Corporation of the City of
NEW WESTMINSTER

REPORT
Engineering Services

To:	Mayor Johnstone and Members of Council	**Date**:	September 29, 2025
From:	Lisa Leblanc Director, Engineering Services & Deputy CAO	**File**:	05.1035.10 (Doc #2764059)
		Item #:	2025-276

Subject: **Implications of Housing Legislation on Curbside Management**

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Next Steps outlined in the report titled "Implications of Housing Legislation on Curbside Management" dated September 29, 2025 from the Director, Engineering Services, be endorsed.

PURPOSE

This report provides Council with information on the consequential curbside impacts associated with provincial housing legislation and requests Council endorse the work outlined in Next Steps.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report outlines the curbside implications of increasing housing in areas of the City that have historically accommodated single-detached residential and duplex uses, which must now accommodate higher residential densities of four units or more. The report also provides approaches to address identified challenges, and next steps to be undertaken to support effective curbside management.

BACKGROUND

In December 2023, the provincial government adopted amendments to the *Local Government Act* to prescribe how and where local governments can permit more housing, with the intention of better enabling local governments to accelerate housing supply. Bill 44 / 2023 introduced Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing (SSMUH), which mandates zoning changes to allow up to four units per residential lot that currently permit single-detached residential and duplex residential uses. Up to six units must be allowed near prescribed stops along the frequent transit network (FTN), and off-street parking cannot be a requirement in these prescribed areas.

In February 2024, the City was awarded an $11.4 million grant from the Housing Accelerator Fund established by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation to advance housing initiatives aimed at improving the housing approval process and expanding housing choices. Two principal initiatives being implemented by the City include the Townhouse Program and Infill Housing Program.

DISCUSSION

Although redevelopment is expected to occur gradually, it will place greater demands on the City's road network and curbside space as infill housing and townhouse developments are permitted throughout the City. As such, the ability to prioritize and manage growth, as the City has historically done, will no longer be viable. Without the ability to prioritize investment in targeted areas, it is anticipated that City resources, including financial and staff resources, will be challenged to support this new growth pattern.

Specific areas that will require more focus as it relates to curbside management include:

- Curb space prioritization and regulation
- Lane construction and connectivity to local streets
- Solid waste operations
- Parking enforcement
- Residential permit parking

Outlined below is further information regarding each of these areas.

Curb Space Prioritization and Regulation

As the City densifies and transportation services and modes evolve, demand for curbside space will increase. The City's Master Transportation Plan incorporates current best practices for curbside access by prioritizing uses according to the Hierarchy of Curbside Access (Figure 1). This prioritization facilitates the evaluation of trade-offs necessary to ensure curb space is equitably allocated to serve the greatest needs within limited, finite

space, and helps ensure the Master Transportation Plan's sustainable transportation goals and Climate Action mode share targets can be achieved.

Figure 1: Master Transportation Plan Hierarchy of Curbside Access



Why the Curbside Access Hierarchy is Important

- **Curbside space is finite**. New Westminster has 404 km of curbside space, excluding lanes. Of this space, 67% is currently unregulated, meaning it is used for on-street parking and loading without limitation. The curbside supports a range of functions including bus stops, passenger and commercial loading, and placement of solid waste, recycling and organics carts (where lanes are not available), among other functions. Given finite curb space, the City will increasingly need to prioritize and regulate its use to ensure the greatest benefit for the greatest number of people. As the City implements its All Ages and Abilities (AAA) Active Transportation Network Plan, and bus speed and reliability measures, there will be further reductions in curb space available for storing cars.

- **Maintaining road sightlines is essential for road safety.** A substantial percentage of pedestrian and cyclist collisions occur at intersections as a result of limited sightline visibility. Limited sightline visibility also impacts City solid waste and emergency response vehicle drivers. Current best practice is to remove visual obstructions, including on-street parking, near intersections that prevent vehicle drivers from seeing pedestrians, cyclists and other road users. The National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) recommends 6.1-7.6 m of clear space from intersections and some crosswalks require up to 15 m of clearance. As capital projects such as the Active Transportation Network Plan are implemented and as the City advances a Vision Zero approach, intersection sightlines are being adjusted to meet these clear space recommendations to improve safety.

