



Special Parking Edition

Parking in Sidney has been a growing topic of discussion during the recent increase in the level of construction and redevelopment, especially in and around downtown Sidney. This issue of Town Talk is intended to provide information on many aspects of parking and to give some insight on bylaw requirements and the realities of vehicle parking in Sidney.



Parking Requirements for New Developments

Off-street parking (i.e. parking on private property, not on the street) for new developments in Sidney is regulated by the Off-Street Parking and Loading Bylaw No. 2140. Council adopted the new Off-Street Parking and Loading Bylaw No. 2140 on September 11, 2017. Since the adoption of the previous Off-Street Parking and Loading Bylaw No. 1661 in 2001, several changes had occurred in the types of developments being proposed; in the public's expectations for parking; and in general trends toward less vehicle parking being required in Canadian towns' bylaws as part of the development process. With these changes in mind, staff proposed a series of amendments to Bylaw No. 1661 which were reviewed in a series of Committee of the Whole and Council meetings from June to September 2017.

Regulations for the number of spaces to be provided are based on the proposed use(s) of a building. The parking requirement for a majority of residential dwelling types (single-family, two-family, townhouse, apartment, secondary suite, etc) is one space per dwelling. Parking requirements for commercial uses are typically determined using two methods: a ratio between the number

of spaces and total commercial area (ex. Office/Retail - 1 space per 40m² of commercial space), and required parking spaces based on the type of business (ex. Restaurant – 1 space per 5 seats).

In most cases, Sidney's Zoning Bylaw does not allow development on a large enough scale to make underground parking economically viable, especially on existing smaller lots, so developments often make do with the amount of surface parking that can fit on the property.

Where the proposed uses on a property require more parking than a development can provide, developers may either pay in lieu for the required parking, at a rate set by the bylaw of \$10,000 per space, or apply for a variance to the bylaw to reduce the parking requirement. Payment in lieu is permitted by bylaw in a defined area of the downtown core and in the Industrial area. The money that is collected by the Town is deposited into a reserve fund to be used for the provision of public parking spaces or for facilities that support walking, cycling, and transit or other transportation options. Developers also have the option to use up to 50% of the pay in lieu fees collected towards the purchase of permanent

car-share memberships that are registered to the individual units in the building. If a property owner chooses the payment in lieu option, then the development would be considered as complying with bylaw requirements. In other words, a variance to the bylaw is not required to allow payment in lieu of parking spaces.

Many properties in Sidney are too small to adequately meet the parking requirements without compromising the aesthetics, function, and overall design of the proposed building. Having the option to pay in lieu of parking provides developers with the opportunity to focus on building design and aesthetics without being overly restricted by parking requirements. Payment in lieu of parking also helps to promote "eco-friendly" methods of transportation by encouraging people to live "car-lite" lifestyles and walk, bike, or utilize public transit to reach their destinations.

Council may consider approving a variance for parking in developments that are very close to transit routes, or when they provide affordable housing where the occupants are not likely to own vehicles, or when they include other vehicle options, such as a car share program.

TIME RESTRICTIONS FOR PARKING OUTSIDE OF THE DOWNTOWN CORE

There are hundreds of parking spaces downtown, but the majority of the Town's on-street parking supply is in neighbourhoods outside of the commercial zones. Beyond the downtown core, parking on most streets in Sidney is limited to a maximum of 24 hours.

This regulation is not intended to prevent neighbours from parking in their own neighbourhoods; rather, it is intended to prevent people not living in the neighbourhood from parking a vehicle on a street in Sidney and leaving it for an extended period of time, for example, while they are away on vacation. This is enforced on a complaint basis as staff do not have the resources to proactively patrol all streets in Sidney. All complaints are confidential and must be submitted in writing; either in person at the Town Hall or by [visiting the Town's website and submitting the form online](#).

