

From: [Karen Messmer](#)
To: [Gary Cooper](#)
Subject: Bicycle parking and housing
Date: Monday, October 31, 2022 11:36:13 AM

Hello Gary -

I was just reading on line about the plans to reduce parking requirements for some types of housing. Since the aim is to also encourage people to use walking, cycling and transit, it is important that bicycle parking be provided in multi-family buildings and at the outside of the buildings. This is an important element of encouraging active transportation.

The current requirements indicate that a 'storage space' must be provided indoors that is large enough to hold a bicycle. Looking at many apartment buildings, I see lots of bikes parked in the short term parking outside. Since we can assume some residents will use the short term bike parking outdoors, it is especially important that these be placed where the bike will be protected from rain. Bike parking also needs to be convenient to each building, which means that it should be a covered area outside the ground floor. And, the bike parking needs to be placed in such a way that it can truly handle several bikes. A central covered parking gazebo is not convenient and tends to invite vandalism.

I have seen some poorly designed and installed bike parking which likely means we need better oversight during permitting and construction. If the City wants to get people to bicycle then they need to spend the effort to make sure new housing truly supports that mode.

Karen Messmer

From: [News](#)
To: [Gary Cooper](#)
Subject: FW: Creating More Future Housing By Reducing Parking Requirements
Date: Monday, November 07, 2022 4:52:47 PM

From: Robert Ahlschwede <swedeberger@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, October 31, 2022 12:38 PM
To: City of Olympia <news@olympiawa.gov>
Subject: Re: Creating More Future Housing By Reducing Parking Requirements

So allowing a developer to lower their costs by eliminating the need for off street parking will help with the parking congestion in downtown Oly? Good idea..... Increase the profit for someone from outside Olympia to make it harder to park on the street in downtown('cause all those residents' cars have to park somewhere)--makes sense to me..... Oh, that's right, we need a parking garage in the downtown(what you in planning have wanted for years, decades now). Where there is a will there is a way.

Please forgive my attitude, but you in planning seem to be anxious to destroy the feel of the historic downtown Olympia.

Rob Ahlschwede

On Mon, Oct 31, 2022 at 11:06 AM City of Olympia <news@olympiawa.gov> wrote:



Apartment or condo parking lot and people moving into home



Creating More Future Housing By Reducing Parking Requirements

Later this year, the City of Olympia will consider ways to offer a wider range of off-street parking options to those who are bringing new or redevelopment housing projects to the community. City staff are inviting community feedback to understand where less space for parked vehicles – such as mutli-family housing parking areas – could benefit future occupants. An online questionnaire, available at engage.olympiawa.gov/reducing-parking-requirements will be available for community feedback through mid-November.

Olympia has a housing shortage. Current housing development rates are about half of where they ought to be to meet Olympia’s projected needs. Reducing how much dedicated vehicle storage space is required per housing unit could increase supply for all types of future housing. It could also help support more affordable housing.

“We know that meeting minimum parking requirements can be a big part of the expense and square footage that’s currently needed to build new housing,” said City Planner Gary Cooper. “Providing the flexibility would let those who are building housing here consider reducing how much of that cost they want to dedicate towards space for vehicles. Some buyers may prefer a less vehicle-dependent lifestyle. The lower cost of these units could help more people find their future home within Olympia, something they

may not be able to do now even when they already work and play here.”

The changes being considered are the result of the City’s Housing Action Plan and a strategy to “expand the overall housing supply by making it easier to build all types of housing projects.” The plan calls for the City to consider how it can, “reduce parking requirements for residential uses, including for multifamily developments near frequent transit routes.”

To stay informed of this effort, sign up to receive Planning and Development updates from the City of Olympia at olympiawa.gov.

[Read More](#)

Contact

Gary Cooper, Project Manager
Community Planning & Development
360.570.3808
gcooper@ci.olympia.wa.us



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--

Rob Ahlschwede 3726 Wesley Loop NW Olympia, Washington 98502 360-866-1935

From: [JUDITH BARDIN](#)
To: [Gary Cooper](#)
Subject: RE: Creating More Future Housing By Reducing Parking Requirements
Date: Tuesday, November 08, 2022 2:39:39 PM

Hi Gary, thank you for getting back to me. I am a retired epidemiologist and have taken courses on survey design and have helped develop survey questions. The way the City conducts surveys and then draws inferences (conclusions) from their surveys really bothers me. First, the surveys are not random since it is a select group of people who have signed up for city emails and then take surveys. Survey questions themselves or as in the Parking survey on the webpage have a type of embedded promo piece that biases people to answer the question a certain way. In the cases of the parking survey, the City in its webpage (where the survey is posted). lists all the positive aspects of reducing parking and none of the negative aspects. I even question if some of these statements are true such as that reducing parking will make units more affordable. How do we know that developers will pass on these cost savings in lower rents? Lastly, when I take a survey in Engage Olympia I get an email with my survey answers. This leads me to think that someones' responses are not deidentified (not linked with their name). This could lead to people to. not disclose their true feelings/thoughts on the survey questions if they think their responses are linked to their name. Most surveys guarantee confidentiality. Does the City do this?

I would be glad to talk to you more about this. You can include this in the public record.

Judy

On 11/08/2022 12:50 PM Gary Cooper <gcooper@ci.olympia.wa.us> wrote:

Hi Judy:

This email is just to let you know that I have received and read your comments. I will include them in the record and make them available to the decision makers going forward.

Thank you,

Gary

From: News <news@ci.olympia.wa.us>
Sent: Monday, November 7, 2022 4:53 PM
To: Gary Cooper <gcooper@ci.olympia.wa.us>
Subject: FW: Creating More Future Housing By Reducing Parking Requirements

From: JUDITH BARDIN <judybardin@comcast.net>
Sent: Friday, November 4, 2022 2:06 AM
To: City of Olympia <news@olympiawa.gov>
Subject: Re: Creating More Future Housing By Reducing Parking Requirements

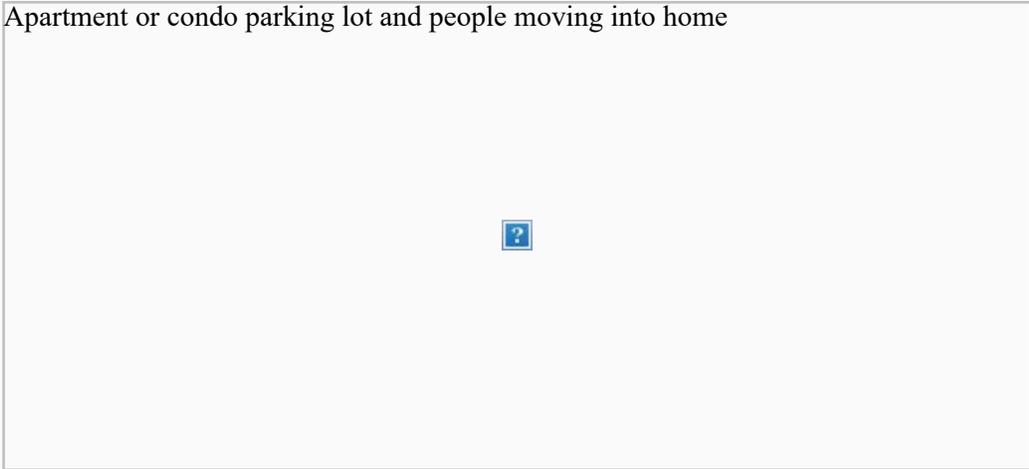
Do you really think you will get an unbiased survey when you attach a big promo piece such as this ahead of a survey. I find the City's tactics appalling.

Judy

POn 10/31/2022 11:06 AM City of Olympia <news@olympiawa.gov> wrote:



Apartment or condo parking lot and people moving into home



Creating More Future Housing By Reducing Parking Requirements

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The changes being considered are the result of the City's Housing Action Plan and a strategy to “expand the overall housing supply by making it easier to build all types of housing projects.” The plan calls for the City to consider how it can, “reduce parking requirements for residential uses, including for multifamily developments near frequent transit routes.”

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[Read More](#)

Contact

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From: [Adrienne Touart](#)
To: [Gary Cooper](#)
Subject: limiting parking please read
Date: Tuesday, November 29, 2022 12:59:18 PM

Dear Gary:

I know the survey period has passed – I was out of town.

Most appreciated if you would consider my comments as I have lived in a neighborhood where this was implemented.

As an example, I went to the local post office; there was no parking available; I was told that the tenants in the apartment across the street (with limited parking) were now using PO spaces.

Ballard, Phinney Ridge and Greenlake neighborhoods where this is the rule for MF construction near transit have streets that are CHOCKABLOCK with cars because residents still have them. Go look at 60th off of 15th Ave. NW.

Several years ago the Seattle Times editorial stated, “Olympia – you have the chance to do density right and not repeat some of the bad decisions in Seattle.”

So far, Oly is repeating all. Please look at the impact of this before moving ahead.

Transit is NOT extensive in Olympia. For example, there isn’t even a bus on Henderson.

In the drive to pack people in, the roads are not keeping up and neither is parking. Infrastructure matters.

Thank you for paying attention and take a field trip to Seattle to view the impact.

Pandora Touart

From: [marti walker](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: Re: City of Olympia-Residential Parking Reductions
Date: Monday, February 27, 2023 3:23:02 PM

Ms. Phillips,

I am opposed to the proposed automobile parking reductions for new residential uses. There is currently a lack of on street parking in many areas in Olympia. These proposed changes would exacerbate the problem.

Furthermore, striking par.4 (Public Notifications and Appeals) of the Administrative Modifications denies adjacent property owners the right to be informed of changes that would directly impact their properties and takes away their right to appeal administrative modification decisions pursuant to OMC Chapters 18.75, 18.72 and 18.78.

