

Parking in Airdrie:

Today's challenges,
tomorrow's solutions.



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Executive summary

The City of Airdrie completed a detailed parking study in 2024-25 to help guide decisions on downtown revitalization, housing, and economic development. As Alberta's fastest-growing city, Airdrie faces pressure to manage parking while supporting ongoing growth.

This study goes beyond past work by including stakeholder input, comparisons with similar cities and projections through 2030. It looks at downtown parking conditions and city-wide policy, offering data and recommendations to support Airdrie's long-term goals.

Findings show a mixed picture. Some downtown areas are congested at peak times while others are underused. Additionally, peak demand currently uses less than half of the available parking downtown, meaning there is room to grow. Still, high-demand areas need targeted solutions to make sure businesses and customers can access parking when and where it's needed.

The study recommends adjusting parking ratios, implementing multi-modal transportation infrastructure, and updating policies to better support both development and transportation needs. These actions align with Airdrie's Housing Accelerator Fund goals and offer a clear path to smarter and more flexible parking system.

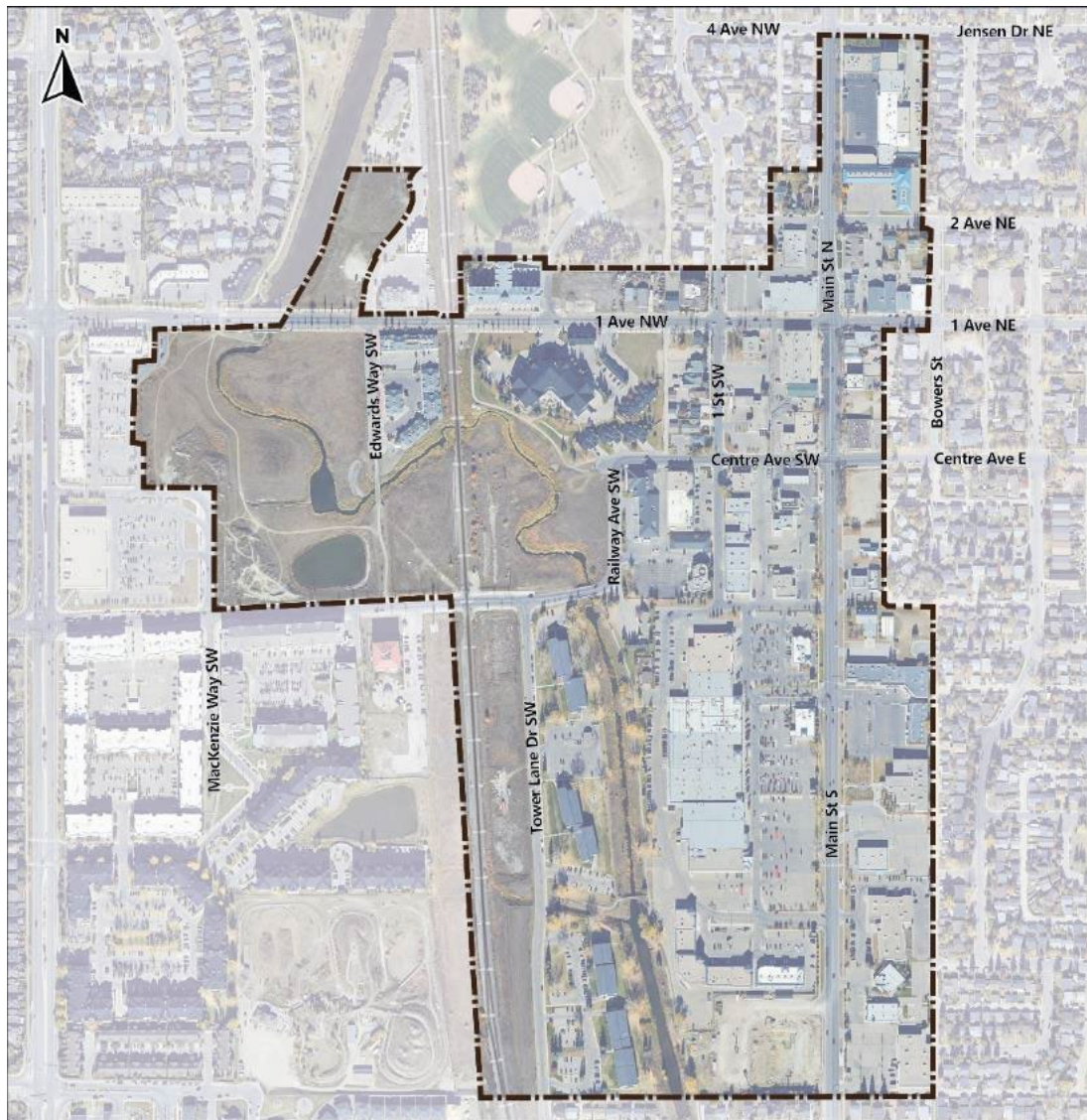
Background and purpose of the study

The City of Airdrie launched this parking study to support infrastructure planning and policy updates as the city continues to grow. As one of Canada's fastest-growing communities, Airdrie must balance parking needs with development goals, economic growth and residents' quality of life.

