

WHAT WE HEARD REPORT

Land Use Bylaw Review

Project:

Parking Options for Businesses



ABOUT THE PROJECT

Cochrane's Land Use Bylaw is the municipality's primary tool to regulate the increasing growth and development the town has been experiencing over the past decade, and to control and regulate how all land is used and developed in the community. The Land Use Bylaw is arguably one of Cochrane's most important documents, and has far reaching implications for how the community is shaped.

Cochrane's current Land Use Bylaw was adopted in 2004. Town Administration has initiated a comprehensive review and re-write to ensure it remains current and effective in regulating land uses and development within the Town. It is important that the Land Use Bylaw meets the land use and development needs of its citizens and reflects Cochrane's unique character and natural landscape. Community involvement and participation in the Land Use Bylaw Review Project is integral to its success.

The Land Use Bylaw Review Project has involved the community through a variety of means, including surveys, engagement events, and online materials. The project is now in its fourth phase, which involves drafting the new bylaw, and engaging the public and stakeholders on the draft regulations.

NEW PARKING REGULATIONS FOR NON-RESIDENTIAL USES

One of the major changes being proposed through the Land Use Bylaw Review is the removal of minimum parking requirements for non-residential uses. This proposed change reflects the evolving needs of our community, and will help remove barriers to business opportunities in Cochrane, create more choice and flexibility for development, and create a more pedestrian-oriented and vibrant community.

An online survey was available on Let's Talk Cochrane from September 14, 2020 - October 13, 2020 to gather public input on the proposed change, which received 117 total responses. The following report provides an overview of all comments received. More information on the proposed removal of parking minimums can be viewed at LetsTalkCochrane.ca/BusinessParking.

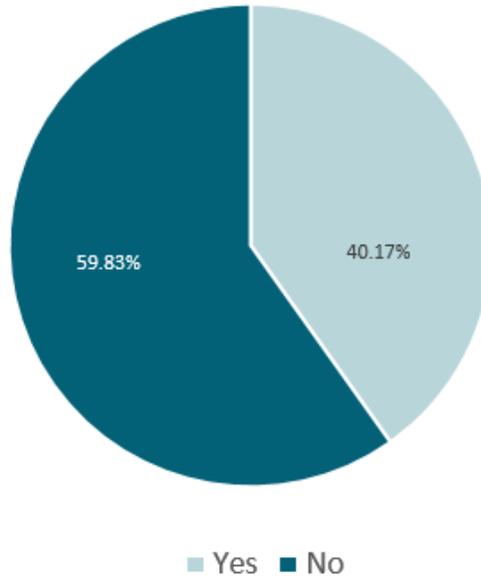
SURVEY RESULTS

Question 1

Are you answering this survey as a business owner?

Yes: 47

No: 70



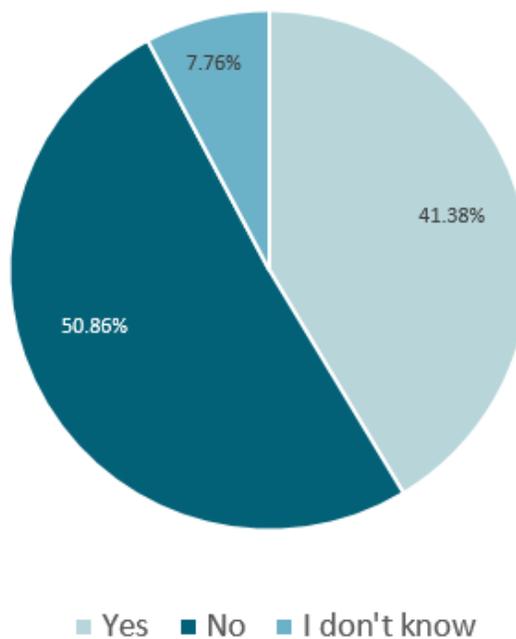
Question 2

Do you think the Town of Cochrane should allow businesses to determine their parking supply?