Martha Walker
619 Central St SE
Olympia, WA 98501

On Monday, February 27, 2023, 02:11:03 PM PST, Joyce Phillips <jphillip@ci.olympia.wa.us> wrote:

You are receiving this email as a "Party of Record" for proposed parking reductions for new residential development associated with the Housing Action Plan Implementation work.

This means you either requested to be on this list or you submitted written comments for consideration.

If you no longer wish to be on this list, please reply to this email and ask to be removed.

The first draft of proposed automobile parking reductions for new residential uses is available for review (see attached). A summary of proposed changes includes:

- Additional purpose statement to promote housing
- In the Administrative Modifications section, eliminate reference to Hearing Examiner for modifications over 40% since those would be reviewed as a variance under a separate chapter.
- Add language around criteria for what is considered in a modification request
- Make the submittal requirements the same for all modification requests of 10-40%.
- Remove notification and appeal info – refer to administrative and noticing chapters instead.
- Change "residential exceptions" to "residential provisions" and update language to reflect proposed changes.
- Reorganize residential section of Table 38.01 to put most frequent housing types at the top of the residential section. Changes are proposed to some residential parking standards.
- For apartments (3+ units) – make a parking range of 0.75-1.5 spaces per unit (which allows the City to eliminate studio apartments and other categories that currently fall within that range)
- Modify age restrictive use and covenant language in 18.38.100.C to be more widely usable to uses identified in RCW 36.70A.620.
- Add parking standard for Single Room Occupancy uses, a residential use that is allowed in several

commercial zoning districts.

- Remove reference to a zoning district we no longer use.

The Olympia Planning Commission will have a briefing on this proposal at its meeting on **Monday, March 6, 2023**. The meeting begins at 6:30. If you would like to attend this online meeting, please register at https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_YI8nRLccR-maq89T3mr4Yw.

If you have comments you would like for me to share with the Planning Commission and City Council on this draft, please email your comments to me at jphillip@ci.olympia.wa.us.

Joyce

Joyce Phillips, AICP, Principal Planner

City of Olympia | Community Planning and Development

601 4th Avenue East | PO Box 1967, Olympia WA 98507-1967

360.570.3722 | olympiawa.gov

Note: Emails are public records and are eligible for release.

From: [Rob LaFontaine](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Cc: [Peter Stackpole](#); [Eric Phillips](#)
Subject: RE: Olympia - Proposed Parking Code Amendments
Date: Monday, March 06, 2023 1:28:59 PM

Hi Joyce,

I hope you're doing well. I looked at the draft parking code amendments you shared and wanted to raise awareness on one item that I suspect is very familiar to you. Bear with me as I channel my inner lawyer!

The proposed requirements note certain exceptions for projects that are located within certain proximities of existing transit service (or further, exceptions for projects near existing transit service with specified span and frequency). My hope for the City would be to avoid a future complication, conflict, or challenge resulting from a change in transit service. While Intercity Transit cheerfully enjoys being a community partner and service provider, we also seek to maintain jurisdictional autonomy when it comes to changes or adjustments to local transit service. Our recommendation would be for the City to adopt language that does not inadvertently bind transit service decisions to certain approved land development projects, thereby clouding Intercity Transit's autonomy to freely alter service. As a public transit agency we often strive for two seemingly paradoxical goals, one is to support and encourage the community's investment along existing service (i.e. routes, stops, etc.), and the second goal is to maintain the clear flexibility to adjust, relocate, or otherwise change those existing service lines at the exclusive will of Intercity Transit. As such we would encourage the City to test for any vulnerabilities of the proposed language against a future scenario whereby a decision from Intercity Transit to change bus service renders a project in or out of the defined proximity threshold. If the City shares this concern, regarding the potential for uncertainty [resulting from a transit affected change], we would support any necessary clarifying edits prior to adoption.

And here's where I get to switch back out of lawyer mode! As mentioned, I suspect the caution outlined above may be familiar, perhaps even anticipated from IT. That said, please let me know if there's anything further I can provide or explain regarding these comments. Note that I've included members of senior management on this thread who may wish to add, remove or otherwise edit the comments I have outlined above.

Collegially,

Rob LaFontaine
Planning Manager
Intercity Transit
360-705-5832

From: Joyce Phillips <jphillip@ci.olympia.wa.us>
Sent: Monday, February 27, 2023 11:07 AM
To: Joyce Phillips <jphillip@ci.olympia.wa.us>
Subject: Olympia - Proposed Parking Code Amendments

Greetings.

The City of Olympia is proposing code amendments to its Parking and Loading chapter, primarily regarding the amount of automobile parking required for new residential development. Please see the attached proposal and let me know if you have any questions, comments, or concerns. This is a first draft, with comments included. A revised draft will be issued prior to the public hearing.

If you are not the correct person to review the proposal, please forward as needed and let me know so I can update my routing form. Thank you!
Joyce

Joyce Phillips, AICP, Principal Planner
City of Olympia | Community Planning and Development
601 4th Avenue East | PO Box 1967, Olympia WA 98507-1967
360.570.3722 | olympiawa.gov

Note: Emails are public records and are eligible for release.

From: [Joyce Phillips](#)
To: [Oly CNA](#)
Cc: [Nicole Floyd](#); [Leonard Bauer](#)
Subject: RE: Parking
Date: Friday, March 03, 2023 12:55:00 PM

Hi, Larry.

Great questions! I hope my answers below are helpful. Please let me know if you have additional questions.

I am copying Nicole (so she can correct my response on Notices and Appeals if I didn't get it quite right) and Leonard (since he is working on the Permit Processing code amendments).

Joyce

From: Oly CNA <cna.olympia@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 02, 2023 9:59 PM
To: Joyce Phillips <jphillip@ci.olympia.wa.us>
Subject: Parking

I'm trying to summarize what the parking proposal for a CNA email but am having a hard time. Perhaps you can help me. Please see below.

I don't understand the mechanics of it.

For apartments (3+ units) – make a parking range of 0.75-1.5 spaces per unit, how does the "range" work? Is it a .75 minimum and 1.5 space maximum and then the 40% factor is applied at either side of the scale? Can you work through some examples to show the math? **Yes, 0.75 is the minimum and 1.5 is the maximum. A proposed development could provide auto parking anywhere within that range and it would be allowed. The code also allows a project to be within 10% of that range, either above or below.**

If a developer/owner wanted to have more or less parking than that range (by 11-40% above or below), they would have to request a parking modification as part of the land use approval process. My understanding is that parking modification requests are not that common – and that hopefully by having a range they would become even less common.

A proposed apartment complex of 100 units would need to provide 75-150 automobile parking spaces. If the applicant chooses to use the 10% reduction or increase, they would be able to propose 68 – 165 parking spaces.

Note: Currently, 1.5 spaces per unit would be 150 spaces or, if taking advantage of the 10% flexibility, 135-165 spaces.

BUT – for market rate housing within a ¼ mile of transit with service at least 4 x per hour for 12 or more hours a day, the current requirement is 75 parking spaces or, if taking advantage of the 10% flexibility, 68-83 parking spaces.

AND – for studio apartments the rate is 1 space per unit, so 100 spaces (or 90-110). And there are other provisions around different types of housing (e.g. for seniors, people with disabilities, very low or extremely low income, etc.) that have various places within the proposed range, so it isn't always an immediately obvious number.

Modification over 40% from what starting point? The starting point would be from the upper or lower end of the range, depending on if they wanted an increase or decrease.

How does the variance process differ from the Hearing Examiner for modifications over 40%? Any modification request over 40% is actually a variance which has separate requirements (OMC 18.66). This is the case currently and the language hopefully removes any suggestion that it is an administrative decision. Variance criteria are very strict and approval of variances are rare. Variances do require a public hearing and are considered by the Hearing Examiner. It is not likely, in my professional opinion, that an applicant could meet the variance criteria for parking (whether it would be for an increase or a decrease).

Make the submittal requirements the same for all modification requests of 10-40%. Yes.

Remove notification and appeal info – refer to administrative and noticing chapters instead. How do the admin and noticing chapters differ from the current language? The intention here is to combine notice of the parking modification request with the notice of the underlying application – typically Land Use Review. These are usually administrative review with Notice of Application and comment periods.

HOWEVER, my comment here is that the City is also working on amendments to the Permit Processing chapters, so I want to make sure this is captured in the draft ordinance coming soon. We are not trying to “do away” with any notice or comment periods – we are working to consolidate them into one chapter (and remove them where they occur elsewhere in the code) and consider all comments during review.

Happy to talk more about this but it is on my radar. In looking at the current notice requirements for Land Use Review, it looks like the City mails notice (email primarily) to RNAs and Parties of Record 5 days before the meeting.

If SEPA is required, the City also posts the site and notifies the paper at the time of application and when the threshold determination is issued. These all include notification to Property Owners within 300 feet, RNAs, Parties of Record, and Agencies with jurisdiction.

To be honest, the requirements are spread across several different chapters and I would want to confirm my response to this question with Nicole. She is out of the office until Monday.

Why would, if **increasing**, (I guess from 10-40%) must the applicant provide a parking demand study prepared by a transportation engineer licensed in the state of Washington, which supports the need for more parking; BUT if **reducing** the parking by I guess 10-20% the applicant only has to self-assess the anticipated impacts? From a neighborhood impact perspective this lower threshold of analysis

doesn't wouldn't seem to add confidence to the analysis.

The intention is to demonstrate the need for additional parking in order to be granted additional parking. To request less parking by more than 20%, the applicant would need to show proximity to transit. And for any reduction proposed, if close to a low density zoning district, the applicant would need address the impact the parking reduction may have on the neighborhood.

This information would be part of the application and reviewed (by the city and community members) on a case-by-case basis.

I'm sure I got some of this complex topic wrong and would like to have you help me understand it better.

I hope that helps, a least a little. Let me know if you have additional follow up questions.
Thanks!