Building on earlier work, this expanded study uses updated methods and a broader scope to tackle current planning issues. It aligns with major municipal priorities, including the successful Housing Accelerator Fund application, which secured \$24.8 million in federal funding tied to reducing regulatory barriers for housing.

The study includes both a deep dive into downtown parking and a city-wide policy review. In the downtown core, it looks at parking supply, usage, turnover and occupancy within the proposed Community Revitalization Levy area. This data helps pinpoint where parking is lacking or underused, allowing for focused solutions that support local businesses and improve access.

FIGURE 1: Downtown parking study area



City-wide, the study compares Airdrie's parking standards with those of six peer municipalities, Cochrane, Leduc, Okotoks, St. Albert, Ajax and Maple Ridge. It evaluates both downtown and non-downtown requirements to provide a full picture of how Airdrie's policies stack up.

The research addresses several key questions: Do current City parking policies need to be updated based on current travel patterns and emerging trends? Do the current parking standards hinder affordable housing development? Should municipal parking facilities be constructed in the Downtown and where? What policies best support the City's development and transportation goals? These questions reflect how parking is tied to broader planning and livability objectives.

While Airdrie remains car-dependent, shifting work habits, transportation choices and sustainability priorities mean parking policies must evolve. This study offers a path to modern, adaptable strategies that meet today's needs while preparing for the future.

Methodology and data collection

The parking study used a detailed approach combining data analysis with input from people who use the system every day. This ensured recommendations are based on both facts and local experience.

Downtown fieldwork formed the backbone of the analysis. WSP surveyed parking inventory on November 14, 2024 and measured demand over three days in November and December. Surveys ran from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. on a Tuesday and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. on a Thursday, with data collected hourly. Survey times coincide with the timings for court proceedings which are held on those two days.

The inventory recorded all surface and on-street parking in the study area, excluding private garages and underground parkades that were not accessible. In total, there were 2,848 off-street and 382 on-street spaces, forming the base for further analysis.

Demand surveys tracked occupancy and turnover, helping identify how well parking serves different users. Turnover data, in particular, gave insight into usage patterns and informed recommendations. The study used 85 per cent occupancy as the theoretical capacity of a parking lot or an on-street parking zone, in line with industry norms. At this occupancy level, the parking lot/zone can be considered to be effectively full, with the remaining 15 per cent parking being challenging for vehicles to access.

Stakeholder engagement was stronger than in past studies. WSP held virtual meetings with 19 key downtown stakeholders, including business owners, property owners and property managers, to gather feedback on local parking challenges.

Wider public input was collected through the Involve Airdrie website. Residents completed an online survey and used an interactive map to flag parking issues and ideas for both vehicles and bicycles. This approach captured broad community views and location-specific concerns.

The study also reviewed Airdrie's Land Use Bylaw B-01/2016, focusing on parking stall dimensions and minimum requirements. It compared Airdrie's requirements with other municipalities across categories like vehicle parking, barrier-free access, bike infrastructure, electric vehicle readiness and micromobility needs.

A comparative review of similar cities provided benchmarks for evaluating Airdrie's policies. This work also reflected current trends in transportation planning, including a shift toward sustainable travel and reduced reliance on cars, while recognizing Airdrie's existing travel habits and infrastructure.

Current downtown parking conditions

The downtown parking analysis shows a varied picture of supply, demand and use, depending on location, time and user type. The study area covers the traditional Main Street commercial core and nearby blocks that form the heart of Airdrie's economic and social activity.

There are 3,230 total spaces downtown: 2,848 off-street and 382 on-street. Of the off-street total, 378 are for private residential use, leaving 2,470 publicly accessible off-street spots. The study excluded Lions Club parking, bringing the total available public supply to 2,839 spaces. *(See Appendix A: Downtown parking inventory)*

Downtown Airdrie has no public municipal lots or parkades. All parking is either on-street or privately owned, limiting the City's ability to manage or adjust supply as demand shifts.

Parking usage peaks on Tuesday between 10 to 11 a.m. at 49.24 per cent of the total capacity, while the Thursday peak occurs between 1 to 2 p.m. at 48.75 per cent. Even during these busy periods, less than

half of all spaces are occupied. However, demand is uneven. While many areas remain underused, three hotspot locations can be identified:

- Westside Professional Centre parking lots and the adjacent on-street parking zones on 2 Avenue
- Parking lots for businesses along Main Street between 1 Avenue and Centre Avenue along with nearby on-street parking zones along Main Street, 1 Avenue, and Centre Avenue
- Parking lots for businesses along 1 Street between 1 Avenue and Centre Avenue along with nearby on-street parking zones along Main Street, 1 Avenue, and Centre Avenue

The Westside Professional Centre and nearby 2 Avenue on-street parking see heavy usage, driven by demand from professional offices. Main Street between 1 Avenue and Centre Avenue also faces strong weekday demand due to retail and services. The stretch of 1 Street between 1 Avenue and Centre Avenue follows similar patterns, with steady business-hour usage. *(See Appendix B: Downtown parking useage)*

Although these areas are busy, the overall supply is still sufficient. The study suggests demand likely doesn't peak at all locations at the same time. With better management and clearer user information, demand could be spread more evenly across available supply.

