



August 30, 2026

Edmonton City Council
c/o Office of the City Clerk
City of Edmonton
1 Sir Winston Churchill Square
Edmonton, Alberta, T5J 2R7

To Mayor Knack and City Council:

**Re: Item 7.2 Review of Traffic Bylaw 5590: Enforcement Trends, Penalty Efficacy and Deterrence Strategies and Item 7.3 Parking Enforcement: Strategy for Growth and Service Improvement
Community and Public Services Committee meeting on August 31, 2026**

The Edmonton Downtown Business Association (EDBA) recognizes the important role that parking management and enforcement play in supporting accessibility, safety, curbside management, and the efficient use of public space. We also appreciate the City's broader evolution toward managing parking and curbside space as strategic public assets rather than simply maintaining parking supply.

At the same time, as the organization representing downtown businesses, we believe there is an important economic development lens that is largely absent from the current reports and that warrants greater consideration as parking and enforcement programs continue to evolve.

Stakeholder Engagement Matters

As the report notes, direct engagement with interested parties was not undertaken as part of the development of the Parking Enforcement Strategy.

Parking is one of the most important factors influencing customer access to commercial districts. Decisions regarding enforcement approaches, fine structures, payment systems, and future automation directly affect visitors, employees, customers, and businesses throughout Edmonton's Business Improvement Areas.

We respectfully request that BIAs and business stakeholders be formally engaged as the City advances future parking, enforcement, and curbside-management initiatives. Parking policy affects far more than compliance. It affects customer behaviour, business competitiveness, and economic activity.

Parking Exists to Support Economic Activity

The reports appropriately recognize parking and curbside space as strategic assets. The EDBA agrees.

However, we submit that parking is not an end unto itself. Enforcement is not an end unto itself. Even parking turnover is not an end unto itself.

Rather, these tools exist to support access to businesses, services, jobs, events, institutions, restaurants, retailers, and attractions.

The City's reports acknowledge that strategic parking management supports commercial districts and BIAs by ensuring customer access and turnover.



For downtown businesses, the ultimate measure of success is not simply compliance rates or citation volumes. It is whether people choose to visit downtown, spend money downtown, and return downtown.

The Missing Lens is Customer Experience

The reports contain extensive discussion regarding enforcement resources, complaint volumes, fine structures, compliance rates, and future technology investments.

There is considerably less discussion about the customer experience associated with parking. For visitors, parking is not experienced as policy. It is experienced as a series of interactions that can either make a trip easy or create frustration. Examples include:

- Learning new payment platforms.
- Creating and managing parking accounts.
- Transitioning away from physical payment machines.
- Determining how and when to extend parking sessions.
- Uncertainty regarding payment confirmation or session duration.
- Receiving a ticket because a meeting, appointment, event, or meal lasted longer than expected.

From a business perspective, every layer of complexity introduces additional friction. While a single negative parking experience may appear minor in isolation, repeated frustration can influence future visitation decisions.

Sustainable Revenue Should Come From Activity, Not Friction

The reports project significant revenue associated with enforcement activities and parking modernization initiatives.

Administration notes that the additional \$1 million investment in parking enforcement capacity is projected to generate approximately \$2 million in additional revenue. Administration also estimates that proposed fine adjustments could generate an additional \$1.5 million to \$1.7 million annually.

Administration further notes that parking modernization initiatives, including Automated Parking Enforcement, are projected to increase annual net revenue from approximately \$5.2 million in 2026 to \$10.4 million by 2028, with the potential to reach between \$14 million and \$19 million following implementation.

Given the scale of this projected increase, the EDBA believes it is important for Council to understand the underlying assumptions and ensure that customer experience, visitation, and economic outcomes remain central considerations as the parking program evolves.

The EDBA understands the need for financially sustainable programs. However, we believe it is important to ask a broader question:

What is the long-term foundation of this revenue?

Much of this revenue will ultimately be paid by customers, visitors, employees, and businesses using commercial districts, including downtown.



Revenue generated because more people choose to visit, shop, dine, work, and attend events is fundamentally different from revenue generated through customer confusion, unintended non-compliance, or negative user experiences.

As Council evaluates future parking initiatives, we encourage consideration of not only how much revenue is generated, but how that revenue is generated.

A thriving downtown with growing visitation should be the long-term objective. Parking and enforcement programs should support that outcome.

The EDBA is particularly sensitive to this issue as downtown businesses continue to face economic headwinds, including changing consumer behaviour, reduced office occupancy compared with historic levels, construction-related disruptions, and recent business closures. At a time when the City and its partners are actively exploring strategies to encourage additional downtown visitation and economic activity, it is important that parking policies reduce barriers to visiting downtown rather than inadvertently create new ones.

The Four Es and the Future of Automated Enforcement

The EDBA appreciates Administration's emphasis on the Four Es of enforcement: Engage, Educate, Encourage, and Enforce. These principles reflect a balanced and customer-focused approach to compliance.

However, the reports also contemplate a future that includes Automated Parking Enforcement and increasing technological integration.

As technology becomes a larger component of enforcement, we encourage the City to consider how the first three Es will continue to be reflected in the customer experience.

Technology can enforce instantly. It cannot engage, educate, or encourage in the same way a person can.

The EDBA believes that future parking technologies should be designed not only to identify violations, but to support compliance before violations occur.

Technology Should Remove Friction and Support Compliance

The reports rightly identify opportunities for modernization. From our perspective, the greatest opportunity may be technology that reduces friction and makes compliance easier.

Future initiatives should be evaluated through questions such as:

- Does this make parking easier to understand?
- Does it make payment simpler?
- Does it reduce accidental violations?
- Does it improve the customer experience?
- Does it encourage visitation?

We were particularly encouraged by Administration's stated goal of treating parking as part of the overall customer experience rather than simply a payment system. That philosophy aligns closely with the needs of downtown businesses.



Downtown Requires an Economic Lens

Downtown businesses continue to navigate significant challenges, including changing consumer behaviour, lower office occupancy than historic levels, multiple construction projects, and increased competition for discretionary spending. The importance of attracting visitors and supporting customer activity remains paramount.

For this reason, we encourage Council to ensure future parking and enforcement decisions are evaluated through both an operational lens and an economic lens.

Operational considerations matter, including:

- Safety
- Accessibility
- Compliance
- Turnover
- Effective management of curbside space

But equally important are:

- Customer experience
- Business vitality
- Consumer spending
- Downtown competitiveness
- Visitation and economic activity

Success should not be measured solely by ticket volumes, compliance rates, or revenue generated. It should also be measured by whether Edmonton's commercial districts, including downtown, remain vibrant, accessible, and attractive destinations for residents and visitors.

As Council considers future parking and enforcement initiatives, the EDBA encourages the City to place equal emphasis on customer experience, visitation, and economic outcomes alongside compliance, enforcement, and revenue objectives. Parking policies should support not only the efficient management of curbside space, but also the success of the businesses, employees, customers, and visitors those spaces ultimately serve.

Thank you for your consideration of this feedback.

Sincerely,

James L. Robinson
Executive Director
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