Thanks.

--

Larry Dzieza, Chair

CNA

cna.olympia@gmail.com

From: [JUDITH BARDIN](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: RE: City of Olympia-Residential Parking Reductions
Date: Monday, March 06, 2023 3:03:24 PM

Yes, thank you,

Judy

On 03/06/2023 2:41 PM Joyce Phillips <jphillip@ci.olympia.wa.us> wrote:

Got it!

Would you like me to share your email with the Commissioners this evening? I will be sending the a couple of comments at 5 and can include these if you would like.

From: JUDITH BARDIN <judybardin@comcast.net>
Sent: Monday, March 06, 2023 2:38 PM
To: Joyce Phillips <jphillip@ci.olympia.wa.us>
Subject: RE: City of Olympia-Residential Parking Reductions

On 03/06/2023 1:58 PM Joyce Phillips <jphillip@ci.olympia.wa.us> wrote:

Joyce,

My point is even if people know the rules is the City taking it into consideration with its reduction in parking. When leaving space for a USPS delivery often that reduces on street parking from two spaces to one. Many people are now telecommuting during the day and their cars are parked at home.

I share you frustration. I lived next to an Airbnb and at times it would have a lot of guests who would park in front of my house by my mailbox.

Judy

On 03/06/2023 1:58 PM Joyce Phillips <jphillip@ci.olympia.wa.us> wrote:

Thanks. For the most part, mailboxes are basically treated like fire hydrants, at least in that people are supposed to know the rules and follow them. But it can be very frustrating when they don't. Last year I had three days in a row when a pickup truck parked too close to the mailboxes and we didn't get mail delivery. USPS left a note on their truck and they finally moved.

From: JUDITH BARDIN <judybardin@comcast.net>

Sent: Monday, March 06, 2023 1:52 PM

To: Joyce Phillips <jphillip@ci.olympia.wa.us>

Subject: RE: City of Olympia-Residential Parking Reductions

Thanks Joyce you were very clear with you answers. I am away and won't get to view the OPC meeting tonight, but I will listen to it later.

I wonder if the City should be considering the USPS requirements. It seems it affects some areas but not all. In SE OLY near the high school where I now live the postman walks the route and mailboxes are at the door. However, in NW OLY where I used to live I had to leave space for delivery by mail truck and mailboxes are at the street.

Thank you for your help,

On 03/06/2023 1:36 PM Joyce Phillips <jphillip@ci.olympia.wa.us> wrote:

Hi, Judy.

Thank you for your comments and questions. Hope you are doing well!

Yes – I am aware of the on-street parking and mailbox issue. It does come up from time to time.

1. If an administrative modification is requested and the units are within 200 ft of a low-density neighborhood how will a developer anticipate the impacts to on-street parking within 1000 feet? How will a developer know how many cars his tenant is likely to have?

The applicant would need to provide information about the situation nearby (is there on street parking, what is the capacity, what is the street like, is there a sidewalk on one or both sides, what is the grade, etc.) as well as any other pertinent information they think will help justify the request. Also, there are parking manuals that provide information about how much parking demand is associated with various types of uses, including for different types of apartments. They will likely pull information from those engineering manuals around parking. The City will consider this information as part of the request.

2. Parking for 3+ apartments or multifamily minimum parking requirements would be 0.75 spaces. Is that for triplexes, fouxplexes, sixplexes and courtyard apartments throughout Olympia? I see there is a separate section for triplexes, so it is a little confusing.

It is a little confusing, I agree. Our code defines apartments as three units or more. So, when the City approved allowing triplexes in the R4-8 and R6-12 zones a couple of years ago, we added a category for triplexes in the low density zoning districts to say that 5 parking spaces would be required. We did this so 5 would always have to be provided, otherwise – if they requested use of the 10% decrease that is otherwise allowed, they would only have had to provide 4 parking spaces because we would round down ($1.5 \text{ spaces} \times 3 \text{ units} = 4.5 \text{ spaces}$. $4.5 - 10\% = 4.05 \text{ spaces}$, which would be rounded down to 4).

So, in any of the 6 zoning districts with a maximum density of 12 units per acre or lower, the triplex would have to provide 5 parking spaces. This provision for triplexes is proposed to remain in place.

Other housing types, such as fourplexes/sixplexes/courtyard apartments/apartments would all fall into 0.75-1.5 spaces per unit in this current proposal.

3. Also it appears that for a number of housing types minimum parking requirements are being reduced by half. Can a developer get an administrative modification (up to 40%) over and above the already proposed reduced parking requirements?

The way it is currently drafted, yes – the modification request to increase or decrease by up to 39% would still be allowed. I do plan on discussing it with the Planning Commission tonight. We do not get very many parking modification requests, but it should still be discussed.

I hope that helps! Happy to chat in more detail or take any comments before or after tonight's meeting. I do anticipate issuing another draft before the public hearing.

Joyce

From: JUDITH BARDIN <judybardin@comcast.net>
Sent: Sunday, March 05, 2023 1:39 PM
To: Joyce Phillips <jphillip@ci.olympia.wa.us>
Subject: Re: City of Olympia-Residential Parking Reductions

Joyce,

I am away and using my phone to reply, so I am sorry if this message is a little choppy.

I had a couple questions and just wanted to point out one thing. Right now the USPS requires that people leave 10 feet on either side of their mailbox so their delivery trucks can access the mailbox. If you don't do that they can refuse to deliver your mail. I had this issue when I lived in NW Olympia. If anyone parked in the parking space near my mailbox, mail would not be delivered. I think this should be considered with the parking regulations.

My first question is if an administrative modification is requested and the units are within 200 ft of a low-density neighborhood how will a developer anticipate the impacts to on-street parking within 1000 feet? I think it is an excellent idea to do this. I just don't know how it can be accurately done. How will a developer know how many cars his tenant is likely to have?

Parking for 3+ apartments or multifamily minimum parking requirements would be 0.75 spaces. Is that for triplexes, fourplexes, sixplexes and courtyard apartments throughout Olympia? I see there is a separate section for triplexes, so it is a little confusing.

Also it appears that for a number of housing types minimum parking requirements are being reduced by half. Can a developer get an administrative modification (up to 40%) over and above the already proposed reduced parking requirements?

Thank you for taking the time to answer these questions,

Judy

On 02/27/2023 2:10 PM Joyce Phillips <jphillip@ci.olympia.wa.us> wrote:

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https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_YI8nRLccR-maq89T3mr4Yw.

If you have comments you would like for me to share with the Planning Commission and City Council on this draft, please email your comments to me at jphillip@ci.olympia.wa.us.

Joyce

Joyce Phillips, AICP, Principal Planner

City of Olympia | Community Planning and Development

601 4th Avenue East | PO Box 1967, Olympia WA 98507-1967

360.570.3722 | olympiawa.gov

Note: Emails are public records and are eligible for release.

From: rmvanderpool7@gmail.com
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: Residential Parking Minimums (public comment)
Date: Monday, March 06, 2023 6:50:08 PM

Good Evening Staff & Planning Committee,

Olympia, in order to meet housing demands, reduce climate impact, and help develop into a multi-modal community, we need to reduce parking minimums. This would eliminate the arbitrary nature of parking requirements. This is say I support reductions in parking requirements and then some.

Thank you,

Robert Vanderpool

From: [Ethan Magnuson](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: Public Comment on Parking Modifications
Date: Monday, March 06, 2023 8:25:07 PM

Ms. Phillips,

After attending the meeting today on reducing parking minimums, I wanted to say that I strongly support Commissioner Nejati and Commissioner Quetin's suggestions to eliminate the parking minimums altogether. I live on the Westside, and listening to all my neighbors' comments during the Capitol Triangle plan hearings, it seems like there's a strong consensus (at least over here) to move away from the assumption that auto-transport is the default, and instead build a city that's walkable, bikeable, and not filled with parking lots. I think this is an inspiring vision, and I hope that you take that course!

Thanks,
Ethan Magnuson, local resident

From: [Shaun Dinubilo](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: RE: Olympia - Proposed Parking Code Amendments
Date: Wednesday, March 08, 2023 10:14:38 AM

Hello Joyce,

Thank you for contacting the Squaxin Island Tribe Cultural Resources Department regarding the above listed project for our review and comment. We have no specific cultural resource concerns for this project. However, if DAHP recommends a survey, or any other additional recommendations, we concur with DAHP's recommendations. We would prefer to receive an electronic copy by email once completed. If any archaeological or cultural resources are uncovered during implementation, please halt work in the area of discovery and contact DAHP and the Squaxin Island Tribe's Archaeologist, Shaun Dinubilo via email at sdinubilo@squaxin.us.



Shaun Dinubilo
Archaeologist
Cultural Resource Department
Squaxin Island Tribe
200 S.E. Billy Frank Jr. Way
Shelton, WA 98584
Office Phone: 360-432-3998
Cell Phone: 360-870-6324
Email: sdinubilo@squaxin.us
Email is my preferred method of communication.

As per 43 CFR 7.18[a][1]) of the Archaeological Resource Protection Act, Section 304 of the National Historic Preservation Act, and RCW 42.56.300 of the Washington State Public Records Act- Archaeological Sites, all information concerning the location, character, and ownership of any cultural resource must be withheld from public disclosure.

From: Joyce Phillips <jphillip@ci.olympia.wa.us>
Sent: Monday, February 27, 2023 11:07 AM
To: Joyce Phillips <jphillip@ci.olympia.wa.us>
Subject: Olympia - Proposed Parking Code Amendments

Greetings.

The City of Olympia is proposing code amendments to its Parking and Loading chapter, primarily regarding the amount of automobile parking required for new residential development. Please see the attached proposal and let me

know if you have any questions, comments, or concerns. This is a first draft, with comments included. A revised draft will be issued prior to the public hearing.

