



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Prince George has initiated the Parking Modernization Study with the goal of establishing a more effective, accessible, and future-ready parking system and to improve parking operations within the Downtown and Hospital Zones. The City identified the need to undertake a Parking Modernization Study to provide recommendations with a focus on improving parking availability and accessibility through a financially responsible and efficient approach to on- and off-street parking.

The goal of the study is to develop a strategy to optimize the current parking supply while implementing strategies to create a more vibrant and accessible downtown in Prince George. The study provides recommendations to improve the utilization and safety/security of on- and off-street parking in the downtown. Additional recommendations include improving overall parking efficiency and accessibility, while aligning with broader City planning goals and objectives to support the creation of a sustainable community.

Detailed below is a summary of the key study tasks and recommendations.

## BACKGROUND DOCUMENT REVIEW

The background document review examined the City of Prince George's planning framework with respect to vehicle parking. The 2011 Official Community Plan's overarching parking objectives include discouraging on-street parking on arterial roads and indicates that shared parking arrangements coupled with parking fees may be implemented in the Downtown area. In April 2025, an update to the Official Community Plan was considered, however it was noted that the draft text does not include the on-street parking policies contained in the previous plan. The 2025 OCP encourages the provision of new electric vehicle charging stations, and recommends minimizing the number of surface parking lots and placing surface parking behind primary buildings. In addition, the City is currently undertaking the Civic Core District Plan, a long-term phased planning document that will define a vision for properties located in Downtown with a goal to strengthen the local economy and provide amenities to enhance the quality of life of the Downtown area.

## BEST PRACTICE REVIEW

A review of municipal best practices from comparable municipalities was conducted to identify key takeaways for the City of Prince George. Several municipalities in both British Columbia and Alberta were examined as a best practice review, beginning with a comprehensive desktop review. Topics review include parking time limits in both downtowns and hospital zones, parking fees, residential permit fees, payment systems, off-street parking supply, electric vehicle charging fees, enforcement procedures, downtown arena and special event parking, and the supply of bicycle parking. A summary of the best practice review is provided in **Table 1**.



Table 1: Summary of Best Practices Review

Parking Topic	Best Practice Review Findings
Downtown Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evening and weekend parking policies are comparable in Prince George to other municipalities.</li> <li>Prince George offers free 3-hour parking whereas the other municipalities typically charge for parking downtown.</li> </ul>
Hospital Zone Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most municipalities charge an hourly rate for parking in Hospital Zones, unlike Prince George which offers free 2-hour parking on adjacent streets.</li> </ul>
Parking Fees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prince George offers free 3-hour on-street parking whereas most other municipalities do not offer free on-street parking.</li> <li>Off-street parking rates and monthly permits are generally comparable to other municipalities.</li> </ul>
Residential Permit Fees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prince George's residential permit cost is similar to cost in Kelowna, whereas Lethbridge and Kamloops do not charge applicants.</li> </ul>
Payment Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most municipalities use pay stations or app-based payment (or both) which is comparable with Prince George.</li> </ul>
Off-Street Parking Supply	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Based on a review of surface lots and parkades in the downtowns, Prince George has an average supply of surface parking, however, an above-average supply of parkade parking when considered on a population basis.</li> </ul>
Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Fees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prince George and all municipalities reviewed have electric vehicle charging stations.</li> </ul>
Parking Enforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prince George's utilization of LPR is similar to the municipalities reviewed. For those who do not use LPR, parking is enforced on a complaint-driven basis.</li> </ul>
Downtown Arena Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Municipalities with a downtown arena tend to offer paid parking whereas Prince George offers free parking at the CN Centre.</li> </ul>
Downtown Bicycle Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most municipalities have year-round dedicated bike parking services to mitigate risks of bicycle parking theft. This includes services like bike valet, bike lockers and bicycle racks.</li> </ul>

## EXISTING PARKING CONDITIONS

Public parking is available within the downtown and Hospital Zone through a mixture of on-street parking and off-street municipal parking lots and parkades. A total of 1,636 legal parking spaces were identified and surveyed within the primary on-street study area and a total of 2,053 off-street parking spaces were documented across eight (8) surface lots and five (5) parkades. Regarding monthly permits, spaces are available in several lots, except for P1, P4 and P6 which do not have monthly permits available and P1 and P6 have permit waitlists.