Yes: 47

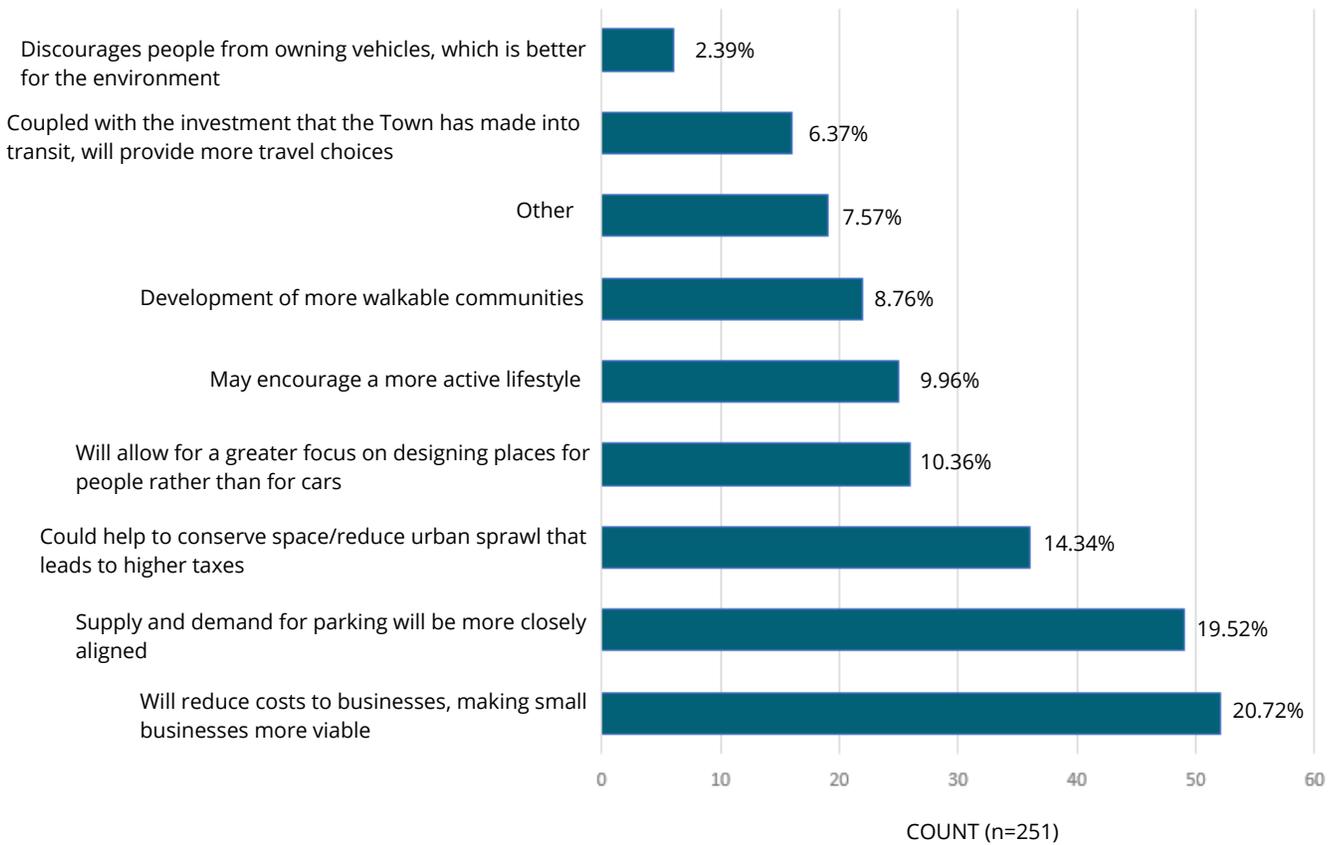
No: 70

I don't know: 9



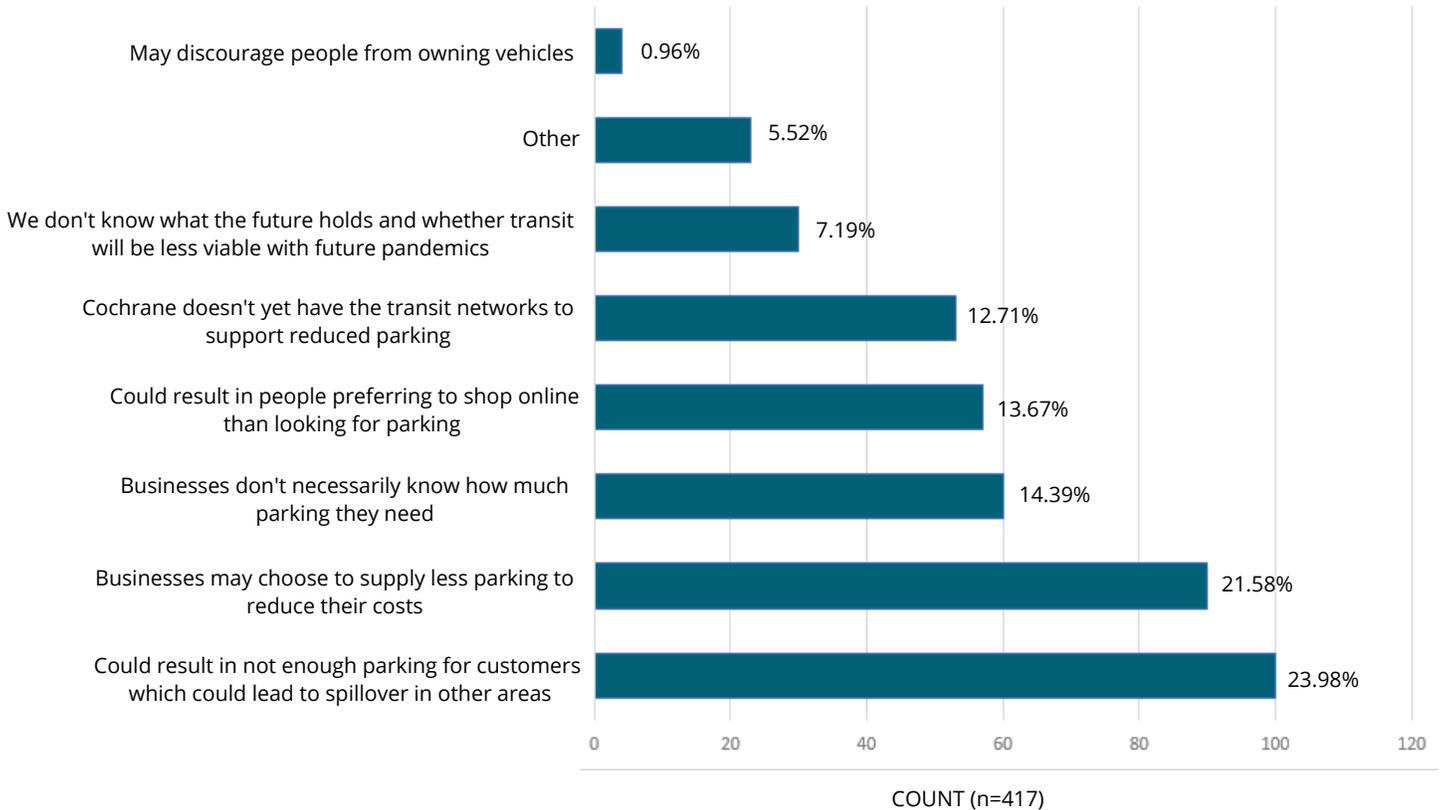
Question 3

What do you see as the advantages of the Town allowing businesses to choose how much parking they need? (Check all that apply)



Question 4

What do you see as the disadvantages of the Town allowing businesses to choose how much parking they need? (Check all that apply)