If you are not the correct person to review the proposal, please forward as needed and let me know so I can update my routing form. Thank you!
Joyce

Joyce Phillips, AICP, Principal Planner
City of Olympia | Community Planning and Development
601 4th Avenue East | PO Box 1967, Olympia WA 98507-1967
360.570.3722 | olympiawa.gov

Note: Emails are public records and are eligible for release.

From: [Craig Swalling](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: parking code amendments
Date: Friday, March 10, 2023 3:15:27 PM

Hi Joyce,

Thanks for sharing this. I will not be attending the hearing but would like to share a thought below.

I do have a concern with;

18.38.080, B.2.b

This encourages the use of 'superior' pedestrian facilities, including low walls, arcades, and seating areas.

These were neat ideas a couple decades ago, but they have become a burden and eyesore. As you must recognize, the current social situation has turned these types of amenities into problems: drugs, illicit sex, homeless shelters, etc. Unless social norms or active policing return, this concept is failing.

I don't want to see more of these features built.

Thank you

Craig Swalling

2501 Columbia St. SW

From: [Larry of Nottingham](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: Parking Minimums
Date: Friday, March 10, 2023 3:32:20 PM

What happened to the recommendation and why don't truly large urban areas with truly robust transit have a 0 requirement?

<https://www.cnu.org/publicsquare/2022/12/27/portland-mandates-parking-u-turn#:~:text=In%20response%20to%20the%20outcry,depending%20on%20the%20building%20size>.

<https://bikeportland.org/2020/12/14/oregon-parking-reform-sightline-323931>

<https://www.seattle.gov/documents/Departments/SDCI/Codes/MultifamilyZoningSummary.pdf>

Please give me a call ASAP.

Thanks.

PSQ (/publicsquare)



Fourplex in Portland with minimal parking. Source: Sightline Institute

PARKING (/PUBLICSQUARE/CATEGORY/PARKING)

Portland mandates a parking U-turn

The city's parking policy has taken many turns, and now small buildings and those with affordable housing are not required to build parking at all.

CATIE GOULD (/node/9484) DEC. 27, 2022

 (<http://www.facebook.com/sharer/sharer.php?u=https%3A//www.cnu.org/node/9528&title=Portland%20mandates%20a%20parking%20U-turn>)

 (<http://twitter.com/intent/tweet?status=Portland%20mandates%20a%20parking%20U-turn%2Bhttps%3A//www.cnu.org/node/9528>)



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[mini=1&url=https%3A//www.cnu.org/node/9528&title=Portland%20mandates%20a%20parking%20U-turn&source=https%3A//www.cnu.org](http://www.linkedin.com/shareArticle?mini=1&url=https%3A//www.cnu.org/node/9528&title=Portland%20mandates%20a%20parking%20U-turn&source=https%3A//www.cnu.org))



([mailto:?subject=Check%20out%20Portland%20mandates%20a%20parking%20U-](mailto:?subject=Check%20out%20Portland%20mandates%20a%20parking%20U-turn&body=https%3A//www.cnu.orgpublicsquare/2022/12/27/portland-mandates-parking-u-turn)

[turn&body=https%3A//www.cnu.orgpublicsquare/2022/12/27/portland-mandates-parking-u-turn](mailto:?subject=Check%20out%20Portland%20mandates%20a%20parking%20U-turn&body=https%3A//www.cnu.orgpublicsquare/2022/12/27/portland-mandates-parking-u-turn))

It took almost a decade for a new apartment building with no parking to arrive in Portland after the city waived requirements near transit in 2002. The political backlash came more swiftly. As Portland's rental market tightened, the city found itself with the second-lowest vacancy rate in the country in 2012. Apartment construction was booming, and buildings without off-street parking were becoming increasingly common.

Then controversy erupted. The epicenter was a 13-block section of Division Street, a car-oriented commercial corridor experiencing a building boom. By the time the issue made it to the front pages of *Willamette Week* (<https://www.wweek.com/portland/article-19687-block-busters.html>), the local weekly paper, 11 new multifamily buildings were under development, seven with no parking at all.

A city-commissioned survey of 115 residents of new apartment buildings would show that 72 percent of the respondents owned cars, with the majority parking on neighborhood streets. Even though the same survey showed that the areas around the buildings had plenty of available parking, neighbors didn't perceive it that way.

Charlie Hales, who was mayor during the controversy and had championed the removal of parking mandates as a council member in 2002, even floated the idea of instituting a building moratorium until the zoning code could be sorted out. Hales told *Willamette Week* that he had anticipated (<https://www.wweek.com/portland/blog-29452-apartments-without-parking-dont-equal-apartments-without-cars-says-city-study.html>) developers might build one parking spot instead of two, but hadn't imagined banks would finance housing with no parking at all.

In response to the outcry, Portland's city council reinstated a parking requirement for multifamily developments with more than 30 units. Those larger buildings would need to provide one parking space for every three or four units, depending on the building size.

"That was the strategic retreat," Hales explained. "We decided to adjust our ideal slightly to a watered-down version in order to reduce the controversy."

Hales, who is no longer mayor, still believes strongly in eliminating parking requirements. “There’s some things we really don’t need to regulate,” he said recently. “Minimum number of parking spaces is one of them.” Given the political pressure of the time, he has a hard time imagining how things could have worked out differently.

While supporters of parking mandates prevailed in that case, the matter was far from settled. Several years after the 2013 brouhaha, regulated affordable housing near transit regained its exemption from parking requirements, after rising rents and economic displacement prompted Portland to declare a housing state of emergency and elect a tenant advocate to city council. Portland adopted an inclusionary zoning policy that same year, requiring multifamily buildings to set aside units for affordable housing—and waiving residential parking requirements for those buildings.

Looking back, Portland activist Tony Jordan, who went on to launch the national Parking Reform Network, thinks the city was foolish to derail the housing construction wave. “Why would you do anything” to make developers think twice about investing in larger buildings, he asked. The way the code was written, adding one more unit to a 30-unit building came with “a penalty of six parking spaces, incentivizing builders to stay under the limit. “Even if we only lost 60 apartments,” he said, “that’s a housing subsidy that we just threw away—and for what?”

Stopping parking spillover

When parking complaints bubbled up in Portland’s Northwest neighborhood in 2016, the city was ready to try a different strategy: directly managing on-street parking. A local parking advisory committee had petitioned Portland’s city council to apply the citywide parking requirements to the growing district, which had historically been exempted. But when a study showed that those regulations would have made 23 percent of newly constructed homes in the neighborhood illegal, the council opted to improve the district’s fledgling parking permit program instead.

“When city staff manage on-street parking properly, they can prevent that on-street parking from getting overcrowded with a 99 percent success rate,” said planning consultant Patrick Siegman, who has spent much of his career studying spillover parking

concerns. The problem, he said, is that almost no one has training in how to manage street parking in a way that is both effective and politically popular. On-street parking management is not part of the core curriculum for planners or transportation engineers.

“What you’re essentially doing with on-street parking spaces is taking a valuable resource that belongs to the public and setting up rights to determine who gets to use it,” said Siegman. Any hotel manager knows that once the keys are gone, there is no vacancy. Yet cities often hand out multiple residential permits for every street space, and wait until the problem is so bad that neighbors have to petition for curbside management. When a neighborhood has more drivers seeking permits than there are on-street spaces, there are a number of ways to ensure balance. Boundaries for a parking district could exclude new buildings or households with driveways, or restrict the number of permits to the street frontage of the lot—forcing developers and incoming residents to make a plan for storing cars off-site.

This is Part Four in a special four-part Public Square series that highlights the growing wave of parking reform. © 2022. Lincoln Institute of Land Policy. From Shifting Gears Why Communities Are Eliminating Off-Street Parking Requirements—and What Comes Next, Catie Gould. Land Lines October 2022. Find the original article here (<https://www.lincolninst.edu/publications/articles/2022-10-shifting-gears-eliminating-off-street-parking-requirements>).



Catie Gould is a researcher with The Sightline Institute in Seattle, writing about climate and transportation policy. She brings a decade of experience in engineering and data analysis to Sightline’s efforts to decarbonize the transportation system.

(/publicsquare/author/catie-gould)

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It's unanimous: Oregon says no to car parking minimums

December 14, 2020 by [Michael Andersen \(Contributor\)](#)



In many Oregon cities, this is how a fourplex would be legally required to look—1.5 off-street parking spaces per home—without the new state rules. (Notice that these driveways eliminated four or five curbside parking spaces.) Photo: Mark McClure, used with permission.

It's arguably the biggest state-level parking reform law in US history.

Crossposted from [Sightline Institute](#). Senior researcher Michael Andersen is a former news editor at BikePortland.

The movement to prioritize housing for people over storage for cars has reached a new high point in the Pacific Northwest.

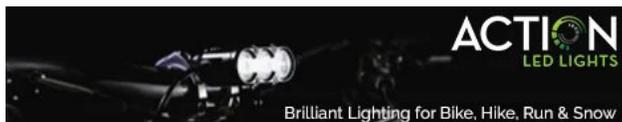
In the first action of this kind by any US state, Oregon's state land use board voted unanimously last week to sharply downsize dozens of local parking mandates on duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, townhomes, and cottages.

Many cities have reduced or eliminated parking mandates in recent years, including Oregon's largest city, Portland. (As a result, this new rule won't directly affect Portland — just its suburbs.)

But Oregon's rule, which stems from its landmark 2019 legalization of so-called "middle housing" options statewide, is a much more unusual state-level action, affecting 58 jurisdictions simultaneously. And because middle housing will soon be legal throughout those 58 jurisdictions — the vast majority of the state's urban lots — it's arguably the biggest state-level parking reform law in US history.

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Oregon's new rules hold mandatory parking ratios at or below one parking space per home



A fourplex with two off-street parking spaces (on the left). Photo: Kol Peterson, used with permission.