Location and Time Restrictions for Downtown Public Parking

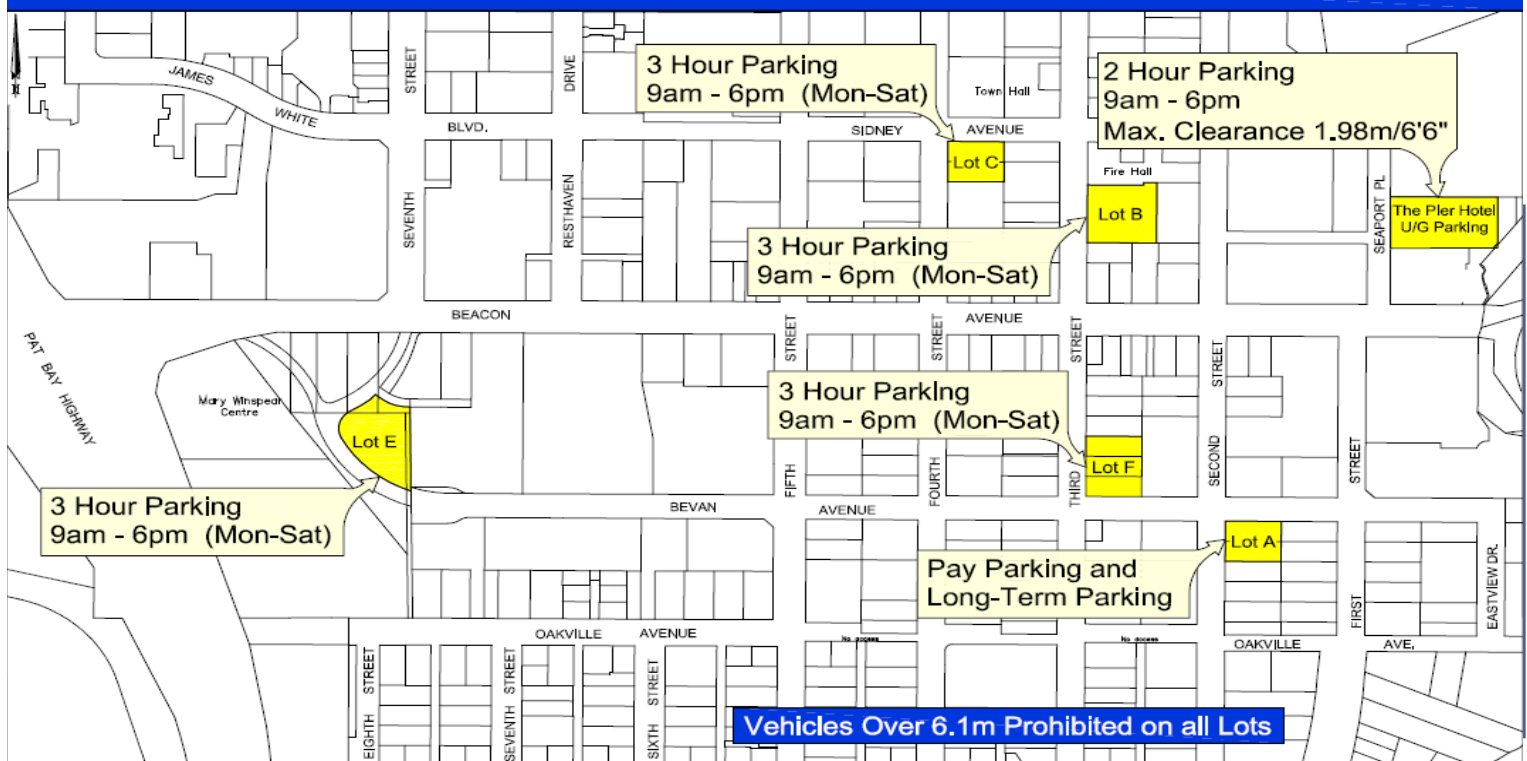
On-street parallel parking is provided along most blocks of the downtown core, and the Town also operates 5 parking lots in the downtown core. The Town of Sidney places time restrictions on parking in order to ensure that there is adequate parking turnover. Parking in the downtown core features shorter time restrictions and is enforced regularly. Maximum time periods for each area are marked by signage on the street or in the lot.

On-street parking on Beacon Avenue is generally limited to a maximum of 1 hour from the hours of 9am to 4pm, Monday to Saturday. Parking on side streets (Seventh, Fifth, Fourth, Third, etc) is generally limited to a maximum of 2 hours extending north to Mt. Baker Avenue and extending south to Oakville Avenue or Orchard Avenue, depending on the location.

Parking in 4 of the 5 downtown parking lots is free of charge and is limited to a maximum of 3 hours. The fifth lot downtown is a pay parking lot located at the south-east corner of Second Street and Bevan Avenue where drivers can pay for parking a vehicle on a longer-term basis. There are also a limited number of parking spaces available to the public in the underground parking area of the Pier Hotel for a maximum of 2 hours from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

The Town has a contract with the Commissionaires for general parking enforcement in Sidney, and also has a contract with Robbins Parking for enforcement at Tulista Park and Iroquois Park specifically for boat trailer parking.