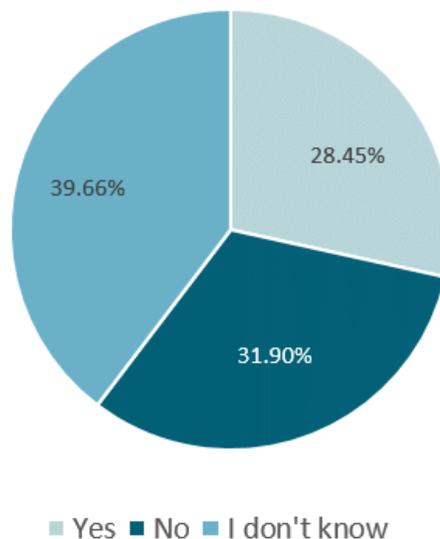
Question 5

Do you think there are enough bicycle stalls supplied at the destinations you visit?

Yes: 33

No: 37

I don't know: 46



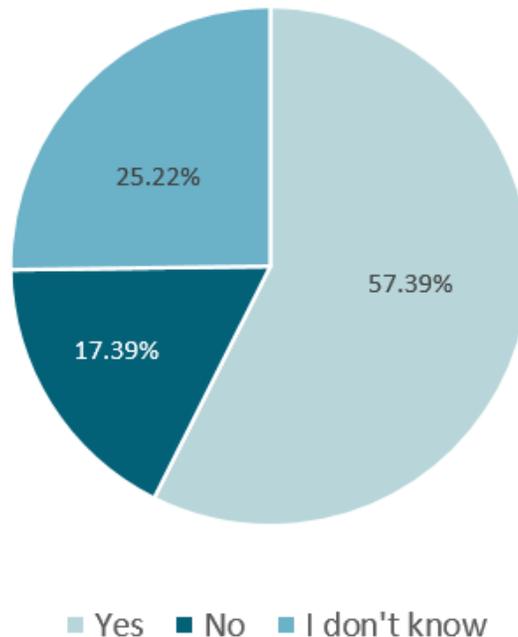
Question 5

Do you think there are enough Barrier Free parking stalls supplied at the destinations that you visit? *Barrier free can be defined as being designed for those with physical or other disabilities, also known as accessible or universal.*

Yes: 66

No: 20

I don't know: 29



Additional Comments:

- This will be a disaster. It is already. A business that must have 20 stalls will come up with some stupid reason they only need 5, get approval then have another parking nightmare. Walk through the industrial end of town where you know the problem is and don't have the balls to deal with it. Like don't panic mechanic parking everything on a public street
- There is a great need for parking in the core of Cochrane. With the Town planning having focused on developing large communities around the fringes of the town people are reliant on these parking spaces for both work and shopping. This is especially true if there is to be a greater emphasis on supporting local and shopping local. There isn't reliable, decent public transport system that would enable either seniors or parents with children the opportunity to complete their shopping and be able to transport their purchases to home without a great deal of additional effort. When the winter temperatures drop and the sidewalks are covered in ice from repeated freeze/thaw cycles people do not want to be risking injury by walking across town to shop. They want the safety and convenience of being able to use their own vehicles and park close to where they shop.

- There doesn't seem to be any advantages to not having enough parking. This a driving town and not walk friendly with all the subdivisions so far away from downtown.
- There is not enough parking in Cochrane as it is.
- Town should not be focussed on business costs!
- No advantage. See people parking illegally
- I see no advantages! It will leave the town with insufficient parking! If I cannot find parking I leave. The businesses will suffer. It is winter 8 months of the year! I am a senior and walking in the winter is not possible!
- None of these advantages will actually happen. Plus, the Colt is useless for a majority of the population.
- Less government = more business. If you want to attract business, drastically reduce our bylaws.
- Will maximize profitability by minimizing overhead costs.
- Businesses need parking for their employees in order to allow patrons to actually PARK to SHOP and SUPPORT US.
- I don't see any advantages because most of neighbourhoods in Cochrane are not walkable to downtown and there's poor investment into traffic development, making it hard enough to get to downtown so, make it harder to find a parking spot will only make things worse. So having a minimum is absolutely necessary.
- They are also trying this in Canmore (trying to make it a pedestrian community) and it has had a disastrous effects on traffic and parking. Please do not follow this model. We live in a cold climate and this is awful for people such as myself that require handicap parking stalls. I will honestly avoid shopping at stores that lack parking.
- Enforces large business's to not take up all parking for small business.
- I own a construction company that has done multiple business projects for small businesses in Cochrane. Changing the calculation for parking would have had Direct impact on building design as many have seen sacrifices to meet sq/ft to parking stall calculations vs a more holistic approach that allows the building design to tailor to business needs and location. More often than not parking is one of the first topics discussed with development officers during the design process.