- **Vehicle ownership rates are not declining.** Despite the City's and region's focused investment efforts in sustainable transportation, it remains likely that as the City's population grows, so too will its vehicle population. Passenger vehicle ownership rates in both the City and region have remained relatively unchanged over the past eight years. In 2024, vehicle ownership rates in the City were 0.43 vehicles per person, above the eight-year average of 0.41 vehicles per person. Refer to Attachment 1 for a summary of vehicle ownership trends. For the Lower Mainland, 2024 vehicle ownership rates were 0.47 vehicles per person[1]. Vehicle ownership is also higher for people living in single-detached, duplex, and townhouse dwellings than apartment dwellings. (See Attachment 1: Vehicle Ownership.) Increased significant behaviour changes will be required to change vehicle ownership rates and reduce demand for vehicle storage as the City and region grow.
- **Property land use spillover is competing with sustainable transportation and City services.** With increased densification on historically single-detached residential lots, accommodating all essential functions for land uses on-site will be challenging. Land use "spillover" onto streets and lanes, including solid waste cart storage and private vehicle storage, will likely occur and is already occurring in many areas of the City. Difficult decisions will be required to address resident desires to park personal vehicles along a street versus accommodating sustainable transportation modes, designated accessible parking, and solid waste and emergency response vehicle movements, while maintaining road safety and advancing Vision Zero objectives.

Lane System

The City's lanes are a critical component of the transportation system. Lanes provide access to lots and solid waste cart staging and service, and reduce the number of driveways along streets, creating safer walking, cycling and vehicle driving conditions. As such, the City's lane system will be critical to supporting increased densities.

The City's Unique Context

The City's road network was created over 100 years ago. As a result, road and lane widths are narrower than most municipalities in the region given vehicle sizes in the 1910s. Lot sizes are also generally smaller and less deep resulting in limited ability to widen roads.

The City has many undeveloped lanes, which for various reasons have not been constructed since the road network was primarily created in 1912. Most (64%) of the City's dedicated lanes on the Mainland are either not constructed, do not meet the current minimum 6.0-m width standard, and/or do not connect to a street (i.e., dead end). (See Attachment 2: Lane System.)

[1] ICBC Vehicle Population, 2023

Lane Development is Essential to Support Increased Density

As infill housing and townhouse units are developed in the City, widening and constructing lanes to meet Subdivision and Development Control Bylaw standards to ultimately connect to a street will be critical to maintain a safe road system that supports delivery of core municipal services.

Given the scope of the City's undeveloped and underdeveloped lanes, decisions will need to be made regarding which lanes are still considered essential to the road network relative to existing and future land uses.

Solid Waste Operations

Given the City's constrained lane system and narrow roads, solid waste crews must address frequent challenges with pick-up operations. Given large vehicle sizes, safe movement is essential. As neighbourhoods densify, solid waste pick-up operations will likely be further impacted by the increase in personal vehicles illegally parked on streets and in locations that inhibit solid waste vehicles to fully access collection carts.

Challenges

- **Vehicle parking in lanes** – Though vehicles may not be parked where they impede traffic (per the Street & Traffic Bylaw), crews often experience clear pathway and sightline challenges due to vehicles parked in lanes. Crews also face similar sightline challenges due to motorists parking/stopping in service vehicle "blind spots" and due to construction activity in lanes.
- **Increased collection times** – Collection times will increase with more residential dwelling units on a lot, as more units will concurrently require solid waste, recycling, and organics carts for pick-up, thus lengthening the time required to service each lot.
- **Increased curbspace required for cart staging** - An increase in carts will also require greater extents of clear curb space for staging especially given the City's automated collection vehicles. The City already has unique cart placement requirements for some residents, including cart placement on the opposite side of the street from residences, or in specifically identified locations given inadequate space at adjacent site frontages.