Town of Sidney PARKING LOTS



Parking Availability

Parking availability is a general concern in every community, and certainly more so in communities that have vibrant and thriving downtowns such as Sidney. The amount of available parking in Sidney fluctuates depending on the time of day. The peak (maximum) demand for parking is between 11:00am and 1:00pm - based on the Watt Consulting Group's 2016 parking study on Sidney's downtown commercial core. There are areas downtown, specifically along First and Second Street between Beacon Avenue and Bevan Avenue, which experience high occupancy (86-100%) during these times.

That said, there is generally available parking within a block of these areas. Even during peak times, Watt's team observed that only 68% of the total on-street parking supply in the downtown core was occupied. Because street parking in any given location is limited, parking studies look at overall parking availability in the downtown area, rather than on a location-specific or street-by-street basis.

Also, the limited number of on-street parking spaces in a given location means that customers should expect to walk a short distance from their parking space to access shopping or other services. This is no different from a mall, where customers park outside the main shopping area and must walk to access the stores. (See below for drawing comparing scale of Mayfair Mall to Sidney Downtown)

For more information on the parking study by Watt Consulting, you can [view the report on the Town of Sidney website](#).

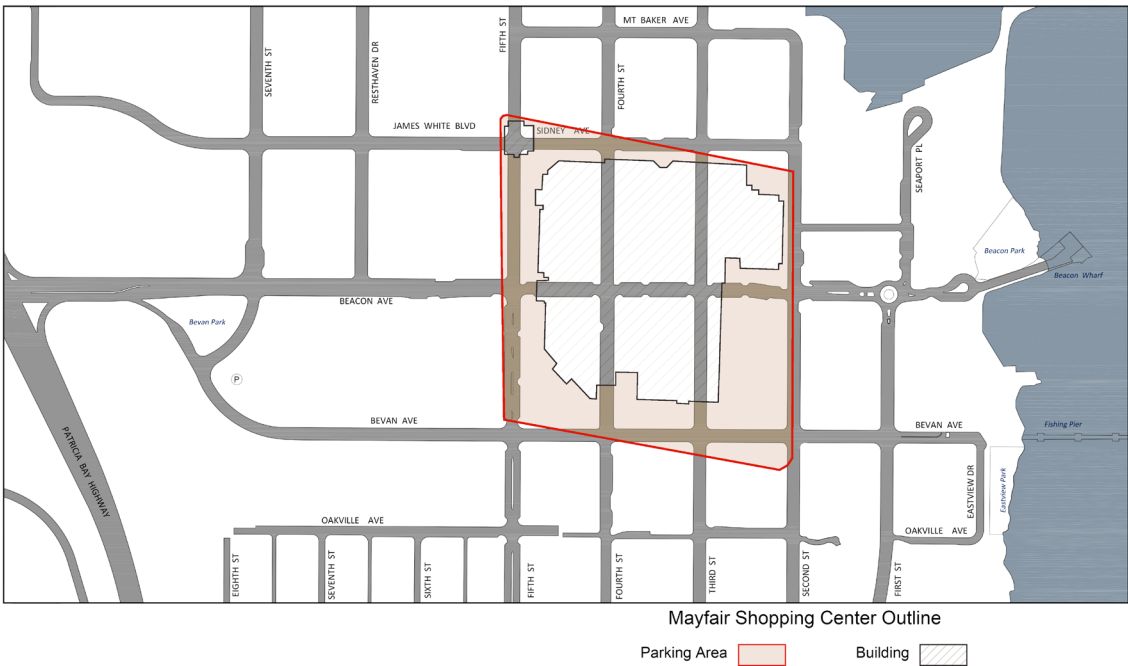
Sidney's downtown has a total area of roughly 32.4 hectares (80 acres). Based on a rough calculation, buildings cover approximately 29% of this area. This means that 71% of the downtown is open surface space, and based on the amount of paving visible in the aerial photograph (on the bottom of page 4), a significant percentage of this open space is already dedicated to parking and vehicles. While Sidney staff do hear from many residents that there is a need to add more

Downtown Sidney's Parking Supply	
Time Restriction (Hours)	Number of Parking Spaces
24	217
3	180 + 6 handicap
2	464
1	94
0.5	6 + 2 handicap
0.25	11
10 minutes	9
Loading	4
Residential	3
Total	996

parking in the downtown, it is also important to recognize that too much parking can harm a downtown by displacing shops, offices, cafes and restaurants with asphalt. It is important to remember the reason that people come to Sidney is for a great experience in a walkable small town atmosphere. Demand for parking is a sign that Sidney has a robust economy; in other words, it is a good "problem" to have. While parking does help bring people to Sidney, it is important to make sure parking doesn't overwhelm the downtown.