Within the primary study area, there is a maximum 2-hour free on-street parking limit within the hospital zone, except in no parking zones and a maximum 3-hour free on-street parking limit within the Downtown, except in no parking zones. Parking on-street is prohibited from 12:00 AM to 7:00 AM between October and April.

Parking in Prince George is enforced using a License Plate Recognition (LPR) system, with patrols conducted by a team that monitors both on-street and off-street parking. Patrols occur 1-2 times daily in key areas, with overnight security provided by Paladin Security. Parking infractions are managed through a ticketing system, with fines for repeat offenses and provisions for towing vehicles under certain conditions. The City uses Ventek



for LPR verification and HotSpot for parking management and payments, offering various permits to accommodate different parking needs. This system aims to ensure efficient, accessible, and fair parking management.

Detailed below is a summary of the parking data collection that was undertaken as part of this study:

- Parking utilization surveys were conducted on four (4) days in early May 2025. Peak parking demand in the hospital zone was observed on Wednesday May 7, 2025, at 10:00 AM with a total of 133 on-street spaces occupied, representing a low overall utilization.
- For downtown on-street demand, peak demand was observed on both Tuesday May 6, 2025, and Thursday May 8, 2025, at 11:00 AM with a peak utilization rate of 51%. In the evenings, there is significant residual supply on primary streets with the highest utilization rate observed along 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, with 47% of the total supply occupied at 6:00 PM on Friday May 9, 2025.
- A parking turnover survey was also conducted along the downtown streets to determine whether users are abiding by the posted parking time limits. 85-88% of vehicles parked were observed to abide by the 3-hour limit, while 12-15% were observed to stay beyond the posted time limit. These results indicate that most vehicles currently follow the permitted parking time limits, although the rate of non-compliance is considered high.
- Regarding downtown off-street demand, the highest observed demand was on Wednesday May 7, 2025, at 10:00 AM where a combined total of 673 off-street spaces were occupied, indicating a utilization rate of 33%. Overall, there is significant residual supply across both on-street and off-street parking facilities.

## PUBLIC AND STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

Public and stakeholder consultation was conducted throughout the study to introduce the public to the study's goals and objectives and allow community members to provide feedback on parking issues and their personal experiences. An online survey was launched for five (5) weeks between March and April 2025, an in-person Public Open House (POH) was held on Wednesday June 25, 2025 to present the preliminary study recommendations. In addition, six (6) key stakeholders were consulted between April and May 2025 to receive commentary on parking issues and opportunities within Prince George. **Table 2** outlines the key consultation events and meetings during the study.

Table 2: List of Consultation Events and Meetings

Stakeholder	Date
Accessibility Committee	April 17, 2025
Council of Seniors	May 20, 2025
CityFest Public Engagement	May 21, 2025
Transit Planner, Transportation & Technical Services	May 21, 2025
Downtown BIA, Chamber of Commerce, Tourism PG	May 22, 2025
Northern Health	May 28, 2025



## CRIME PREVENTION THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN (CPTED) REVIEW

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles were reviewed to determine where deficiencies currently exist that may be contributing to public safety or security concerns. Detailed below is a summary of the key study observations and recommendations:

- Site observations indicate that multiple break-ins have occurred at the P10 George Street Parkade due to the poor design of the entrance gate.
- Poor lighting and limited visibility within stairwells and vestibules were noted at several off-street parking facilities, which contributes to a perceived lack of safety.
- There are several opportunities to improve the safety and security within the on- and off-street lots. Cost effective design interventions can be implemented such as CCTV cameras and emergency call stations, stairwell and lighting improvements, and perimeter fencing for surface lots.
- In addition, exterior façade improvements and ground floor activation of city-owned parkades can increase perceived safety, provide space for public art, and contribute to an enhanced public realm and downtown beautification.

