

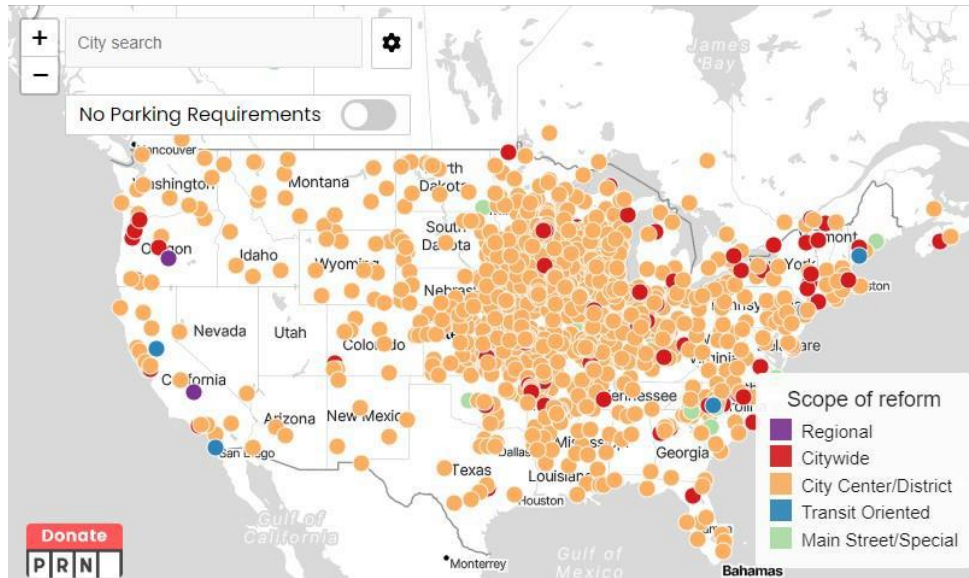
# PARKING MINIMUMS RECONSIDERED

Currently, the City of Steinbach zoning by-law requires 1.5 car parking stalls for every dwelling unit in a multi-family building, with a single lockable bicycle stall being required for every 20 car stalls, with a minimum of 2 bike stalls.

If the goal of the city is to densify downtown and to incentivise active transportation by building housing within walking distance of amenities, this directly contradicts this goal because room that could be used for extra dwelling units is taken up by extra parking. The City of Winnipeg has seen success in reducing parking requirements (sometimes as low as 0.8 stalls per unit) where extra bike parking can be provided, and efficient active transportation is in place near the development.

Edmonton has gone further, and in 2020 adopted a city-wide “Open Option Parking” bylaw[1] that gives developers, homeowners and business owners the freedom to decide how much on-site parking they want based on their unique needs and activities.

Edmonton’s decision comes in the wake of hundreds of other North American cities that have dropped parking requirements for part or all of their communities. Why? Parking minimums discourage business start-ups, density and affordability. The American Planning Association discusses these issues in a June 2022 article: “A Business Case for Dropping Parking Minimums”. [2]



Places of all sizes are eliminating parking minimums. An interactive map allows viewers to drill down into the reforms undertaken by over 200 North American cities, half of whom are under 100k population.

Credit: Parking Reform Network

Because of the City of Steinbach’s CBD and CBD Transitional Zone contain almost everything a person needs within walking distance, we believe it would be in the best interest of the city to reduce the parking requirements within these two zones. Another avenue of approach would be to reduce the parking stall requirements for affordable housing as people in affordable housing are less likely to own cars, meaning these units or suites do not require car parking stalls, but are more likely to require bike stalls. The City of Winnipeg has also been implementing this approach with only a single parking stall for multiple units.



An image depicting how many bikes can fit in once car stall (Source: Bike Delaware Inc.)

A common problem for cyclists who are commuting to Steinbach's downtown is the complete lack of proper bicycle parking. It is not an uncommon sight on a warm summer day to see a dozen bicycles locked to trees or lamp posts around the sidewalk patios on Main Street, simply because there are no proper bike racks to park in. With most businesses on Main Street being built with no front setback it means bike racks need to be built on the boulevard; between the street and the sidewalk lies a ~5'-0" wide strip of pavers and trees which would be the perfect spot for bike racks, not impeding traffic and not impeding pedestrians using the sidewalk but being close to the front doors of businesses.



*A boulevard bike rack in Winnipeg (Source: West End Biz)*

Not only are these bike racks useful, but they don't need to be an eyesore either. Winnipeg has done a great job at implementing these gorgeous bike racks on boulevards all around the city. There is no reason that Steinbach cannot implement something similar, of course more lowkey options exist which would match the downtown better, even blending into the environment. Certainly nothing can look worse than a bunch of bikes being locked to random trees. Ideally these bike racks would be provided all along both sides of Main Street and the required bike stalls for residential units can be provided within the building, resulting in adequate private bike stalls and adequate public bike stalls.

Sources:

1 **City of Edmonton** – Parking Rules for New Homes and Businesses. Website:

[https://www.edmonton.ca/city\\_government/urban\\_planning\\_and\\_design/comprehensive-parking-review](https://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/urban_planning_and_design/comprehensive-parking-review)

2 **American Planning Assoc.** – Planning Magazine, June 2022. Website:

<https://www.planning.org/planning/2022/spring/a-business-case-for-dropping-parking-minimums/>