(Continued on page 4)

Mayfair Mall Superimposed on Sidney Downtown



When shopping at a mall, customers are willing to walk the equivalent of several blocks to get to their destination. The map to the left illustrates the size of the parking area at Mayfair Shopping Centre, which would cover approximately 6 square blocks of downtown Sidney.

Parking Availability (Continued)

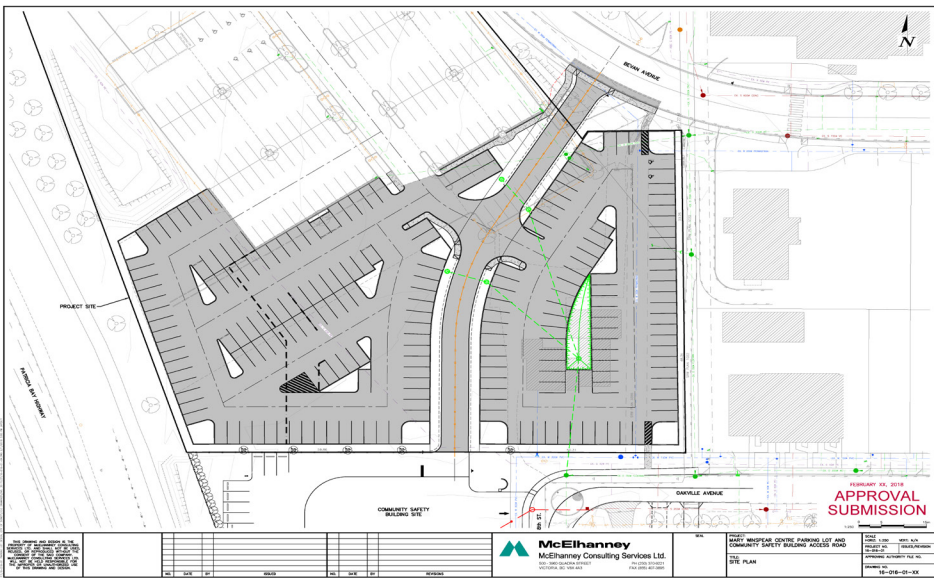
It should also be noted that many of the 24 hour parking areas close to the downtown core are occupied by employees working in the downtown during weekdays. This is why the Town of Sidney is currently working to build a large new parking lot on the south side of the Mary Winspear Centre. Approximately 180 parking spaces will be built over a span of two years.

In addition to providing a long-term parking solution for employees working in downtown Sidney, the parking lot's location on the edge of downtown (and adjacent to the highway) means that there will be minimal impact on the Sidney experience people come here for.

Providing employees with an all-day parking solution while they are

working also helps free up on-street parking for customers and stops employees from having to move their vehicle periodically throughout the day (the "Coffee Break Shuffle") to comply with parking restrictions and avoid receiving a parking ticket – saving both the employee and employer additional time.

Proposed Downtown Employee Parking Lot (South of Mary Winspear Centre)



Cost of Constructing Parking Spaces

Providing off-street parking comes at a significant cost. Construction industry cost averages provided by the Altus Group suggest that in many cases the cost to construct a single parking space is often more expensive than the car that will occupy it. Based on the average construction costs, the cost of a parking space in a below or above-ground parking structure is estimated at between \$50,000 and \$70,000 per parking stall. When soft costs (i.e. land costs, architectural and engineering fees, maintenance, enforcement, etc.) are included, the cost range is \$70,000 to \$90,000 per parking stall.

Aerial Photograph - Pedestrian Walk Times in Sidney Downtown



Variances for Parking in New Development

As of February 13, 2018, Council has considered 87 applications for Development Permits and Development Variance Permits, as well as two Development Referrals from the Victoria Airport Authority (VAA) since the start of their term in December 2014. A total of five of those permits approved a reduction in the required number of parking spaces, resulting in a shortfall of 59 spaces on private development sites. It is noted that 44 of these 59 spaces not provided were associated with the attainable rental apartment development at 9830 Fourth St (the Aranza, currently under construction). Four of the 87 applications met Parking Bylaw requirements by paying in lieu for required spaces, for a total of 17 spaces which are paid for at the time of issuance of a Building Permit for the associated developments. 60 of the 87 applications met the Parking Bylaw requirements by providing the

required number of spaces, and the remaining 18 of the 87 applications, as well as both of the Development referrals from the VAA, proposed a surplus number of parking spaces that exceeded Parking Bylaw requirements, resulting in a surplus of 77 parking spaces on private development sites (this figure does not include the surplus of 263 parking spaces that would be created by the construction of the Community Safety Building and Sidney Crossing).