## BACKGROUND AND FUTURE DEMAND ASSESSMENT

The Civic Core District Plan envisions a performing arts centre situated on the former Four Seasons Pool site, an ice arena on the current site of the Kopar Memorial Arena and a mixed-use hotel next to the proposed performing arts space and a mixed-use residential development on the previous Knights Inn property. To frame the study recommendations, it was necessary to understand the future parking needs of Downtown Prince George, particularly as it relates to the Civic Core District Plan and the associated parking demand that planned civic facilities will generate. Parking demand growth was calculated in relation to the City's overall population growth (1.02% per year) as outlined in the draft OCP. A higher growth rate for accessible parking demand is anticipated based on the increased growth of the senior population (1.23% per year).

Four scenarios were considered, a baseline scenario, a low scenario, medium scenario and a high scenario, each contemplating a different sized arena and performing arts venue. The low scenario is anticipated to have a peak demand of 944 parking spaces, the medium scenario will have a peak demand of 1,058 parking spaces, and the high scenario will have a peak demand of 1,915 parking spaces.

Two options were proposed to support the future parking demand:

- Option 1 assumes the removal of both P11 and P12 temporary surface lots, which is required to enable the construction of the Civic Core District Plan facilities.
- Option 2 assumes the removal of both P11 and P12, as well as the removal of P7 Plaza Parkade due to ageing facility maintenance costs.

Overall, in the low/medium scenario (small arena, small/large venue), future parking demand can be accommodated with the preferred parking (close to the venue) and extended on-street supply (15 minutes or less from the venue).



If the high scenario is selected (large arena, large venue), a shuttle bus service linking off-street lots to the arena and performing arts venue is recommended and P7 Plaza Parkade should either be maintained or replaced with a parkade of similar capacity.

## SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The study recommendations were determined based on the feedback received from the public and key stakeholders, the review of comparable best practices in other municipalities, and the future parking demand assessment.

With respect to the Civic Core District Plan, three (3) alternatives that were considered to address the expected parking demand from the arena and performing arts venue as shown in **Table 3**.

Table 3: Civic Core District Alternatives

Alternative	Pros	Cons
<b>Alternative #1:</b> Provide On-site Arena/Venue Parking (944-1,915 spaces)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Parking is closest to destination</li><li>• Other off-street parking facilities could be potentially sold</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Very high cost (\$50-100m+), would need to be recovered through property tax or high user fees</li></ul>
<b>Alternative #2:</b> Utilize Hourly Off-Street + On-Street Parking Only	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No changes required to the monthly permit system or parkade access</li><li>• Existing infrastructure can be maintained</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Residents will strongly prefer free on-street vs. hourly off-street</li><li>• Could negatively impact parking availability for restaurants / bars</li><li>• Longer walking distances will be required</li><li>• Large 5.5k seat arena option is not feasible</li></ul>
<b>Alternative #3 (Preferred)</b> Reimagine Off-Street + On-Street System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Leverages existing public assets</li><li>• Creates a flexible system to accommodate special event demand</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Public education will be required</li><li>• Some upfront costs to switch to new payment + permit model</li></ul>

**Table 4** summarizes the study's recommendations and implementation plan. The full set of recommendations and supporting evaluation are provided in the study report.