In all cases, **property owners will have the option to include as many off-street parking spaces as they feel the project needs.** Their projects simply can't be *required* to have more than one space per home,

even on the largest urban lots.

This new standard applies to areas that are home to 2.5 million Oregonians, or 60 percent of the state's population.

[Related: [How car parking makes housing much more expensive.](#)]

Last week's vote by the governor-appointed Land Conservation and Development Commission will strike down the current parking mandates in [Salem](#) (1.5 per home), [Eugene](#) (1 per home), [Gresham](#) (2 per home), [Hillsboro](#) (1 per home), [Beaverton](#) (as many as 1.75 per home), [Bend](#) (as many as 2 per home), [Medford](#) (1.5 per home), [Springfield](#) (as many as 2 per home), and many other cities.

In 22 smaller Oregon cities, those between 10,000 and 25,000 population, duplexes will be legalized on all lots. As part of that, duplexes in those cities will no longer be required to have more than one space per home. Another eight percent of Oregonians live in those cities.

"I think it's great for Oregonians," said Sara Wright, transportation program director for the [Oregon Environmental Council](#). "We have limited public and private space; we have increasing population. It's great to give us more flexibility in the way we build our communities."

"We can now use that space for more housing, more space for others," said Timothy Morris of the [Springfield Eugene Tenant Association](#), who sat on a state advisory committee that helped vet the rules. "We can even add entire units of housing where parking spaces would have been."

Wright and Scott were among a coalition of environmental and housing advocates and professionals from around the state, organized by Sightline, who had [urged](#) the state commission to pass such a policy.

Mary Kyle McCurdy, deputy director of the anti-sprawl group [1000 Friends of Oregon](#) and one of the architects of Oregon's middle housing legislation, sat on both advisory committees and watchdogged the commission process over the last year. She credited various factors, including direct input from middle-housing developers and good research by state staff, for building consensus around the change.

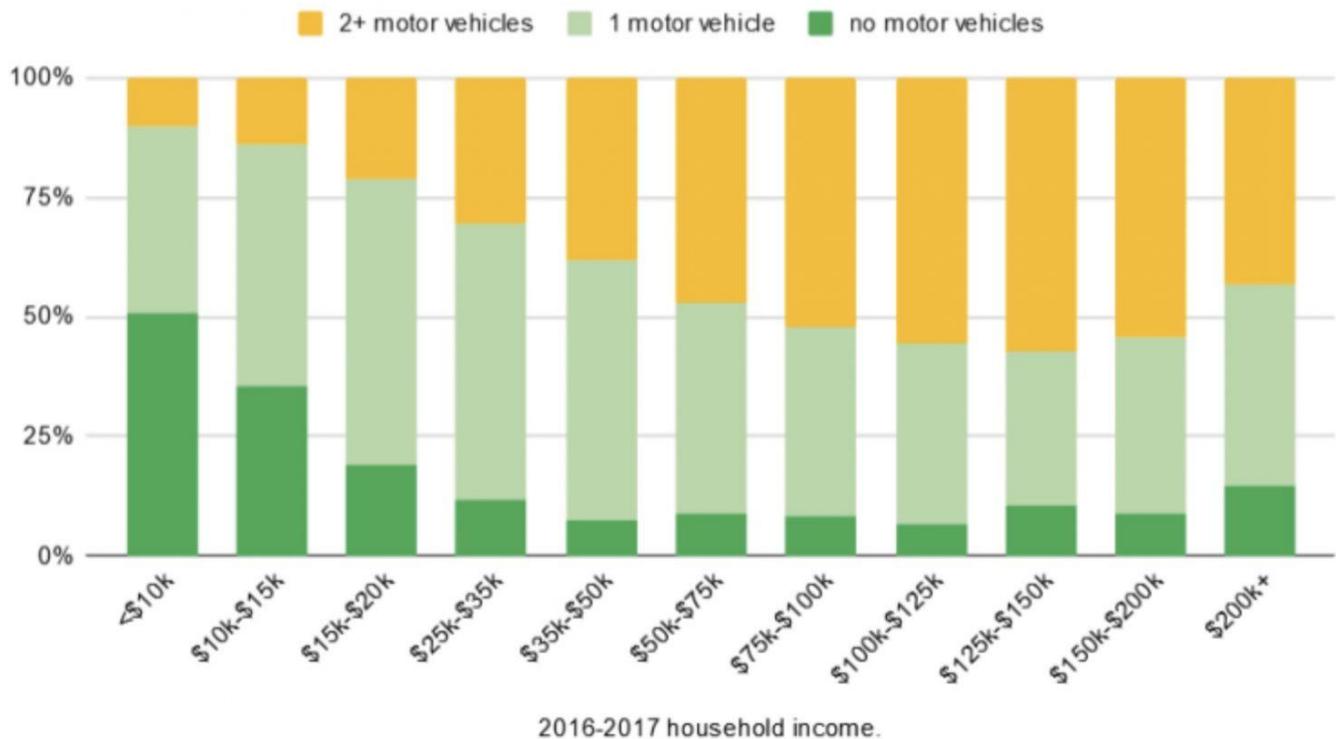
"I think it disproved the notion that some of these parking changes were coming from a Portland perspective," McCurdy said. "That was not at all the case."

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People should not be required to pay for parking spaces they don't need

Most tenant households in the United States own either zero or one cars.



Data: 2017 [National Household Transportation Survey](#).

The new rule was [approved](#) as part of the Oregon Land Conservation and Development Commission's [deliberation](#) on how to interpret a crucial two-word phrase in the state's landmark 2019 [law](#) that legalized middle housing statewide.

The phrase: "Unreasonable costs." Under the law, cities are not allowed to subject middle housing to unreasonable cost.

That phrase in the law required the state to define, alongside a "[middle housing model code](#)" that cities now have the option of adopting, a "minimum compliance standard" with which all cities will be required to comply or be declared "unreasonable."

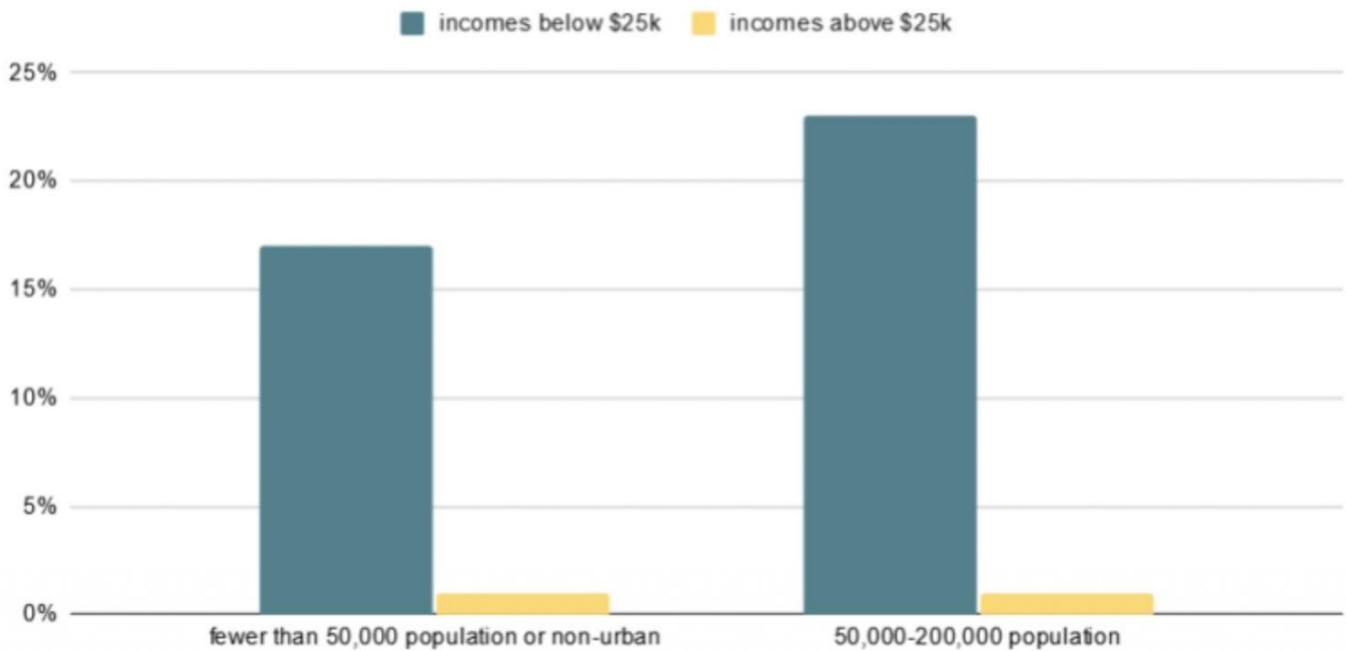
(Among the many other pro-housing aspects of the minimum compliance standard that'll be applied to larger cities and the Portland metro area: For townhouse projects, a minimum average lot size of no more than 1,500 square feet. Writing in CityLab in July, Emily Hamilton of Mercatus Center persuasively identified two crucial ingredients of effective middle-housing legalization: [low parking requirements and small minimum lot sizes](#).)

To arrive at the new parking standard, state staffers commissioned a [study](#) to examine possible costs and lot layouts for new duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes. It concluded that for such structures "on small lots, even requiring more than one parking space per development creates feasibility issues."

Separately, drawing on [prior research](#) by Sightline, state staffers looked at car ownership rates around Oregon. They found that [in every affected city, at least 40 percent of tenant households own one or zero cars](#).

Even in smaller cities and rural areas of the United States, living without a car isn't all that unusual. It's simply concentrated among poorer people:

Share of households without cars in small cities and rural areas (nationwide)



Data: 2017 National Household Transportation Survey.

In other words, building lots of off-street parking adds costs that can block projects. And many Oregon households, even in fairly small and rural cities, have little use for it.