Turnover data shows time-restricted on-street spaces generally serve multiple users through peak hours. Still, some spots are being used by employees or long-term parkers, especially in areas where enforcement is weak. Only eight time-restricted zones recorded no violations during the study. A few had repeated issues, though most violations were minor overages rather than deliberate misuse. *(See Appendix C: Downtown parking turnover summary)*

Parking standards review

(See Appendix D: Peer municipal comparisons)

The review of Airdrie's Land Use Bylaw parking standards highlights both strengths and areas for improvement in meeting the city's development goals. The analysis looked at stall dimensions, minimum parking requirements and emerging needs such as electric vehicle infrastructure and affordable housing.

Stall dimensions in Airdrie are consistent with peer municipalities and exceed the Transportation Association of Canada (TAC) passenger car dimensions. Current length and width requirements provide enough space for safe vehicle use and no changes are recommended.

The study focused on parking minimums for key land use districts, including Neighbourhood Mixed Use (M1), Community Mixed Use (M2), Downtown Core Mixed Use (M3) and various residential zones. It also included select downtown uses based on staff input. It is to be noted that a 25 per cent reduction applies to parking minimums in the M3 District to reflect the area's unique transportation context.

Findings show that Airdrie's parking minimums for most land uses are within the range of requirements for comparable cities, while for some they are higher or lower than the range. Requirements for 'Restaurants,' 'Government Services' and 'Other Educational and Institutional Uses' are especially high and may discourage development in both downtown and broader areas. As such, based on the jurisdictional scans, the following land uses were determined to have requirements in the City's Land Use Bylaw that fall outside the range of requirements for peer municipalities.

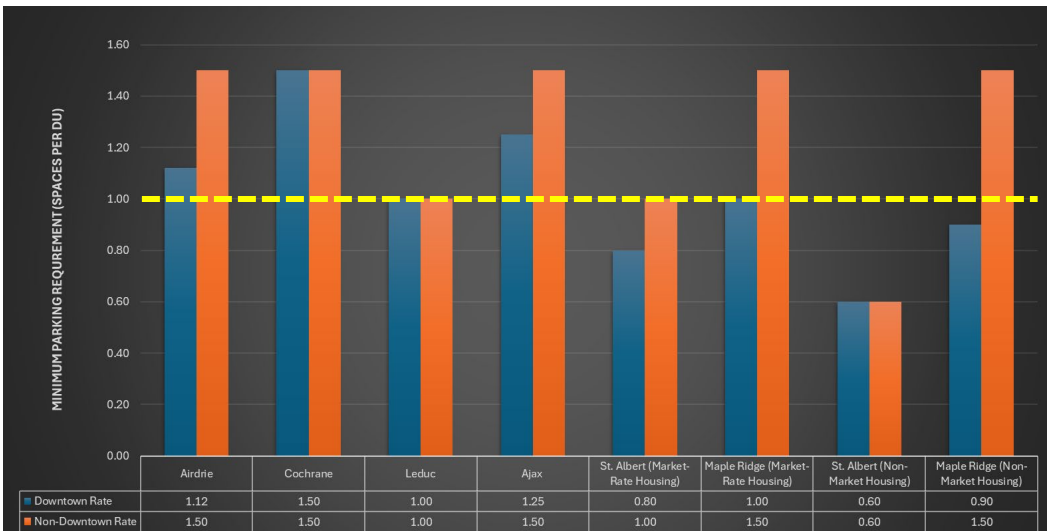
TABLE 1: Comparisons with peer municipalities

Land Use	Peer comparison downtown parking requirements	Peer comparison non-downtown parking requirements
Mixed Use Development, General (Taking the form of an apartment building)	Higher than the upper limit of range by 0.31 stalls per DU (including visitor parking) [31% higher]	No comparison was possible
Shopping Centre	Higher than the upper limit of range by 0.25 stalls per 100 sq.m of GFA [7% higher]	Within Range
Business Support Service	No comparison was possible	Lower than the lower limit of range by 0.3 stalls per 100 sq.m of GFA [12% lower]
Restaurants	Higher than upper limit of range by 3.0 stalls per 100 sq.m of GFA [50% higher]	Higher than upper limit of range by 2.0 stalls per 100 sq.m of GFA [20% higher]
Indoor Recreation, Limited	No comparison was possible	Lower than the lower limit of range by 0.3 stalls per 100 sq.m of GFA [9% lower]
Government Services	Higher than upper limit of range by 0.89 stalls per 100 sq.m of GFA [31% higher]	Higher than upper limit of range by 1.43 stalls per 100 sq.m of GFA [40% higher]
Other Educational and Institutional Uses	Higher than upper limit of range by 0.63 stalls per 100 sq.m of GFA [50% higher]	Higher than upper limit of range by 0.5 stalls per 100 sq.m of GFA [25% higher]
Vehicle Service, Limited	Lower than the lower limit of range by 0.5 stalls per 100 sq.m of GFA [25% lower]	Within Range