- I do not see the advantages of the Town allowing business to choose how much parking they need at all. We will end up like Calgary with car laden streets, and no place for visitors to park. In general I ALSO think the Town has done a TERRIBLE job with parking for housing.
- the time of day parking stall are needed varies based on business types.
- This puts the outskirt communities at a disadvantage, their walk ability score is already low and to mix limited parking available will make these communities less desirable. This is a tourist destination and to expect people to walk to destinations isn't reasonable. There are already parking lots that have limited spaces available (CIBC/Starbucks for example or the Laundry Mat/tattoo shop) so to allow a reduced parking could be extremely damaging to the community. Businesses change constantly so when something could easily require less parking a replacement business could have a difficult time with parking down the road.
- While this may work else where, appear to reduce red tape, and might be a current trench in the planning world, the topography of Cochrane doesn't support this, literally stupid idea. Unless you reside downtown, that's pretty much everyone else, has to drive to get downtown. We already have a parking problem. This move will kill the downtown as residents will become so frustrated that they will simply choice to drive to the City to get a parking space. Again, this is a stupid planners idea that will serious hurt Cochrane in the long term.
- There are only a few neighbourhoods that could accommodate walking to the business areas. You wouldn't be able to walk from fireside to the core. What you're proposing would work better in a small town, not somewhere with a population close to 30,000.
- Increased traffic in downtown area as people search for parking.
- In other places that have reduced parking it becomes very hard, at times, to find parking. This leads to paid and time restricted spaces, people not choosing to go to places with limited parking, and those who do choose to go then find parking wherever they can even if they are not supporting the business they are parking at. If you think of Canmore or Banff who have very walkable streets, but very little parking, to walk you have to park but there are times that you drive between the assigned parking lots for hours before finding a space. The congestion of vehicles plus increased foot traffic makes for a challenge to navigate and lots of frustration. Many times places like these have less local shopping because the locals don't want to struggle getting into the local businesses.
- Cochrane has very few neighborhoods within walking distance of downtown. There already is a lack of Downtown parking. Allowing more businesses to operate without parking will have a negative affect of discouraging shoppers from shopping downtown as they will simply drive somewhere where they can park.
- This is a totally biased survey! Ducks on the Roof is a classic example of a business that was allowed to expand and not provide sufficient parking. This town is all about sprawl... Cars will rule... Transit is paid for by taxes... Parking is paid for by businesses. This appears to be a total expense shift to the taxpayers.