Therefore, the staff concluded, it's unreasonable for a city to require parking spaces whether or not a home's resident is likely to want them. The reasonable approach is to make it a site-specific decision by the landowner.

The state commission agreed.

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A lesson for advocates: Reform parking within the context of things people want, like housing



A historic fourplex in Southeast Portland. Photo: Sightline.

Fifteen years after Sightline was [among the first outlets](#) to call attention to an odd new book by [UCLA Professor Donald Shoup](#), *The High Cost of Free Parking*, there is now widespread belief among both housing advocates and environmentalists that citywide parking mandates are a bad idea.

If you want to mandate off-street parking, Jordan said, “you’re going to have to cut down trees and you’re going to have to pave more surfaces.”

“One-size-fits-all rules—they don’t take into account a lot of context,” said Tony Jordan, the Portland-based founder of the [Parking Reform Network](#), a national advocacy coalition launched last year that has Shoup, among others, on its advisory board. “They don’t take into account the fact that there are a lot of households that don’t have cars. They don’t take into account that there’s a lot of existing supply [of parking space] on the streets.”

If you want to mandate off-street parking, Jordan said, “you’re going to have to cut down trees and you’re going to have to pave more surfaces.”

It’s much better, Jordan and others are arguing, to let property owners make site-specific decisions about their parking needs.

But parking reformers face a political challenge. How to eliminate parking mandates without triggering a “war on cars” freakout?

Oregon’s latest win, along with recent reforms in [Washington](#), [California](#), [Minneapolis](#), and [Portland](#), offer one possible answer: Embed the parking reform inside other reforms.

By embedding their parking reforms in efforts to create more and cheaper homes, these states and cities focused attention not on what their residents stand to lose (abundant parking space) but instead on what residents stand to gain (abundant and cheaper homes).

Morris, the Eugene-Springfield tenant advocate, said that’s the way he thinks about the issue.

“Our health, our planet, our future—the benefits are really grand and the negatives are slightly less parking,” he said. “So I’ll take the pros with the con any day.”

— *Michael Andersen, Sightline senior researcher, writes about housing and transportation: (503) 333-7824, @andersem on Twitter.*

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Michael Andersen (Contributor)

Michael Andersen was news editor of BikePortland.org from 2013 to 2016 and still pops up occasionally.

📁 [Front Page](#)

🏷️ [housing](#), [missing middle](#), [Parking](#)



How car parking makes new housing much more expensive



Speak up or sprawl out: "Missing middle" housing proposal hits the planning commission tonight



Guest Post: How to build a neighborhood with character(s)



Affordable-housing alliance to city: Legalize 'missing middle' in bikeable neighborhoods



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Jonathan Maus
Founder and Publisher, BikePortland

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84 COMMENTS

oldest ▼



J_R ⌚ 2 years ago

A little correction: It's the Land Conservation and Development Commission.

👍 4 Reply



Momo ⌚ 2 years ago

Reply to [J_R](#)

Yep, the LCDC, not to be confused of course with the DLCD, the Department of Land Conservation and Development. Love all those acronyms!

 3  Reply



Evan Manvel  2 years ago

 Reply to [Momo](#)

And given the headline, not to be confused with the Land Use Board of Appeals. 😊

 1  Reply



Michael Andersen  2 years ago

 Reply to [J.R](#)

Drat, thanks.

 1  Reply



soren  2 years ago

I'm just glad that I will never ever have to hear “housing free market” types drone on about a reform that is largely irrelevant to Portland’s low-income housing crisis.

(Note: there is absolutely no shortage of housing for rich people can buy a bungalow, luxury duplex, or even \$600K Orange Splott LLC “small home”.)

 1  Reply



Momo  2 years ago

 Reply to [soren](#)

Just because you don't care about having an adequate supply of middle-income housing, that doesn't mean other people don't care about it or think it's an important issue alongside the low-income affordability issue. I happen to think both are important and have completely different solutions. These “middle housing” reforms will help deal with the artificial scarcity of housing for middle-income households by tweaking the regulations that make market-rate housing more expensive than it needs to be. To deal with low-income housing shortages, we need direct subsidies to correct for a failure of the market to provide that product in any real sense.

 10  Reply



Hello, Kitty  2 years ago

 Reply to [Momo](#)

I believe that converting low end rental housing into upper end owned housing is an inequitable transfer of housing opportunity from those who desperately need it to those who have more options.

 5  Reply



Chris I  2 years ago

 Reply to [Hello, Kitty](#)

Agreed. Which is why it's really important that we have new construction, to fill the demand for upper-end housing units.

 11  Reply



Hello, Kitty  2 years ago

 Reply to [Chris I](#)

What does all that new upper-end construction replace? In my neighborhood, it is the small houses and less expensive rental properties.

 4  Reply



Alex Reedin  2 years ago

 Reply to [Hello, Kitty](#)

But... what would happen in the absence of any new development? Would those abodes stay permanently affordable, or would their rents/prices just

It's unanimous: Oregon says no to car parking minimums – BikePortland

go up and become relatively low-quality (but relatively close-in) middle-income housing?

There's no rule written anywhere about what middle-income people will accept as housing. For example, shockingly expensive abodes in New York City and San Francisco, that upper-income people reside in (not the ultra rich, but say at the 75th income percentile in those cities), don't have features that middle-income Americans in single-family housing in most of the country regard as basic amenities. I'm talking about, most obviously, in-unit washer and dryer hookups, but also dishwashers and garbage disposals.

👍 12 ➔ Reply



cmh89 · 2 years ago

➔ Reply to [Alex Reedin](#)

If the California Bay Area has taught us anything, it's that not replacing low-density single family homes with high-density multi family homes results in cheap single family housing

/s

👍 9 ➔ Reply



Hello, Kitty · 2 years ago

➔ Reply to [Alex Reedin](#)

The prices will go up over time, of course. But more slowly than when a house gets demolished and replaced with a million dollar house. Also, the ceiling of appreciation is much lower for a smaller structure.

I'm not opposed to new development (though I wish builders would hire better architects); I'm opposed to demolishing existing housing. In my neighborhood, at least, it's usually possible to subdivide a lot and build on half, leaving an existing structure in place on the other half. It's not as profitable as demolishing and reconstructing, which is why it's not often done.

One thing I think we can all agree on is that (most) development is driven by profit, and top-tier housing is usually the most profitable.

I've always found it interesting that many who are skeptical about "capitalism" in other realms embrace it so uncritically when it comes to building housing they aspire to.

👍 4 ➔ Reply



Alex Reedin · 2 years ago

➔ Reply to [Hello, Kitty](#)

But, that ignores the potential add-on effects of net new market-rate housing units in pushing down demand for *other* existing, less-desired housing units. I know you think that every net new housing unit in Portland is filled by a net additional migrant household from California(/etc.), and I disagree, and we've already discussed it extensively so let's not argue about it now. But I just wanted to note that for anyone else reading this.

The construction without demolition I assume you're talking about is building ADUs, since that's all there's room for on the vast majority of Portland single-family lots. Building ADUs on a lot with an existing single-family home on it while minimizing disturbance to the existing structure is laborious – which makes it expensive. You can call that "unprofitable" but the fact is that even in cases where no profit is being made, ADUs are fairly expensive to build (relative to the per-unit costs to build an apartment complex).

I don't embrace capitalism uncritically; I would much rather have Soren's vision of 30-80% of Portland's housing stock being public/social housing than a world where the only change in the housing policy is more building of market-rate units. But we're nowhere near that level of social housing and won't be for years (if such a policy is ever adopted). It's

It's unanimous: Oregon says no to car parking minimums – BikePortland

worth being clear-headed about what impact new market-rate development has for low-income folks in the meantime. There are both positive and negative effects.

👍 3 ➡ Reply



Middle of the Road Guy 2 years ago

👤 Reply to [Hello, Kitty](#)

It just goes to show our value system changes when it is “us” and “them”. There’s some interesting literature out there on this phenomenon...from a sociobiological perspective.

👍 2 ➡ Reply



Chris I 2 years ago

👤 Reply to [Hello, Kitty](#)

Right, like the Red House, which was providing low cost (free for Sovereign Citizens!) rent, and they wanted to tear it down and build 10+ market rate units in a high-demand neighborhood. Good thing we nipped that one in the bud, right?

👍 6 ➡ Reply



Hello, Kitty 2 years ago

👤 Reply to [Chris I](#)

I don’t know how long you’ve been in Portland, but that neighborhood is a great example of what happens when development goes wild. Lots of new housing, little of it affordable to the people it displaced. It’s the model that some want to replicate across the city.

👍 3 ➡ Reply



Alex Reedin 2 years ago

👤 Reply to [Hello, Kitty](#)

N/NE Portland was, by and large, gentrified-in-place (by which I mean, large rises in rents and home prices, leading to much displacement of the previous residents) well *before* substantial new market-rate development occurred.

I don’t like *either* gentrified version of N/NE Portland – the 2005 one with little new development, or the 2020 one with a more sizeable amount of it.

👍 5 ➡ Reply



Middle of the Road Guy 2 years ago

👤 Reply to [Hello, Kitty](#)

I’ve lived in and around that area for nearly 20 years...and most of the big builds were on major streets that were commercial operations and not homes. Not that many people have been “displaced”. The homes that were there...I suspect they sold their lots and bigger stuff went up.

👍 4 ➡ Reply



Middle of the Road Guy 2 years ago

👤 Reply to [Chris I](#)

Ouch!

