

## Walter, Penny

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**From:** City Council  
**Subject:** FW: Email - Communication - Karen Kobussen - Minimum Parking Requirements - CK 4350-024-001  
**Attachments:** Letter to City Council\_Remove Parking Requirements\_07.31.24.pdf

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**From:** Web NoReply <web-noreply@Saskatoon.ca>  
**Sent:** Monday, July 29, 2024 4:30 PM  
**To:** City Council <City.Council@Saskatoon.ca>  
**Subject:** Email - Communication - Karen Kobussen - Minimum Parking Requirements - CK 4350-024-001

--- Replies to this email will go to [REDACTED] ---

Submitted on Monday, July 29, 2024 - 16:29

Submitted by user: [REDACTED]

Submitted values are:

**I have read and understand the above statements.:** Yes

**I do not want my comments placed on a public agenda. They will be shared with members of Council through their online repository.:** No

**I only want my comments shared with the Mayor or my Ward Councillor.:** No

**Date:** Monday, July 29, 2024

**To:** His Worship the Mayor and Members of City Council

**First Name:** Karen

**Last Name:** Kobussen

**Phonetic spelling of first and/or last name:** KO-buh-sen

**Email:** [REDACTED]

**I live outside of Saskatoon:** No

**Saskatoon Address and Ward:**

**Address:** [REDACTED] Avenue P

**Ward:** Ward 4

**Name of the organization or agency you are representing (if applicable):** Strong Towns YXE

**What do you wish to do ?:** Submit Comments

**What meeting do you wish to speak/submit comments ? (if known)::** Public Hearing Wed July 31

**What agenda item do you wish to comment on ?:** Zoning Bylaw Amendment to Remove Minimum Parking Requirements [GPC2023-0503]

**Comments:**

Please see attached letter from Strong Towns YXE

**Will you be submitting a video to be vetted prior to council meeting?:** No

## **Parking Reform Brings Good Things!**

As far back as 2009, the City of Saskatoon has made exemptions for “right-sizing” parking requirements for developments where it made sense. The Housing Business Plan, 2013-2022, specifically included “bonuses” for projects which provided more living space in exchange for reducing parking space. This “trade-off” has been ongoing for at least a decade.

And, probably, no one has even noticed. The day after any city repeals its mandatory parking minimums, it’s still the exact same city. Existing parking is not affected, and not a single parking space will be added or removed as a direct consequence of that simple policy change.

Anchorage, Alaska is one of the most recent places to end parking mandates citywide, one of at least over 100 North American cities to have done so, at current count. Ottawa, Calgary, Edmonton, Toronto, Montreal, Regina and now Vancouver are all Canadian cities who have essentially eliminated parking minimums. Why? Because in almost every city in North America, we have developed about 50% more parking spaces than we actually needed.

Parking reform in Anchorage was, in some ways, promoted and passed as the keystone of an ambitious pro-housing agenda that has continued to bear fruit. In the time since, Anchorage has also relaxed restrictions on accessory dwelling units, on residential lot zoning regulations. They have created more flexibility for housing in downtown and made small-scale missing-middle housing such as triplexes and fourplexes more viable by streamlining onerous rules and restrictions.

The key to all this knowledge, and what makes this city so unique, was that Anchorage documented the outcomes of parking reform as they happened. They measured the benefits from day 1, and what they learned was that parking reform is not just a housing issue. It’s so much more.

### **Lessons learned from Anchorage, Alaska:**

#### ***Spur Development Where None Was Happening***

Glacier City Center, a project in the ski community of Girdwood (which is outside Anchorage but within its municipal boundaries), cut its on-site parking from 40 to 14 spaces, reclaiming valuable land for additional commercial space. Prior to parking reform, only one new business had opened in Girdwood in a decade. Ending parking mandates was a key reason for this.

#### ***Grant Crucial Flexibility to Small Businesses***

A Mexican restaurant in Anchorage had seen its renovation plans stymied by an untenably expensive requirement to expand an already-underused parking lot to an enormous 99 spaces. The passage of parking reform made it possible for the restaurant to undertake a phased redevelopment plan.

#### ***Make Affordable Housing Possible***

After parking reform, Anchorage’s Barratt Inn was able to be converted into permanent low-income housing, providing 96 badly needed affordable apartments and helping to address the city’s growing homelessness crisis. The reuse project would have not been allowed under the prior parking requirement.

### ***Make Missing-Middle Housing Possible***

Multiple examples are cited of small infill condo and duplex projects that would have been denied development permits under the previous parking code. Legalizing these options makes it possible to add needed housing in established neighborhoods.

### ***Cut Back on Bureaucracy***

A Costco store in Anchorage was able to alter its loading dock, removing several customer parking spaces, without having to receive permission from the planning department. This saves city staff time and money scrutinizing minor decisions that are best left to individual businesses.

### ***Right-Size Parking Without Eliminating It***

What is clear from the Anchorage examples documented is that builders are still providing parking. Alaska's largest city is hardly Toronto or Vancouver, heck, it's not even Saskatoon! But, the example of Anchorage — and everywhere parking reform is enacted — makes it possible for parking decisions to be made according to actual context and need, instead of conforming to an arbitrary and unproductive mandate.

In Saskatoon, we just saw a 34-unit apartment, intended for student housing, have their development permit application denied because they were 7 parking stalls short from the requirements. Seven. This project over-compensated for bicycle parking, was about 2 blocks from transit to the University, and the majority of units in the building were designed as micro-units, that is, bachelor suites intended for a specific demographic — single, university students. So, while the project still had ample parking designed into its concept plan, the current parking minimum requirements had to be enforced. An appeal was filed, time and delays contributed costs to the project, but in the end, the Development Appeals Board decided that seven parking spots were not going to take precedent over 34 new housing units. In the end, the ruling was overturned, and the project allowed to be built. And, no one in the entire City will even be affected by this ruling and the loss of 7 parking stalls.

Ending parking minimums does not mean that no parking will be built at all, it just means that we will build the right amount of parking and free up valuable land for things that matter — more housing, economic development, and saving time and money for the City and for industry.

Respectfully,

Karen Kobussen