- I think this is short sighted. The more communities are developed, the more parking those residents will require to do shopping. The Cochrane community is not walkable from Riversong, Fireside, Heritage Hills, Heartland, Sunset and so on. I am all for using land wisely but do not feel that all business owners will what is a “right” number over saving moving.
- People need a car in Cochrane as most people work in Calgary, plus Cochrane isn't built for walking places. Also, a lack of parking won't encourage people to have a healthy lifestyle that's a silly notion. Parking may seem like too much right now, but that's because it's a pandemic and people are staying home.
- There are many more disadvantages than the listed above, maybe stop all the new massive housing developments instead of focusing on these silly topics.
- All your available answers are condescending and presumes business owners are mostly irresponsible. A change in your attitude towards your tax base will result in more business and taxes for the town of Cochrane.
- Seniors need parking. We don't get around easily sometimes. Cochrane makes everything convenient. Not everyone can get around by bike.
- Businesses will not account for Staff parking & will leD to spillover onto streets which already happens in East end business area(east of the Quarry)
- Will further contribute to the CHAOS that ALREADY is COCHRANE TRAFFIC. Do not underestimate the number of people who do business in Cochrane from out of town. They need their vehicles to get here (and we need their patronage), and will want convenient parking. An under-supply of parking will ultimately penalize customers, business owners and Cochrane residents as parking lots give way to further commercial development, higher density and nowhere to park. Unregulated parking = a parking shortage, pure and simple. Business establishments come and go and change directions. Once parking is minimized, we won't get it back and customers won't have a convenient place to land. The references above to current conditions such as public transit and the pandemic demonstrate a short-sighted bias. The Town needs to consider the long-term prospects and consequences of these decisions.
- My biggest complaint in the core of Historic Downtown Cochrane is the amount of businesses that ALLOW their employees to park their vehicles in front of OTHER businesses instead of their own!! I have so many customers complaining to me that there never seems to be any parking available.
- Most neighbourhoods locations are not walkable to downtown and most business in town.
- This is clearly an effort pushed by developers to reduce the cost of development and increase density of businesses. All that will happen is people won't provide enough parking for their needs and neighbouring businesses will subsidize the cost with people parking in their lots.

- Our town infrastructure and traffic has already been horribly impacted by extremes in traffic. Please do not allow businesses to decide their parking. It will always come down to saving costs. Please protect our town, by protected our citizens - especially those who are disabled - by allowing adequate parking. This is a horrible idea btw.
- People still prefer cars - just look at the intersection problems during a normal weekday - not 1A & 22 on a long weekend, but downtown intersections are a mess on a Tuesday or Wednesday afternoon as well. More growth is more cars, especially when the only grocery stores and banks are all in the downtown area. Your goal is admirable, but it is not based on reality - vehicle advancements talk about electrics, more enviro-friendly, etc., but they do NOT talk about less vehicles
- Not everyone can or wants to use transit
- Business owners will not choose space that does not meet their needs
- Perpetrates the old model of car first and people second. I applaud the Town of Cochrane for taking initiative to take a bold step towards a healthier future for all of us. Build the accessibility today for tomorrow so we can walk cycle scoot trike and x-county ski our way around! And only use car as last resort or when we need to load up. It works in plenty of places around the world and we will be seeing more of it. Well done.
- Few Business Owners are Property Owners
- There are already enough infrastructure problems in Cochrane, this will just add more.
- As stated above, my biggest complaint is the lack of respect from other businesses with parking. Employees should NOT be allowed to take up parking spaces that are needed to patrons visiting said businesses
- Cochrane is not a walkable town in that most businesses are in the downtown core and a large majority of residents live in the newer communities, which are very disconnected. Unlike the City of Calgary, our path systems are not cleared of snow in a timely manner, which further hampers walkability. The only area in town that seems to have a surplus of parking is in the Quarry, most other business areas are severely lacking in parking, especially around where the smaller/independent businesses are. I have never seen a cyclist use the bike lanes through the Quarry so I can only assume the bike stalls are sufficient. To count Barrier Free parking as sufficient, one needs to look at more than just the number of stalls but rather, is the stall truly barrier free (width of stall, availability and accessibility of ramps).
- Taking away parking as the town grows larger, not including outside visitors would be the most moronic thing to do when the parking and traffic situation already blows.

- There is also an issue with parking available for employees...many times employees from one business are not allowed to park in the business parking which is designated for customers, so instead they spill over into other businesses parking stalls, this should also be addressed in this proposal!
- If insufficient parking is supplied/mandated you will:
 - A) Discourage tourism
 - B) Exacerbate existing traffic problems (both with traffic and pedestrian crossings)
 - C) Strain inadequate pedestrian infrastructure.
 - D) Encourage more parking in communities, and subsequently increasing danger to pedestrians (esp. children).
 - E) Increase the incidence of frost-bite (We do not live in California; we should not adopt ill-suited solutions to local problems as Calgary has. Rather, we should develop or adopt solutions that best fit the context).