Approaches to Address Challenges

Solid Waste Operations Staff are currently reviewing waste management requirements and services to enable efficient waste collection including:

- **Smaller solid waste vehicles** – Staff are exploring smaller truck sizes for the future, but anticipate that they will continue to perform automated side load collection, which requires clear side access to the carts.
- **Shared collection carts** - Staff are reviewing how to provide shared collection carts among multiple dwelling units on a lot or modify cart sizes provided. Either approach

can cause challenges depending on design and demand, and will require thoughtful review and discussion with other municipalities addressing the same challenges.

Parking Enforcement

The Street & Traffic Bylaw regulates the enforcement of parking on City streets. Parking enforcement is essential for ensuring ongoing safe movement of people and goods as well as the delivery of core municipal services such as solid waste collection, street cleaning and snow plowing, and emergency response.

Challenges

- **Increased parking enforcement needed** – The need for enforcement will increase as vehicle population grows and drivers seek opportunities to park along curb space not designated for general parking. This is already occurring in many areas of the City. Refer to Attachment 3 for a summary of parking enforcement complaint calls. Parking enforcement officers regularly note non-compliant parking patterns, specifically, parking in unauthorized zones (bus, loading, accessible parking), parking too close to intersections, crosswalks, driveways, and fire hydrants, and overall competition for curbside space amongst residents, patrons, and taxi/ridehail and delivery drivers. (See Attachment 3: Parking Enforcement Complaint Calls.)
- **Aging technology** – Existing equipment is aging and does not facilitate time efficient enforcement methods. The City's existing license plate reader vehicles also do not recognize vehicles that may be exempt from curbspace regulations which requires staff to manually review data collected.
- **Limited enforcement officers and office staff** – The City has an average of four enforcement officers per day with shifts between 8:00 am and 9:00 pm. Enforcement officers are also responsible for enforcing sidewalk, boulevard, watering and vegetation complaints. Two office staff also field approximately 50-75 phone calls and 50 emails per day from the public.

Approaches to Address Challenges

Parking staff are considering options to better manage and enforce bylaw infractions and ensure service delivery continues to meet the needs of the community, including:

- **Provide adequate staffing during peak periods** – Operating under legacy staffing levels inhibits the ability to ensure compliance at the curb. Increased presence improves turnover, in particular at high-demand locations, which ensures curb space is available to serve the community for its intended purpose. With current staffing levels, evening hours (5:00 pm – 9:00 pm) often go unserved. As a result, enforcement in the evening is inconsistent and non-compliance is common.
- **Expand hours of service** – Parking staff regularly receive reports of people misusing curb space after City enforcement hours (generally 8:00 am – 9:00 pm). This includes

parking overnight in loading zones, within close proximity to fire hydrants, and within crosswalk sightlines. Vehicles are typically clear of these areas prior to staff commencing work the following day, so enforcement is challenging. This activity causes a variety of issues for emergency response vehicles and businesses not having access to loading zones for early morning deliveries.

- **Explore technologies for electronic permitting** which are fully integrated with the City's enforcement platform and can cost effectively improve enforcement levels.

Residential Permit Parking

The City has established on-street residential permit parking areas in proximity to land uses that generate significant non-local vehicle trips, including SkyTrain station areas, Royal Columbian Hospital, New Westminster Secondary School, and the Uptown and Downtown commercial areas.

Challenges

- **Increased densities and land use spillover will oversubscribe curbspace.** As densities increase, the City will likely not be able to accommodate future residential parking permits and/or will need to restrict the number of permits available per household (currently up to four plus visitor permit), as many areas will be oversubscribed relative to permit demand and available curb space.
- **Many existing residential permit parking areas are already oversubscribed.** Historically, the City has not monitored the number of permits issued for a particular building relative to available curb space prior to issuing a resident permit. Although residents are made aware that a permit does not guarantee an on-street parking space within their block, many residents continue to expect curbside parking to be readily available near their homes, in addition to their onsite parking. (See Attachment 4: Residential Permit Parking Block Capacity.)