Affordable housing is also affected by parking policy. Airdrie defines affordable housing as costing no more than 30 per cent of a household's gross income. The city's policy framework extends beyond cost thresholds to address comprehensive accessibility and affordability for low- and moderate-income households through availability, safety, security of tenure, and suitability. Airdrie's [Affordable Housing Principled Action Plan](#) targets regulatory reform, including reduced parking standards and other barriers, to deliver diverse market and non-market housing options.

Among the peer municipalities, only St. Albert and Maple Ridge offer reduced parking requirements for affordable housing. Compared to market rate housing, St. Albert provides a 25 per cent reduction in resident parking requirements for affordable housing in the downtown and 40 per cent reduction outside the core. Maple Ridge reduces resident parking requirements by 10-11 per cent and visitor parking requirements by 50 per cent in its Town Centre.

FIGURE 2: Multi-family parking requirement comparison



Barrier-free parking standards in Airdrie align with the National Building Code (2023 Alberta Edition) and the Alberta Accessibility Design Guide (2024). The Land Use Bylaw defers to provincial standards, ensuring consistency in accessibility.

Bicycle parking is calculated as a percentage of vehicle parking, making it hard to compare with other cities. Most peer municipalities set specific requirements per unit or building. As more cities shift toward multi-modal transportation, Airdrie may need to update its bicycle parking requirements to better support active travel.

Electric vehicle parking is not yet addressed in Airdrie's bylaw. With federal rules requiring all new light-duty passenger vehicles to be zero-emission by 2035, this will need attention. St. Albert already mandates EV charging stations and Maple Ridge requires “EV-ready” infrastructure to support future charging needs.

Housing development impact analysis

One of the most important findings in this study is the strong link between parking standards and housing development. Airdrie's current Land Use Bylaw sets fixed parking ratios for different housing types, but these may be limiting the city's ability to meet growth targets and deliver on Housing Accelerator Fund targets.

Recent development applications show that parking requirements often increase project costs and complicate design. This is especially true for multi-family housing, where developers must balance density, affordability and parking standards to make projects viable.

Parking adds significant cost. Underground parking, though space-efficient, can cost \$48,000 to \$66,000 per stall in Calgary, according to the Altus Group 2025 Canadian Cost Guide, pushing housing prices beyond reach for many moderate-income buyers. Surface parking is cheaper, roughly \$3,300 to \$8,100 per stall, but uses up valuable land that could otherwise house more people. For high-density sites, this creates a trade-off between parking and housing supply.

Non-market housing developments face even greater barriers. With tighter budgets and target populations who often own fewer vehicles, strict parking requirements can force project downsizing or relocation, directly impacting the city's ability to meet rapidly deepening housing needs as noted in the City's [Housing Needs Assessment](#).

Data on vehicle ownership by demographic group suggests current standards may overestimate actual demand. Many groups, especially seniors, young adults and lower-income households, own fewer vehicles than the bylaw assumes. This mismatch leads to unused parking, higher costs and wasted land.

TABLE 2: Vehicle ownership versus current parking requirements

Demographic	Vehicle Ownership/HH	Current Requirement ¹	Potential Oversupply
Seniors (65+)	1.0 ²	1.75 stalls/dwelling unit	75%
Young Adults (25-34)	1.1 ³	1.75 stalls/dwelling unit	59%
Low-Income (<\$50k)	0.8-1.0 ⁴	1.75 stalls/dwelling unit	75-118%
General Population	2.0 ⁵	1.75 stalls/dwelling unit	-
¹ Parking requirement for multi-residential development (taking the form of apartment building) in the City's Land Use Bylaw ² Statistics Canada. (2006, December 15). Study: Seniors' access to transportation. Daily Report. Retrieved from https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/061215/dq061215c-eng.htm ³ Di Fiore, M. (n.d.). Millennials & the Future of Municipal Parking. Canadian Parking Association. Retrieved from https://canadianparking.ca/millennials-the-future-of-municipal-parking/ ⁴ Litman, T. (2003). Social Inclusion as a Transport Planning Issue in Canada. Victoria Transport Policy Institute. Retrieved from https://www.vtpi.org/soc_ex.pdf ⁵ McGillivray, M. (2025, April 2). Impacts of rising costs and claims on personal automobile insurance profitability and consumers in Canada. Analysis in Brief, Statistics Canada (Catalogue No. 11-621-M2025003). Retrieved from https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-621-m/11-621-m2025003-eng.htm			

Seniors typically own 1.0 vehicles per household, while the bylaw requires 1.75 spaces per dwelling unit, resulting in approximately a 75 per cent oversupply. Young adults and lower-income households show similar patterns, while only the general population aligns closely with current standards.