Table 4: Summary of Recommendations and Implementation Plan

Category	Recommendation	Timing	Cost Type	Cost
Civic Core District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remove P11 and P12 surface lots without replacement</li> </ul>	Medium-Term	Capital	Low
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Under low/medium scenario (2.5k seat arena), P7 Plaza Parkade can be removed <u>OR</u></li> <li>Under high scenario (5.5k arena), P7 Parkade should be maintained or replaced with equivalent parking supply</li> </ul>	Medium-Term	Capital	High
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adopt a hybrid free/paid parking system while reducing on-street downtown free-parking to 2-hours between 7:00 AM and 7:00 PM. Initiate paid parking on identified streets at a rate of \$1.0 per hr.</li> </ul>	Medium-Term	Program	Medium
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide the following infrastructure in on- and off-street parking facilities through the following initiatives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On-Street: Physical pay stations every 1-2 blocks complimented with directional signage</li> <li>Off-Street: Adjust the existing access configuration to allow evening/weekend use by non-permit holders (where applicable). Provide pay stations for hourly and event parking</li> <li>Off-Street: Digital displays be provided at parkade entrances which indicate parking availability; web/app- integration is also strongly recommended</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Medium- to Long-Term	Capital and Program	Medium
On-Street Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase the frequency of patrols, prioritizing areas with high levels of infractions. Assess the feasibility of switching to mail-based ticket issuance to increase staff capacity.</li> </ul>	Short-Term	Program	Medium
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a public awareness initiative to communicate the applicable parking rules and regulations.</li> </ul>	Short-Term	Program	Low
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review and revise the existing parking by-law to align with current operational practices, updated parking zones, and enforcement procedures.</li> </ul>	Short-Term	Program	Low
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Frequency of by-law patrols to be increased to hourly patrols during paid parking hours to ensure a high rate of compliance</li> </ul>	Long-Term	Capital and Program	Medium
Off-Street Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement hourly/daily paid parking at the P13 surface lot</li> </ul>	Short-Term	Capital and Program	Low

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess the feasibility of expanding the P4 Earl Brown Lot.</li> </ul>	Medium-Term	Capital and Program	Medium
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>P1 Westel Lot and P8 Westel Parkade: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For a 2.5k seat arena, the P1 Westel Lot and P8 Westel Parkade lease agreements do not need to be renewed. In addition, the P7 Plaza Parkade can be removed at its appropriate lifecycle stage.</li> <li>For a 5.5k seat arena, the City should ensure parking is provided at the P1 Westel Lot and P8 Westel Parkade through a renewed lease or a private agreement. The P7 Plaza Parkade should be maintained or replaced with a facility of equivalent supply</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Short-Term	Program	Low
Safety and Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investment be targeted towards state of good repair, exterior design and active ground floor uses, and safety/security improvements to retained off-street facilities</li> </ul>	Short- to Long-Term	Capital	Medium/High
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement the following design interventions at off-street parking facilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Install emergency call stations and CCTV cameras.</li> <li>Address lighting deficiencies and provide non-motion lighting in stairwells to deter unwanted activity.</li> <li>Increase visibility at elevator and stairwell entrances with windows or transparent glass.</li> <li>Add short height fencing to improve the perimeter of surface lots (where feasible).</li> <li>Harden P10 George Street parkade entrance with standard gauged overhead door.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Medium- to Long-Term	Capital and Program	Medium/High
Hospital Zone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Addition of signage indicating 2-hour free parking is included within the HotSpot paid parking zones. Physical pay stations should also be provided for those users without a smartphone.</li> </ul>	Short-Term	Capital	Medium
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3-4 accessible parking spaces should be provided within the free 2-hour zone and should be located near major building entrances.</li> </ul>	Short-Term	Capital	Low
Parking Permits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adjust monthly permit pricing on an annual basis based on observed demand, introduce flexible business permit.</li> </ul>	Short-Term	Program	Low
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monthly permit and reserved model transition towards a daytime permit (i.e. 5:00 AM to 5:00 PM).</li> </ul>	Long-Term	Program	Low
Accessible Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Add accessible parking to address existing coverage deficiencies</li> </ul>	Short- to Long-Term	Capital and Program	Medium



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop website portal for residents to request additional accessible parking</li> </ul>	Medium-Term	Program	Low
PUDO, EV Charging and Bike Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consult with businesses and HandyDart operator regarding the installation of PUDO zones at identified priority locations</li> </ul>	Short-Term	Program	Low
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement EV charging at identified high priority locations and based on observed demand</li> </ul>	Medium- to Long-Term	Capital and Program	Medium
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Add bicycle parking facilities in line with ATP recommendations</li> </ul>	Medium-Term	Capital	Low
2 <sup>nd</sup> Avenue Conversion and P3 Columbus Lot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conversion of 2nd Avenue to two-way traffic, add angled parking and improve the sidewalks and public realm</li> </ul>	Medium- to Long-Term	Capital and Program	Medium/High
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor and assess the long-term need for P3 Columbus Lot</li> </ul>	Long-Term	Capital and Program	Low