toronto, Ontario	All uses; visitor, loading and barrier free still subject to minimums
Bromont, Quebec	All uses
Lunenburg, Nova Scotia	All uses
St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador	All uses
Vancouver, British Columbia	All uses

Elimination of Parking Minimums in Canadian Cities in Specific Areas

City	Use	Location
Yellowknife, NWT	Commercial and residential	Downtown and Old Town areas
Penticton, British Columbia	Commercial	C5 and C6 zones
Calgary, Alberta	Commercial and Institutional	Citywide
Regina, Saskatchewan	All uses	Downtown Direct Control District
Dryden, Ontario	Commercial	Downtown Commercial (CD) Zone

City	Use	Location
Thunder Bay, Ontario	All uses	Rural Areas, Rural Settlements, Institutional and Community Areas, Natural Heritage Areas, and Future Development Areas Pedestrian Commercial Areas Urban Neighbourhoods and Commuter Commercial Areas
Elliot Lake, Ontario	Commercial and industrial	C1 Central Commercial Zone
Timmins, Ontario	All uses	EA -CG Zone in a downtown area
London, Ontario	All uses	Downtown district, Transit Village, Rapid Transit Corridors, and around the Main Street area Urban Corridor, Shopping Area, Neighbourhoods, Future Community Growth, Heavy Industrial, Light Industrial, Commercial Industrial, Future Industrial Growth, Commercial Industrial, Institutional, Green Space, Environmental Review, Farmland, Rural Neighbourhood, Waste Management Resource Recovery Area
Kitchener, Ontario	All uses	Urban Growth Center zones
Penetanguishene, Ontario	Commercial	Mixed Use Commercial Zone, Downtown and Waterfront Zone
Oakville, Ontario	Commercial	Downtown Oakville [Mixed Use Zone on Map 19(8a)]
Oshawa, Ontario	Residential	Specific areas - see 39.10 Exception
Ottawa, Ontario	All uses	Near Major LRT Stations (Area Z), Inner Urban Area (Area X)
Kingston, Ontario	Commercial; Residential uses reduced	Citywide
Laval, Quebec	Commercial and industrial	Citywide
Montreal, Quebec	Residential	Ville Marie
	All uses	Le Sud-Ouest
Sherbrooke, Quebec	All uses	Downtown
Moncton, New Brunswick	All uses	Area 1 according to Schedule C - Parking Area Map
Halifax, Nova Scotia	All uses	Downtown Dartmouth (DD), Downtown Halifax (DH), Centre 2 (CEN-2), Centre 1 (CEN-1), Comprehensive Development District 2 (CDD-2), Comprehensive Development District 1 (CDD-1)