Although Airdrie's transit options are limited, planned upgrades and new active transportation infrastructure could shift travel behaviour over time. This supports the case for more flexible parking standards now, with room to adjust as mobility trends evolve.

Future parking demand

Airdrie is expected to continue growing over the next five years, which will impact both downtown parking demand and broader parking infrastructure needs. This study used development plans, demographic trends and shifting travel patterns to project future demand and support planning decisions. It is to be noted that residential parking was not considered for the future projections and analysis based on the assumption that residential developments will have sufficient private parking and will not require any public parking.

Downtown parking demand is projected to rise moderately through 2030, largely due to commercial growth and densification. Peak demand is expected to reach 3,068 spaces by 2030, up by approximately 120 per cent from the current peak of 1,398 spaces, if we achieve full build out of Our Core Strategy.

Downtown currently offers 2,839 public parking spaces. The upcoming Airdrie Public Library at 805 Main Street South will add about 176 new spaces, bringing the total to 3,015. No other significant supply increases are planned.

In 2024, peak demand was 1,398 spaces with 49.2 per cent occupancy and a surplus of 1,441 spaces. As previously stated, by 2030, demand is expected to reach 3,068 spaces against a supply of 3,015, resulting in a deficit of 53 spaces and a projected occupancy rate of 101.8 per cent (*See Appendix E: Future downtown parking demand*). While relatively small, this deficit signals the need for action through added supply or better demand management.

Most of the demand increase will be tied to larger developments that change how people use downtown, such as new retail, entertainment or institutional spaces that draw more visitors. However, other trends may soften the impact. Remote work, flexible schedules and shifting transportation preferences could reduce peak-period parking demand over time.

The Main Street Square north parking lot provides a snapshot of how specific sites may face growing pressure. After the library moves and civic uses are added to its former site, this lot is expected to exceed 85 per cent capacity during most business hours. It will be over capacity between 10 a.m. and 12 p.m. on Tuesdays and from 1 to 3 p.m. on Thursdays. This highlights the importance of localized planning as development patterns shift. New businesses, services and community facilities will require parking for employees, customers and visitors, adding to overall demand for parking infrastructure.

Parkade location analysis

The study supports building a parking facility (surface parking lot or parkade) in downtown Airdrie to meet future demand and support revitalization. As demand grows, especially within the Community Revitalization Levy area, development of a strategic parking facility can help address shortages while advancing downtown intensification and economic goals.

The study recommends that the City conducts a future land use study to determine the exact location of the parking facility; it identifies certain selection criteria to determine a suitable site. However, based on location, accessibility, development potential, ability to integrate with the surrounding area, feedback received through public consultation/stakeholder engagement and the findings of the parking demand analysis, the following locations may be considered for choosing potential sites for the parking facility:

- Block bounded by Main Street and First Avenue
- Adjacent to the provincial civic complex
- Vacant lot at 116 Main Street NE

Proposed parkade designs should prioritize integration with the urban setting. Ground-floor activity, attractive facades and pedestrian-oriented features will help ensure parkades contribute positively to the downtown environment. Construction should be timed with growth and funding availability.

The Community Revitalization Levy area allows for creative funding options, including tax increment financing. This model would let rising property values generated by new development help fund the very infrastructure that supports it, creating a self-sustaining investment cycle.

Technology and smart parking solutions

The study's technology review highlights a range of mature solutions that could improve Airdrie's parking system, both now and as the downtown evolves. These tools address specific challenges identified in the parking analysis and provide a foundation for future enhancements.

Detection technology is at the core of smart parking systems. It delivers real-time data on occupancy and usage, which is the first step in helping drivers find spots faster and allows the City to better understand and manage supply.

Occupancy sensors offer the highest accuracy for tracking individual stalls. If fitted with an availability notification device (e.g. a green / red light above the stall), they can reduce driver search time and generate reliable data for optimizing space use. Video analytics use AI-equipped cameras to detect vehicles and assess availability. These systems also enhance security and can monitor multiple stalls from one installation, offering cost efficiencies over single-space sensors.

Inductive loops, embedded in pavement, provide dependable vehicle detection. Though more costly to install due to the required civils works, they offer low operating costs and long-term durability, best suited to parking locations with a small number of fixed entry/exit points. LiDAR systems use advanced sensors to assess stall availability with high precision, offering real-time data that also supports broader transportation planning.

TABLE 3: Types of technology solutions

Technology	Accuracy	Install Cost	Operating Cost	Best Use
Occupancy Sensors	Very High	Medium	Medium	Individual Spaces
Video Analytics	Medium	Medium	Medium	Area Coverage
Inductive Loops	High	High	Low	Fixed entry/exit points
LiDAR	Very High	High	Medium	Individual Spaces

Occupancy sensors and LiDAR are best for locations needing precise stall tracking and can classify a wide range of different vehicle classifications, video systems are ideal for broader coverage and loops suited to parking locations with fixed entry / exit points.