As an aside. Stop putting lights, stop signs, and unjustifiably long 30km/h zones everywhere. You are making the town a transportation nightmare.
- Business know exactly what they need for parking, parking lot assessments are far less than building assessments, the only issue that presents itself is to form of future developments. The existing Commercial area north of the tracks is very predictable, new areas however would likely require a well conceived zoning bylaw, probably form based zoning would be the best option here.
- Angle parking is good
- Just say no to this and deal with traffic before coming up with these weird ideas.
- Encourage the Town to continue to deregulate. There are numerous bylaws that can't be enforced and as such add no value.
- I find that, like in areas like the Quarry, there seems to be an excess of parking. There are other areas just outside the Quarry that there is nowhere near the amount required for some of the businesses. I would like to see more sidewalks and proper curbing on the east side of the Quarry. Downtown, especially on weekends and during the summer doesn't seem to have enough parking. I personally have left downtown to shop at big box because of lack of available parking. Not good support for the little guy. Thanks for listening
- I don't have a permit for barrier free parking and I don't want one but I do live far enough from downtown I need to drive and have physical limitations that make walking further a frustration especially if anything has to be carried. I hope that preference is still given to those with disabilities, expectant mothers and young kids. I try to not take a prime space if I see someone else who might need it more.

- My business is on River Avenue where the town is considering removing on street parking to put in a bike lane. I own a bike shop, you would think I would be in support of this idea, right? I'm not. 95% of my customers come to my store by car: to drop off/pick up a bike for repair, to purchase a new bike, I have many customers from Calgary that come in their cars of course too. The reality is that this town is not and will never be bikeable for a major portion of the population considering most people live up on a hill and have no safe way of riding downtown to do their shopping. Every single business on this road does not have enough parking and relies on the on street parking. There is not enough parking in general in Cochrane because it is a car centric community. If you reduce parking you make it harder for businesses to survive because if parking is inconvenient people will just shop where they work (in Calgary). I appreciate your efforts to make our town more bikeable /walkable, but it's far too late for that after all the development. I think you're dreaming if you think you can get people (and don't forget most people have young kids so visiting businesses with them by bike would be very difficult) out of their cars and on bikes to do their shopping.
- My biggest concern is that businesses will try and reduce costs leading to not enough parking. Businesses likely don't really know how much they need.
- Really need to think about the out-skirting communities. I live in fireside and by having business able to chose how much parking they supply could result in less stalls so they can save money. By having less stalls creates people waiting or not even finding a stall I will move onto the next store or just take my business into the city where I don't have to fight or wait for a parking stall.
- If the Town keeps approving residential development, you need to ensure there is sufficient parking everywhere, and improved roads to manage increased traffic. You cannot force people to walk an not drive cars. That is an obtrusive idealistic objective.
- Did you not realize how many communities CANNOT walk to stores ????
- Bad idea to allow businesses to determine. They will buy cheaper places with less stalls and cause massive spill over. If you want more parking go to Springwood and lease back parking space.
- this is not and never will be a bicycle town, i myself ride recreationally shopping on a bike is very difficult
- You can see places where not enough parking is considered (historic downtown, Cochrane Home treasures, Home Reno Heaven, the little caesars building, ETC and it can actually lead to lower sales because people want to be able to find a parking spot easily.
- I have a handi pass and use it on a regular basis. Accessible parking is required but I have had reasonable success finding it in the DT. Like regular stalls I may have to search for them on occasion but that's reasonable to me.

