
PARKING STRUCTURES

This guideline is intended to address the integration of parking structures into built form and the public realm interface.

This guideline addresses both above- and below-grade parking structures, either as standalone parking facilities or accessory uses (as defined in the Zoning Bylaw).

The general location and configuration of above-grade parking structure is addressed under *US1 Site Design* and *BF1 Built Form - General*.

This guidance identifies design considerations in addition to *Zoning Bylaw* regulations related to building height and setbacks.

The allocation and design of parking spaces, drive aisles, bicycle parking and similar considerations is addressed in the *Zoning Bylaw*.

Parking structures require thoughtful consideration to ensure their configuration and design contribute to a thriving and attractive public realm interface and create active edges that are comfortable and safe (eg. eyes on the street) for all users. Parking structures, whether above- or below grade, should be designed to be flexible so they can be repurposed for other uses, if necessary.

GENERAL

- Vehicle entrances to parking structures should be accessed from the rear (e.g. alley) or less prominent street wherever possible.
 - Access from a mid-block connection may also be appropriate. See also *PR4 Mid-block Connections* for more information.
- Vehicle entrances to parking structures should be integrated into the building design in a manner which minimizes their visual impact (Figure 1).
- Access considerations for pedestrians and cyclists include:
 - Ensuring pedestrian entrances are directly accessible and clearly visible from the street.
 - Accommodating cyclists through the use of separate entrances and/or ramps that are physically separated from vehicles.
 - If access for cyclists is not directly from a visible street (i.e. from an alley), signage should be used to direct users appropriately.
- Consideration should be given to the design of pedestrian and cyclist entrances to ensure the safety of users. Considerations include, but are not limited to maintaining site lines, minimizing entrapment areas, and providing appropriate lighting. Refer to *Section 3.1.1. Parkades, Pages 26-27 of the Design Guide for a Safer City*.
- Consideration should be given to the design to provide accessibility for people of all ages and abilities including, but not limited to entrances, internal walkways, ticket/payment kiosks, emergency call buttons and other facilities. Refer to *Section C.1. Off Street Parking Areas, pages 11-14 of the Access Design Guide*.
- Parking structures in multiple-building complexes should include interconnected walkways between buildings and to the exterior to facilitate safe and comfortable pedestrian movement.

ABOVE-GRADE PARKING STRUCTURES

- Above-grade parking structures should be wrapped with commercial and other uses that activate the streetscape wherever possible (Figure 2).
 - The Zoning Bylaw requires a minimum 8.0m depth of commercial uses to wrap and screen parking bays at grade.
 - It may be appropriate to consider other uses (e.g. residential) to wrap screen parking bays both at grade and on upper stories of parking structures.
 - It may be necessary to increase the depth of commercial or other uses, in order to create a useable floor plate suitable for its intended use.
- The facade of above-grade parking structures should create visual interest through a combination of architectural design patterns, cladding, screening, landscaping and/or public art (Figure 3).
- Particularly for large above-grade parking structures, consideration should be given to reducing building massing by breaking up long facades and incorporating recesses and projections into the facade plane (See also *BF1 Built Form - General*).
- Ensuring stairwells incorporate ample glazing and are well lit, comfortable and attractive, increases animation and natural surveillance, and provides a viable alternative to elevator use (increasing energy conservation).
- Special consideration should be given to a design strategy that facilitates future conversion to other uses. Convertible parking structures are characterized by level floors, removable ramps, and high floor-to-floor heights (minimum 4.5m main floor height) (Figure 4).

BELOW-GRADE PARKING STRUCTURES

- Ramps for below-grade parking structures should be located inside of buildings wherever possible to ensure weather protection and minimize the visual impact on the public realm interface, amenity areas or other open spaces.
- Ensure below-grade parking structures are of a sufficient depth to minimize grade changes that limit site accessibility.
 - Stairs and ramps within the public realm interface should be designed in an integrated way (Figure 5). Visible portions of parking structures devoid of architectural treatment, landscaping, etc., are discouraged.

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- Below-grade parking structures should be set back from property lines in order to accommodate tree planting and landscaping within the site generally and the public realm interface in particular (Figure 6).
- Alternatively, a below-grade parking structure can be designed and configured in a manner which accommodates sufficient soil depth (1.2m minimum) for tree planting and landscaping (Figure 7).

- 1 Parking structure entrance integrated into streetscape, Portland.
- 2 Main floor uses integrated into parking structure, Banff.
- 3 Above-grade parking structure screened with coloured glass panels, Calgary.
- 4 New parking structure designed for future conversion to residential and commercial uses, Calgary.
- 5 Below-grade parking structure screened by soft landscaping.
- 6 Stairs, planting beds well integrated into the public realm interface, Calgary.
- 7 Below-grade parking structure set back from property line to facilitate landscaping.
- 8 Below-grade parking structure design which accommodates tree and shrub planting.