To improve public access and reduce congestion, information delivery systems play a key role. Variable message signs can display real-time parking availability at decision points, helping drivers choose between parking areas. Web-based systems allow residents and visitors to check space availability before leaving home and can be integrated into the City's website.

Mobile apps offer the most flexible and user-friendly platform. They combine real-time availability, navigation, filtering by need (such as accessible spaces or time limits) and payment processing, all in one interface.

Enforcement technologies increase compliance and reduce the need for manual monitoring. Automated access control gates connect to online systems for real-time tracking and pre-paid entry, improving security and efficiency. Automated License Plate Recognition (ALPR) streamlines enforcement by reading plates and processing violations automatically. It also supports pay-by-plate systems that eliminate physical meters.

Emerging tools like public area mobile robotics may play a future role in enforcement and security. These autonomous units can monitor lots, deter crime and enforce parking rules while reducing the demand for staff.

Technology implementation should begin with proven, high-impact solutions in the busiest areas downtown. This phased approach allows the City to address immediate needs while laying the groundwork for more advanced systems as demand and infrastructure evolve.

While the technological opportunities have been divided to help understand individual functions (e.g. detection, driver information and enforcement), it is recognized that these are often delivered by vendors in combination as part of a cohesive "Smart Parking System".

Economic and business impacts

The findings of Airdrie's parking study have direct implications for economic development and downtown business success. Parking availability and efficient management influence customer satisfaction, business viability and the downtown's appeal as a destination for shopping, dining and services.

In high-demand areas, current parking shortages may be limiting customer access and stifling business growth. Based on public consultation, the study found that some potential customers avoid downtown during peak periods due to a lack of parking, resulting in lost economic activity and reduced revenue for affected businesses.

Different business types experience these impacts in varying ways. Retailers depend on short-term customer parking and are sensitive to availability and time restrictions. Professional services require longer-term spaces for staff and clients. Restaurants and personal services see steady demand throughout the day and evening, often conflicting with other uses. The study also found Airdrie's restaurant parking requirements are 20 and 50 per cent higher than those in peer municipalities for non-downtown and downtown areas respectively, which may be discouraging food service development.

Parking policy also impacts housing, which in turn affects economic growth. Restrictive standards that limit housing reduce construction activity, slow population growth and constrain the tax base needed to fund municipal services. More flexible standards can help accelerate affordable housing development, bringing more residents downtown to support businesses, services and infrastructure.

Development of the parking facility represents large capital investments but can be partially funded through the Community Revitalization Levy. This provincial tool allows tax revenue from increased property values to be reinvested in local infrastructure, including structured parking.

Evidence also shows that areas with well-managed parking tend to see higher property values. As values rise, so do municipal tax revenues, helping to recover infrastructure costs over time.

Addressing parking concerns is also key to attracting and retaining businesses. Companies consider parking availability for staff and customers when choosing locations. Reliable parking infrastructure supports business recruitment and helps prevent relocations due to poor access.

Ultimately, the success of Airdrie's downtown revitalization depends in part on creating an environment that works for businesses and customers alike. Improvements that enhance convenience and access can strengthen downtown as a vibrant hub for commerce, dining and entertainment.

Policy recommendations and implementation framework

The study outlines several policy recommendations to improve parking efficiency, support housing and economic development and align with Airdrie's broader community goals. These recommendations include both short-term operational improvements and longer-term adjustments to parking standards, improved parking management practices, and infrastructure development.

For non-market affordable housing, the study recommends inclusion of a separate parking requirement in the City's Land Use Bylaw with at least a 40 per cent reduction in parking requirements compared to market rate multi-family housing. This will reflect lower vehicle ownership among residents and will align with approaches used in peer municipalities like St. Albert and Maple Ridge. Reducing parking for affordable housing also lowers development costs, improving overall affordability.

Commercial and civic uses in the downtown should benefit from expanded shared parking provisions. Different businesses often have different peak hours and shared parking can reduce the total number of spaces needed while still meeting demand. This supports efficient land use and encourages downtown intensification. Additionally, reductions in parking requirements should be considered for some of these uses such as shopping centre, restaurants, and government services. Furthermore, with the implementation of robust multi-modal transportation infrastructure improvements in the future, separate reduced parking requirements may be included in the Land Use Bylaw for different land uses in the Downtown instead of applying the same percentage reduction (25 per cent) for all land uses.

The study also recommends time-of-day management strategies to improve the efficiency of downtown parking. Expanding time-limited zones in high-demand areas, along with clear alternatives for long-term parking, would help preserve customer access while directing staff parking to less constrained areas. Better enforcement of these time limits is key to success. Finally, the study recommends harmonizing time restrictions in the Downtown and implementing them for the same time period to ensure consistency and make it easier for motorists.