👍 0 ➡ Reply



Buzzwords Suck 2 years ago

👤 Reply to [Chris I](#)

The second pic, the 4 plex that looks like Bart Simpsons head, replaced a single family home that sold for less than each of the single condos in the plex. So it did not provide any new, more affordable housing. And (no surprise) there have been huge issues with the owner trying to sell them. They are now rentals. Also, the two condos that do NOT have garages have not been able to be sold OR

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rented. Idealism aside, people own cars and want somewhere safe to put them or to have a space to store stuff, have a workshop, a home gym, or other large, flexible space. The current definition we have for “affordable housing” is misleading and does not match up with the actual price middle or lower income folks can afford.

👍 12 ➔ Reply



soren 2 years ago

➔ Reply to [Momo](#)

“an adequate supply of middle-income housing”

Thanks for being honest about what you want. Instead of advocating for the actual housing that is in short supply — housing for working class and poor people — you want a greater supply of “nice housing” for households earning 70-120K (middle income in PDX). There is absolutely no shortage of high-end apartments for mostly-white middle income Portlanders — just a shortage of “nice” bungalows, mini-mcmansions, and 0.5+ million dollar duplexes.

“tweaking the regulations ”

The OP and most of P:NW had conniptions about the weak and ineffectual inclusionary housing mandate (because it might dry up supply of “middle class” housing). In my opinion, “all housing matters” types don't really want to tweak the market in any way that addresses housing justice.

“direct subsidies”

So even greater subsidies of housing speculation by a few? Perhaps instead of doing what we've been doing for generations, we could look at what has actually been successful — social housing (and its housing price-leveling power). Housingcare for all.

👍 6 ➔ Reply



Momo 2 years ago

➔ Reply to [soren](#)

You're completely conflating luxury housing with middle-class housing. It makes no sense to talk about “high-end” apartments for “middle income Portlanders.” If it's high-end, it's for rich people, not middle income people. There is an actual shortage of “middle” apartments for “middle’ income Portlanders. You seem to be deliberately pretending that's not true, as a way of avoiding that you simply only care about one of the two main types of housing shortages that exist.

👍 1 ➔ Reply



soren 2 years ago

➔ Reply to [Momo](#)

Middle class Portlanders **are** high-income because median household income has rocketed up in Portland the past few decades. Moreover, based on HUD affordability guidelines the vast majority of “middle income” folk can afford the high-end housing that is in ample supply (thanks to overbuilding and the mad dash to buy a pandemic nest in the suburbs, exurbs or some town like Boise).

👍 1 ➔ Reply



Keith 2 years ago

➔ Reply to [Momo](#)

“we need direct subsidies to correct for a failure of the market to provide that product in any real sense.” Yes, because all of us wish to live amongst \$450k+ housing instead of somewhere I can afford?

👍 0 ➔ Reply



Chris I 2 years ago

➔ Reply to [soren](#)

Yawn.

👍 4 ➔ Reply

**Michael Andersen** 2 years ago| [Reply to soren](#)

Dream on, Soren! Still gotta prevent excessive parking mandates from driving up the prices of apartment buildings in the burbs. 😊

👍 3 ➔ Reply

**Middle of the Road Guy** 2 years ago| [Reply to soren](#)

That's the point of being rich – so you don't have to go without. I'm not saying that high end housing doesn't pervert the market or that lower cost housing isn't needed, but if you have enough money you should be able to buy what you want. Housing, bikes, sushi...

👍 3 ➔ Reply

**Jim Labbe** 2 years ago| [Reply to soren](#)

\$600K tiny home? That sounds like some hyperbole. Orange Splott LLC has built standard sized homes made permanently affordable via Proud Ground (affordable land trust) without public subsidy thanks in part to Portland's initial on-site parking requirement waivers.

👍 0 ➔ Reply

**soren** 2 years ago| [Reply to Jim Labbe](#)

Eli's is a for profit **owned housing developer*** who sells “pergraniteel” single family homes/condos, many of which are sold at market rate. Eli also has financially benefited from a conflict of interest on the PSC by passing a policy that literally deregulated his business model.

Proud Ground does not provide housing for the low-income folk who are in desperate need but rather provides housing for middle income folk (80-100% MFI) who can afford* to live in one of the many empty high-end apartments that our gloriously efficient market has overbuilt. Housing middle income people in “nice” single family homes is simply not something I care about in the midst of this dehumanizing housing crisis.

*based on HUD 30% income metrics

👍 0 ➔ Reply

**Jim Labbe** 2 years ago| [Reply to soren](#)

Talk is cheap. Especially the heresy and hyperbole you seem to peddle. I might agree with the values and principles you seem to champion and your sense of urgency, but with all due respect I don't think you know who or what you are talking about. Eli has led a life and a career of action advocating for and building affordable housing for all income levels (yes including HUD 30%) as a non-profit affordable housing developer for many years and later with his own business building denser co-housing development for a range of income levels. He has done that by pushing the limits of exclusionary single family zoning to create denser, better designed, and more affordable infill community housing. So when he was invited to apply to join the PSC and help reform exclusionary zoning via Residential Infill Project and address other barriers to more affordable development, thankfully he accepted. Eli has been a tireless advocate of a range of policies and mechanisms to expand affordability for all income levels (including transitional housing for the houseless) and has advocated for specific policies (like the real estate transfer tax) to specifically combat the effect of real estate profiteering on rising housing costs. His actions and accomplishments speak volumes of his commitment and success in advancing housing justice.

👍 1 ➔ Reply

**Hello, Kitty** 2 years ago| [Reply to Jim Labbe](#)

All zoning is inherently exclusionary. That's its entire purpose!

👍 1 ➔ Reply



Jim Labbe 2 years ago

➔ Reply to [Hello, Kitty](#)

True but that's beside the point here. Single family zoning is exclusionary to low-wealth, low income people in need of housing which is the subject of this post and thread.

👍 0 ➔ Reply



Hello, Kitty 2 years ago

➔ Reply to [Jim Labbe](#)

Newly constructed "middle housing" is usually even more exclusionary to those people.

👍 0 ➔ Reply



Jim Labbe 2 years ago

➔ Reply to [Hello, Kitty](#)

I don't see how that could possibly be the case in the near term or long term. All newly constructed, market rate housing is less affordable but single family residential is especially so. The affordability provisions in RIP will allow new missing middle housing in the near term to be more affordable in some instances. It remains to be seen if the more efficient land-use of missing middle housing, as well as its contribution to aggregate supply, will help keep housing costs down over the longterm. It seems to me there are reasons for skepticism about the magnitude of these affects but compared to the status quo and given other factors (rising transportation costs) there is a strong case to be made missing middle housing can contribute to a more affordable community (determined by more than housing costs) over all. RIP is a partial solution to a multifaceted, systemically exclusionary housing system.

👍 0 ➔ Reply



Hello, Kitty 2 years ago

➔ Reply to [Jim Labbe](#)

I agree that newly constructed single family housing is likely to be even more expensive, but that's not the option I support. In most cases, it's less expensive (and more climatically sound) to leave existing housing in place. That's what I want, and by incentivizing demolition of functional housing, RIP is a step in the wrong direction.

👍 0 ➔ Reply



Jim Labbe 2 years ago

➔ Reply to [Hello, Kitty](#)

It is potential for this to happen in particular instances but the evidence that new construction of missing middle housing would somehow be worse than a status quo that allows small affordable homes to be demolished and replaced massive very high-end single family homes, doesn't hold up. Moreover, your argument totally ignores the fact that RIP could just as well expand opportunities to preserve existing structures by increasing incentives to re-use and repurpose them, creating more small and more affordable units while preserving existing structures. Regardless, these issues were thoroughly vetted by the PSC, staff, the City Council and public debate leading up to RIP's adoption. Unfortunately a lot of people ignore the evidence because they are making a politically provocative not an evidence-based argument. In some cases that's because they oppose new housing and new neighbors in their neighborhood. Ironically these voices would appear to even oppose the discretely added, more affordable units allowed within existing structures or within the smaller new structures required by RIP. Since these position are politically unattractive, they retreat to evoking this argument about RIP destroying small affordable homes without a lot

evidence. If we really care about preserving the character of our neighborhoods, I think we should focus tools that will preserve Portland's historically mix-income communities over the long term, mixed income communities being winnowed out by overly rigid single family zoning, among other factors. We should be focused on the people not on quaint old homes.

👍 0 ➔ Reply



soren 2 years ago

➔ Reply to [Jim Labbe](#)

RIP made replacement of existing low-density plex/shared housing with high-end single family housing more feasible and profitable. Given that this reservoir of naturally affordable housing is already at risk for replacement, RIP's deregulation may end up increasing "exclusion" of low-income folk in inner Portland neighborhoods. When this is paired with mounting evidence that urban core upzoning are associated increases in land value and that very high demand areas (e.g. inner Portland) experience filtering up, it's conceivable that RIP could end up being a disaster.

👍 1 ➔ Reply



soren 2 years ago

➔ Reply to [soren](#)

"urban core upzoning is associated with increases"

/editing-fail

👍 0 ➔ Reply



Jim Labbe 2 years ago

➔ Reply to [soren](#)

I don't know where you get your evidence in the code or on-the-ground but it strikes me as highly speculative. RIP code amendments don't actually go into effect until next summer. It is important point because a lot of opponents have been blaming RIP for development approved by the existing code, some of which might even be prohibited under RIP. I strongly suspect the immediate impact of RIP will be highly underwhelming for everyone.

👍 0 ➔ Reply



soren 2 years ago

➔ Reply to [Jim Labbe](#)

Hi Jim, I have followed RIP closely since its inception. In fact, my criticisms of RIP (that can be seen in repeated public testimony from myself and PTU) is that it was designed to be underwhelming while incentivizing housing types that do not address the low-income housing crisis. The provision for deeply affordable 4-6 plexes is good but should have allowed higher levels of density and been matched with greater incentives. It is also interesting that P:NW leadership pushed back hard against proposed amendments that would have limited market rate density as proposed by tenant and affordable housing organizations (which were designed to increase the relative value of the affordable housing bonus).