Approaches to Address Challenges

- **Revise guidelines for granting permits** – With the number of households per lot increasing and the availability of curbspace for parking decreasing, a different approach is needed. Existing areas that are already oversubscribed will also warrant a new approach.
- **Revise criteria for establishing new residential permit parking areas** – Given finite curb space, criteria will need to better reflect the Master Transportation Plan Hierarchy of Curbside Access and support sustainable transportation modes.
- **Review residential permit pricing** – Pricing will need to better reflect the value of curb space as demand increases.

NEXT STEPS

Given the challenges, Staff are recommending Council endorse the following principles and workplan to support more effective curbside management in the City. Though not a deviation from current practice, the principles underline the need to encompass the broader context of City infrastructure and services while accommodating housing and densification.

Principles

1. **Curb Management** - The City will use the Master Transportation Plan curbside hierarchy to inform decisions regarding curb regulations and residential permit parking to better support delivery of municipal services and sustainable transportation.
2. **Lanes** - The City recognizes lanes are critical to the transportation system to provide site access, support solid waste service, and improve road safety as the City densifies.
3. **Solid Waste** - The City supports efficient and effective delivery of solid waste services for all residents while accommodating new housing types and densification.
4. **Parking Enforcement –** The City will apply cost-effective methods, including new technologies, to improve service delivery and ensure curb space is available to serve the community for its intended purposes.

Work Plan

Work to be undertaken by Staff in the coming months includes:

- Continue to allocate curb space in accordance with the Curbside Access Priority framework.
- Develop a communications strategy to inform the public on the importance of prioritizing curb space and that curb space is a shared public resource.
- Develop a lane system plan to prioritize lanes for completion/improvement.
- Finalize Solid Waste Master Plan.
- Update the City's Solid Waste Facility Guidelines for Development Applications.
- Develop a comprehensive waste management policy for infill housing and townhouse developments.
- Explore new cost-effective technologies for parking enforcement.
- Assess staffing needs for parking/bylaw enforcement.
- Explore electronic parking permitting systems that can be integrated with the City's enforcement platform.
- Review residential parking permit guidelines for existing areas.

- Review criteria for establishing new parking permit areas.
- Review structure and pricing of residential permit parking program.

Staff will report back to Council on many of these items and, where there are financial implications, through future budget cycles.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The provincial legislation, particularly as it relates to small-scale multi-unit (infill) housing, is expected to have significant ongoing financial implications that staff continue to work on and understand. There is and will be a significant impact on the City's ability to finance the additional infrastructure and services to appropriately support the community. These impacts will be better understood as the financing growth work that the City is doing progresses.

The tasks outlined in the next steps section of this report will be incorporated into the late 2025 and 2026 staff work plans. There are no immediate financial implications with these work items. As staff work through these next steps and better understand potential budget implications, these will be brought to Council through future budget cycles.

INTERDEPARTMENTAL LIAISON

Many departments are involved with responding to the impacts of a growing city, and the provincial housing legislation changes. Preparation of this report to specifically address curb space impacts has been completed with the support of Transportation, Solid Waste, Parking Enforcement, and Planning & Development staff.

OPTIONS

The following options are provided for Council's consideration:

1. THAT the Next Steps outlined in the report titled "Implications of Housing Legislation on Curbside Management" dated September 29, 2025 from the Director, Engineering Services, be endorsed.
2. That Council provide staff with alternative direction.

Staff recommend Option 1.

CONCLUSION

The provincially mandated implementation of small-scale multi-unit housing will gradually raise densities in New Westminster's neighbourhoods. Though the change will occur incrementally, long-term effects on the City's road system and core services are

anticipated to be considerable and will require ongoing curbside management and financial investment. As such, the City will need to more proactively manage curb use to ensure municipal services, emergency response and road safety are mantained.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Vehicle Ownership
Attachment 2: Lane System
Attachment 3: Parking Enforcement Complaint Calls
Attachment 4: Residential Permit Parking Block Capacity

APPROVALS

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