Introducing modest parking fees in the busiest downtown zones could manage demand and generate revenue for system upgrades. Prices should encourage turnover without discouraging legitimate use and revenue could be reinvested into parking maintenance and improvements. However, the feedback obtained during the stakeholder engagement and public outreach indicated that the stakeholders and public are significantly opposed (93 per cent) to the implementation of paid parking in Downtown Airdrie. Therefore, it was not recommended in the parking study.

To prepare for federal mandates on zero-emission vehicles, the Land Use Bylaw should include electric vehicle infrastructure requirements. The study recommends that 100 per cent EV-ready requirements for resident parking spaces in residential developments and 10-25 per cent EV-ready requirements for all parking spaces in non-residential developments and visitor parking spaces in residential developments. The appropriate percentage of EV-ready parking spaces for non-residential developments and residential visitor spaces may be determined by performing a study.

Bicycle parking requirements should also be strengthened. Rather than tying bike parking to vehicular parking requirements, minimums should be based on the number of residential units or floor area. This ensures adequate infrastructure, especially in developments with reduced vehicular parking.

The study recommends adding adequate bicycle parking at key locations and major transit stops. It identifies existing bike rack styles in the Downtown to have performance concerns and suggests using alternative styles. Additionally, it recommends establishing designated parking locations for e-scooters to encourage the use of such devices. Finally, long-term improvements may include implementation of micromobility hubs at strategic locations in the Downtown.

Barrier-free parking standards already meet provincial requirements and should be maintained. However, stronger enforcement may be required to ensure these spaces remain available for users who need them.

The study emphasizes the implementation of robust multimodal transportation infrastructure improvements in the Downtown. It states that in case such improvements are implemented, parking requirements may be reduced for different land uses in the Downtown. Together, these recommendations offer a practical path toward a more efficient, accessible and future-ready parking system that supports Airdrie's housing, mobility and economic development goals.

Implementation timeline and monitoring framework

The study proposes a phased approach to parking improvements, beginning with quick, low-cost actions that deliver strong returns and building toward more resource-intensive projects in later years. This ensures early wins build momentum while preparing for larger, long-term changes.

In the first two years, the focus is on refining parking standards and making operational improvements. Updates to the Land Use Bylaw would lower requirements for certain land uses and affordable housing, while adding new rules for EV and bicycle parking. Incentives would encourage private EV charger installation, and checks on downtown businesses would ensure bike parking is in place. Operational changes include harmonizing time limits across downtown, extending restrictions in high-turnover areas, and creating event-specific parking plans. Transit connections would also be improved, and the City would budget for a new municipally owned facility in its 10-year capital plan. These measures are relatively low cost but carry medium to high impact.

Over the next two to five years, priorities expand to active and shared transportation. More bike racks would be installed and upgraded, pathways built, and designated spaces introduced for e-scooters. Parking standards tailored to downtown would be developed, while opportunities to improve on-street supply in busy areas would be explored. New municipal EV chargers would be added, supported by a dedicated parking enforcement program and the possible introduction of a parking ambassador role. These actions involve more coordination and funding, but offer high value in accessibility and turnover.

In five to ten years, attention shifts to major capital projects and long-term policy tools. New surface lots or a municipally owned parkade could be constructed downtown, while Land Use Bylaw changes would allow developers to trade some vehicle stalls for additional bike parking. Micromobility hubs and new requirements for micromobility parking in developments would further expand options beyond cars. These initiatives are higher cost but provide lasting benefits to downtown mobility and vitality.

Ongoing work will ensure the parking strategy evolves alongside other City priorities. Parking actions will be coordinated with the Transit Master Plan update, the Main Street Streetscape Plan, and other initiatives. Shared micromobility programs will be maintained, and parking patterns will be studied after major construction projects to guide future decisions.

The framework is designed to be flexible, allowing timelines and priorities to shift with funding, construction sequencing, and emerging opportunities, while ensuring parking policies continue to support Airdrie's economic growth, transportation choices, and community goals.

TABLE 4: Recommendations

	RECOMMENDATION	WHAT TO DO	WHY IT MATTERS
IMMEDIATE 0-2 YEARS	Reduce parking requirements for certain new developments in the Land Use Bylaw	Lower the minimum number of parking spaces developers must build for certain land uses identified in the study	Makes it easier and cheaper to build
	Set different parking requirements for multifamily housing in the Land Use Bylaw	Create separate, lower parking requirements for multifamily housing projects	Makes multifamily housing easier to build
	Update Land Use Bylaw to include EV parking requirements	Create requirements for EV parking infrastructure in new developments	Supports the shift to electric vehicles
	Encourage property owners to install EV charging stations	Develop and education and incentive program	Expands EV accessibility
	Update bicycle parking requirements in the Land Use Bylaw	Include bicycle parking requirements for new developments on a per unit basis	Encourages cycling and reduces car dependency
	Make sure all businesses have bike parking	Check that businesses in the downtown have the required bike parking and partner with businesses to add if missing	Encourages cycling and reduces car dependency
	Enhance transit connections in the downtown	Improve transit routes linking the downtown to other neighbourhoods	Gives people alternatives for driving to the downtown
	Budget for new municipally owned parking facility	Include the cost of constructing a parking facility in the City's 10-year capital budget	Helps meet demand when street parking may not be enough
	Provide consistent parking time limits	Make on-street parking time limits and daily rules the same throughout the downtown	Reduces confusion for drivers and makes parking easier to understand and enforce
	Add parking time limits to certain downtown streets where none exist at present	Extend 1-hour parking limits to busier areas	Ensures parking spaces turn over more frequently
	Plan for special events	Prepare a traffic and parking management plan for major events in the downtown	Prevents chaos and keeps traffic moving