- I was an architectural designer here in Cochrane and the Calgary area for over 15 years. I was the designer of Lofts on the Bow here in Cochrane. I have worked with multiple municipal bylaws and know the value they bring and the frustration they can invoke. There is a reason minimum parking stalls are required by the bylaws. In the end it does more good than harm and ensures parking is adequate for most businesses. I do believe there are locations (like the downtown core) where the minimum parking may need to be negotiated or relaxed. In fact building a multi story parkade somewhere downtown is needed. However in new developed areas and bigger commercial areas it is easy to work with the minimum parking required. Now as a former designer I believe maybe there should be negotiations with sector specific business and to determine if the current minimums are indeed required. Currently I am pastoring a church in Cochrane and our church is in the planning stages of building and addition and renovation. I see how the current calculation for parking for churches is necessary but also see a flaw in the calculation and number of stalls required. It's time to sit down with architects, businesses, and the like and recalculate the minimum number of stalls, not just do away with them. If Calgary building the ring road and Cochrane getting ready to twin highways through town are any indication, they are telling us our society is built on the automobile and that is not going to change anytime soon. We need to make sure we build and plan smart and sustainable communities.
- I believe that there should be some sort of minimum number of parking stalls, but that number could be and should be reduced. One look at the Walmart, Canadian tire, Extra foods parking lot on any given day will show that the parking lots are never full to capacity. This trickles down to even the smallest business that is required to have 4 or 5 stalls and rarely if ever are all those stalls filled.
- As an Architectural Technologist, I've had to alter many designs to allow clients to have businesses in certain locations. The small businesses that I have done work for in the past always have an abundance of parking that goes unused.
- Centralized parking like parkades over the tracks connecting historic Cochrane to the business center would simplify parking and enable the many bike friendly and walking friendly community design points noted in this survey.
- We don't live in a favorable year round climate to allow individuals to want to walk to solicit local businesses. Cochrane already has an urban sprawl problem and the layout of the many residential communities was not designed for walkability to be able to support local businesses by foot in the downtown core.
- I think there needs to be more handicap parking along 1 St W.
- TOOO many barrier free parking stalls. ALSO the Town needs to stop approving back lanes with rear garages for houses. The residents end up parking on the streets in front of their houses, making the streets ugly and impassable, and unsafe.

- What we have seems sufficient at the moment although I'm not requiring universal access - yet! But certainly even bikes and trike bicycles (adult tricycles) which we'll see more of hopefully as people want to stay active can be better accommodated than they are now. Bike lanes and walking paths are a progressive investment in the health of your citizens.
- There is nothing about the "advantages" of parking minimums in the presentation of this survey, only the disadvantages. The questions are obviously biased towards reducing parking, entire survey and process once again seems skewed towards a green agenda to squeeze vehicles off of the roads which is not effective for our urban sprawled Canadian society in that we do not have an effective / affordable / public transit option (driving empty City Buses around all day is a waste of tax money and clearly not working based on way you have to try to book it). Less vehicles, and a walking community is not feasible otherwise there would already be a private enterprise transit option available. Someone needs to do a balanced 2 sided actual study of who actual people in town vs who ride bikes for the few months of the year - we are not Vancouver in terms of congestion and climate. This entire survey seems to be either naive or presumptive in its presentation to claim that "business owners will have more choice and flexibility". No they won't, commercial real estate developers / landlords will determine this, of which there are basically 3 main ones in town who own and control most of the business space. The rest are small businesses renting from them. How will a tenant (which most of the businesses in town are) be able to decide parking needs when no stalls exist? There already are various examples of not enough parking in several key areas already (most of 1st Street, all along Railway St, Centre Ave in older area which now has lost street parking, most of the businesses or mini-malls in these areas are congested, even the newly planned Canadian Tire and Walmart Parking lots for most of this summer were overflowing on weekends into other areas) with more to come as our population / traffic grows. The planning department needs to go discuss the satisfaction of "parking planning" with the people who have invested all of their financial resources into their homes in all of the new subdivisions and see what they have to say. I'm sure they do not even want to ask the question, but only then do you have some feedback from the citizens who pay the taxes as to what they think about yet more enforced walking/cycling options and trying to squeeze vehicles off the road.
- With business in the downtown core..the employees should be able to park behind the business and not be allowed only a couple of stalls., there fore leaving front parking for public use. The public generally parks anywhere on the street and then walks to the business. If there is a tight situation for public parking where the building dominates the lot then in lieu parking should be provided by the town.