Developers may provide more parking than required by the bylaw if they wish; typically, however, most propose what they feel is the market's demand for parking.

For details on previous development applications approved by Council, please contact the Development Services Department or [visit the Town's website](#).



The Cost of Free Parking

While parking in Sidney is generally thought of as “free”, the idea of free parking is actually a myth; it is not free at all. Even if parking spaces are offered for “free” to the user there are still considerable costs to property owners and ratepayers. While the general public may not pay for parking directly, businesses typically incorporate the cost of constructing and maintaining “free” parking into the costs of the goods and services they provide. In other words, even if you do not own a vehicle, you are likely paying more for goods, services, housing, and more just so vehicle owners can enjoy the privilege of free parking.

The Town of Sidney, for example, uses tax revenue as well as parking

fees and fines to help pay for the construction, maintenance, and enforcement of our off-street and on-street parking spaces. People who own vehicles are not taxed differently than non-vehicle owning citizens. For several decades, there has been discussion about the idea of building a parkade structure in the downtown core. With costs estimated at \$90,000 per space, it would cost \$9,000,000 to provide a parkade with just 100 spaces. Parking in a parkade structure also tends to be a driver's last resort, and used only if other options are all full. It would not make sense for the Town to charge a fee for parking in a parkade if there is no charge to use on-street spaces.

REDUCING PARKING DEMAND WITH CAR-SHARING

Car sharing is a short-term car rental system where members can book cars in the provider's fleet for a desired period of time (i.e. hourly, daily or even weekly use). Car sharing can help reduce demand for parking by providing an option for people who may otherwise purchase a second or third vehicle. Car-sharing is also an option for those who choose not to own their own vehicle but may need one occasionally, or for those who would like occasional access to a vehicle of a different type than they use day-to-day (e.g. a SUV, truck or van).

In July 2017, Sidney welcomed Modo Co-operative, one of the largest car sharing organizations in BC, with over 500 vehicles in the Vancouver, Nanaimo and Victoria areas. Modo members can book one of two brand new cars located in downtown Sidney: a Toyota RAV4 hybrid electric SUV and a fuel-efficient Honda Fit compact car. The cars are conveniently located on Fourth Street next to the Town Hall parking lot, and on Third Street, between Beacon and Sidney Avenues, by the entrance to the Third Street parking lot. Once becoming a member, booking can be done anywhere, any time by computer, telephone or smartphone app.

In addition to two cars in Sidney, Modo members can also book an additional 46 vehicles in the greater Victoria area. Cars are also stationed at all four major ferry crossings, with 500 more on the mainland. For more information on Modo's service, and how to become a member, visit www.modocoop.com.



Parking for Existing Developments

Many of the existing mixed-use commercial/residential developments in Sidney's downtown as well as the nearby multi-family condominium and apartment buildings were constructed with surface parking areas, some of which are partially enclosed or covered by the building. It is apparent that the majority of these private parking spaces are seldom full, whether observed during the daytime or in the evening, any season of the year.

This may be partly due to residents' differing schedules and vacations, or also due to changing patterns in vehicle ownership among residents who are choosing to live in and close to the downtown core. Living in close proximity to the shops, services, and transit stops in the downtown likely has an influence on residents in terms of the transportation choices they make.

Furthermore, Sidney's large demographic of seniors may be choosing to live within a short walking distance to amenities in order to reduce their dependency on vehicle ownership. 2017 saw the arrival of two MODO Car Share vehicles in Sidney, providing another transportation alternative to private vehicle ownership.

Parking Related to Construction

Parking related to construction on private property in the downtown core and on other properties in Sidney that are located along streets with higher volumes of traffic is controlled by the Town through Construction Management Plans. The developer and the Town agree, in advance of issuance of a Building Permit, on how to manage parking for employees working on the construction site.



PARKING THOUGHTS TO PONDER

- Would you support a tax increase to pay for the construction of a parkade, or for the purchase of land to provide more parking?
- Would you be willing to pay for on-street parking in downtown Sidney?
- Would you rather walk a few blocks to your destination or pay for convenient parking?

We would like to hear from you on these matters. Please email admin@sidney.ca or write a letter to the Town Hall with your thoughts at 2440 Sidney Avenue, Sidney BC V8L 1Y7.

DEVELOPMENT IN SIDNEY

You can always learn more about active development applications in the Town of Sidney by visiting the [Active Development Application page on the Town's website](#).