MID-TERM 2-5 YEARS	Add bike parking in key locations	Install bike racks at busy downtown areas and bus stops	Encourages cycling and reduces car dependency
	Improve existing bike parking	Upgrade bicycle parking rack styles as per APBP recommendations	Improves bicycle parking infrastructure; this will encourage cycling and reduce car dependency
	Build walking and cycling paths	Add multi-use pathways throughout the downtown	Makes it safer and easier to walk and bike
	Include designated parking areas for e-scooters	Set up specific spots where people can park e-scooters in the downtown	Prevents sidewalk clutter while supporting alternative transportation
	Include separate downtown parking requirements in the Land Use Bylaw	Develop lower parking standards compared to rest of the City, specifically for downtown	Recognizes that the downtown has different transportation needs
	Study on-street parking options	Explore opportunities to improved on-street parking options in key areas	Enhances accessibility, support local businesses and create a more welcoming experience for visitors in key areas
	EV charging stations on municipally owned properties	Install EV charging stations at strategic locations on municipally owned properties	Supports the shift to electric vehicles and demonstrates municipal leadership in sustainability
	Create a parking enforcement program	Provide parking enforcement for the downtown	Creates more turnover
	Consider parking ambassador program	Have friendly staff help people understand parking rules to offset enforcement	Reduces parking violations while building goodwill
LONG TERM 5-10 YEARS	Add more parking supply in the downtown	Build new surface parking lot(s) and/or municipally owned parkade in the downtown	Addresses parking shortages
	Include policies in the Land Use Bylaw to let developers trade vehicular parking spaces for bike parking	Allow developments to provide fewer vehicular parking spaces if they add extra bike parking	Encourages cycling and reduces car dependency
	Implement micromobility hubs	Locate micromobility hubs at strategic locations	Encourages use of bicycles and various other micromobility devices and reduces car dependency

	Include micromobility parking requirements for new developments in the Land Use Bylaw	Develop specific micromobility parking requirements for different land uses	Encourages use of alternative modes of transportation and reduces car dependency
ONGOING	Coordinate with other city plans/studies	Make sure the parking study recommendations align with the Transit Master Plan Update, the TMP, the future Main Street Streetscape Plan and other City plans	Ensures all city projects work together
	Continue e-scooter programs	Keep supporting shared e-scooter services	Provides convenient short-distance transportation options
	Study parking needs after major construction projects	Study how people are using parking and how traffic flows through the downtown after completion of major projects such as new roads, buildings or transit	Understand changes to make smart decisions about future parking needs and traffic management

Conclusion

The 2024/25 Parking Study offers a strong foundation for making informed decisions about parking policy and infrastructure over the next five years and beyond. Its findings show that thoughtful adjustments to parking standards and management practices can support housing development, strengthen the downtown and improve the efficiency of the transportation system.

While Airdrie's overall parking supply is currently sufficient, the study found that inefficiencies in how it's managed and distributed lead to shortages in some areas and underuse in others. Targeted solutions can help make better use of existing capacity while preparing for future growth.

The study recommends reduced parking standards for affordable housing developments which can help the City meet its Housing Accelerator Fund goals. Such a change will reduce barriers to development while still maintaining optimum parking supply.

For downtown, the study supports investment in a parking facility. Establishing the facility at a strategic location will help accommodate growth while supporting economic activity and higher-density development.

The recommended policies strike a balance between addressing today's challenges and preparing for future opportunities. Their success depends on coordination between planning, engineering and economic development teams, but the outcomes, more housing, a stronger downtown and better mobility, make the effort worthwhile.

The impact of these changes should be measured not just in parking availability, but in broader outcomes like housing starts, downtown business success and residents' quality of life. Parking is a tool that supports community goals, it is not a goal on its own.

The City should move forward with the most impactful, easy-to-implement recommendations first, while building momentum toward longer-term improvements. Ongoing monitoring and evaluation will help ensure that policies continue to reflect Airdrie's changing needs and transportation patterns.

This study equips the City with the evidence needed to make smart, forward-looking decisions about how parking supports growth, economic development and livability for all residents. It offers a clear roadmap for a more efficient, accessible and responsive parking system.