Note: As a tenant organizer, I along with other housing justice groups, proposed a deeply affordable housing bonus during the BHD stakeholders process. Despite this clear history documented in the meeting notes, P:NW leadership falsely claimed that this bonus was a result of their advocacy and not the advocacy of tenant and community groups.

"blaming RIP for development approved by the existing code"

I agree that RIP does little to change the exclusionary status quo. This is unfortunate because the status quo is increasingly awful with an

It's unanimous: Oregon says no to car parking minimums – BikePortland

increasing number of naturally affordable “plexes” and “shared houses” being sold, gutted, and flipped into high-end single family housing. By deregulating the number of SFHs allowed per lot and making it easier to subdivide lots, RIP has made the practice of converting a duplex, triplex, or “shared home” into a large single family home all the more profitable.

👍 0 ➡ Reply



Hello, Kitty 2 years ago

➡ Reply to [Jim Labbe](#)

I don't think the status quo is acceptable either. My current thinking is leave RIP in place and overlay it with demolition protections for sound structures.

It is really hard to take claims of “affordability” seriously in regard to RIP, when what it does is incentivize replacing (often) affordable housing with high-end housing. Offering bonuses for adding cheap housing has largely failed in Portland.

I do not like using the word “exclusionary” to indicate expensive housing, as all housing (including free government housing, if we had any) excludes people. I know you mean it as a pejorative, but it's just redundant. Maybe “RIP is a partial solution to a multifaceted housing system that tends to focus housing production on the most well off”? At least then we'd know what we're talking about, and we could discuss who actually benefits from RIP.

👍 1 ➡ Reply



Steve Scarich 2 years ago

This is a little off topic, but over here in Bend, parking requirements for new businesses have been dramatically reduced. The result is that bike lanes have become the go-to parking for these new businesses. A lot of these businesses are being built near the city core, and parking is already tight. Now, it is beyond tight and drivers just use bikes lanes. I don't see how it will be any different for housing developments in the future. and, with Portland basically throwing in the towel on traffic enforcement (sending those teams to precinct work), you can anticipate having lots of cars in bike lanes, and nobody at the city answering the phone, when you call to complain.

👍 6 ➡ Reply



Todd/Boulanger 2 years ago

➡ Reply to [Steve Scarich](#)

Steve, have you brought your concerns to the Parking Dept or City Council? (Another route may be the City's Risk Manager/ Legal if the City has traffic safety / parking enforcement code that it is not enforcing then they might want to be aware of the liability if a cyclist were to get injured by a blocked bike lane, etc.)

👍 7 ➡ Reply



J_R 2 years ago

➡ Reply to [Todd/Boulanger](#)

Wouldn't enforcement hurt poor people or minorities? Can't do that.

👍 2 ➡ Reply



Steve Scarich 2 years ago

➡ Reply to [J_R](#)

I assume that you were tongue in cheek, but there are only four, or five minorities over here in Bend, and these restaurants pour \$7 pints, so no poor (pun intended) people allowed.

👍 2 ➡ Reply



hedda 2 years ago

➡ Reply to [Steve Scarich](#)

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JR can only talk about poor or Black people if he's mocking them.

👍 2 ➡ Reply



Hello, Kitty 2 years ago

➡ Reply to [hedda](#)

It sounds like they're mocking hand wringers rather than any particular demographic group.

👍 1 ➡ Reply



Steve Scarich 2 years ago

➡ Reply to [Todd/Boulanger](#)

Yes...I have talked to Traffic Enforcement. They made no promises, but, in the past, they have done enforcement sweeps in similar situations. Usually, it becomes an ongoing issue. In one case, after years of my complaining, then enforcement, a popular restaurant bulldozed an adjacent field, laid down gravel, and created additional parking. What will happen in this case, I'm certain, is that scofflaws will get the message, and park in the local neighborhoods, then the neighbors will complain, the City will eventually (usually takes several years) issue stickers for local residents. btw City Council over here is a lost cause. Their business bias is so strong that I have never, in 20 years seen them take significant actions to limit development.

👍 1 ➡ Reply



bendite 2 years ago

➡ Reply to [Steve Scarich](#)

I asked earlier but my question got bumped down. What businesses and which street sections are people parking in the bike lane in Bend? I don't see it very often.

👍 0 ➡ Reply



Steve Scarich 2 years ago

➡ Reply to [bendite](#)

4th ave at Penn, there were 4 cars in the bike lane the day that I called in. Big outdoor bar opened over the Summer.

👍 0 ➡ Reply



Steve Scarich 2 years ago

➡ Reply to [bendite](#)

Went by yesterday; bike lane full of parked cars.

👍 0 ➡ Reply



Chris I 2 years ago

➡ Reply to [Steve Scarich](#)

My theory is that a lack of parking minimums somehow generates more assholes. It sounds like Bend is full of them.

👍 0 ➡ Reply



mark smith 2 years ago

➡ Reply to [Steve Scarich](#)

Perhaps giving the person parked a 5 minute warning then torching their car is appropriate.

👍 4 ➡ Reply



bendite 2 years ago

➡ Reply to [Steve Scarich](#)

What streets/areas are people using bike lanes for parking? I only see it very occasionally.

👍 0 ➡ Reply



stephan 2 years ago

➡ Reply to [bendite](#)

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Plastic wands would help. I noticed that at the Oregon Convention Center. People parked their cars on the bike lane regularly until the city put plastic wands in. Then the problem was resolved. I am not a big fan of plastic wands for protection, but they do seem to help with parking.

 5  Reply



raktajino  2 years ago

 Reply to [stephan](#)

Multnomah Blvd between the Moda Center and Lloyd Center is a good example. When I was commuting along there 2013-2016, there would be nice and clear bike lanes until MLK or so. When the wands and barricades stopped, cars would start being an obstacle. It helped that (iirc) there were also parking spots between those barricades, giving people an obvious alternative to the bike lanes.

 2  Reply



Steve Scarich  2 years ago

 Reply to [stephan](#)

In general I am opposed to any new 'street furniture'. Here in Bend, it won't work because of snow plowing requirements in the Winter. Similar issue in Portland, just not on a regular basis.

 0  Reply



cmh89  2 years ago

 Reply to [Steve Scarich](#)

There's this crazy thing you can do, you can actually make it physically impossible to park in bike lanes by building them above surface level or putting in hard infrastructure to keep cars out of them.

 5  Reply



Evan Manvel  2 years ago

 Reply to [Steve Scarich](#)

I'd argue the result you're frustrated with is not due to mandates being reduced, but parking being undermanaged. (And perhaps a need to flip to curbside parking-protected bike lanes, eliminating the conflict).

That is, in places with excess demand, cities can choose to manage who gets to park in the spots through permits, time limits, pricing, or a combination.

DLCD has published a [host of publications](#) on how to manage on-street parking better and works with cities who are interested in doing such (we presented at a webinar with Bend staff). I thought Bend is considering doing some pricing downtown.

Mandating a lot of parking – thereby subsidizing driving and usually making streetscapes less friendly to people walking and biking – often isn't the best approach to meet our many goals.

 5  Reply



Todd/Boulanger  2 years ago

So does this shift include any Parking Maximums? Or were the minimums just removed?

 2  Reply



Michael Andersen  2 years ago

 Reply to [Todd/Boulanger](#)

No maximums were created.

 4  Reply



David Hampsten  2 years ago

Is that top photo, with all the garages, in Sullivan's Gulch? Would Portland code even allow for such a structure these days?

 1  Reply

**Michael Andersen** · 2 years ago| [Reply to David Hampsten](#)

I believe this wide of a curb cut would be illegal. Not sure though.

1 Reply

**qqg** · 2 years ago| [Reply to David Hampsten](#)

Without looking things up, I think Michael is right that the curb cut is too wide to be approved, plus the parking between the front lot line and the building would be illegal, as would the high percentage of paving, and the percentage of front facade devoted to garage walls.

1 Reply

**Chris I** · 2 years ago| [Reply to David Hampsten](#)

This building is on Halsey St. near Hollywood. I frequently walk by, and having cars parked right up against the sidewalk, combined with a huge curb cut next to a high-speed street is definitely not great. The other side of the street is much more comfortable, but then you hit a freeway offramp just west of here, which usually has someone blowing the red light to turn right.

5 Reply

**EP** · 2 years ago| [Reply to Chris I](#)

I had to look that up. It's at 45th & Halsey. I was thinking it was another spot, on NE Irving between 20th and 21st. There are two older courtyard apartment buildings with this treatment for 15 garages, and they have the cut angled down much steeper to get to basement grade. It's great that all the garages are on one street, and the other apartments have the courtyard entrances off of 20th and 21st. This kind of (old) development is a nice look, I'd like to see more.

<https://goo.gl/maps/esSndtGcj851JLYC7>

2 Reply

**PNWPhotoWalks** · 2 years ago| [Reply to EP](#)

Correct on the location. I don't geotag my shots, for privacy purposes. Here is my original snap – <https://www.flickr.com/photos/memcclure/46419179485>

0 Reply

**raktajino** · 2 years ago| [Reply to EP](#)

That apartment management company, Bristol Urban, has all sorts of old Portland-y properties. (Clarification: they own the section that's further from the camera and in better condition. Not sure who owns the near one.) Generally in walkable/bikeable locations too!

0 Reply

**David Hampsten** · 2 years ago| [Reply to EP](#)

Thank you! I was trying to figure out the tall concrete project behind it, the combo reminded me of some buildings in the Gulch where I lived for 5 years, but in fact it's a mile away in Hollywood – Homeforward's Hollywood East Apartments for the elderly, on Broadway near Grocery Outlet, TJ's, and Whole Foods.

0 Reply

**citylover** · 2 years ago| [Reply to David Hampsten](#)

Yes, projects that meet the code but only need a building permit (no land use review) sneak through all the time. There are several in my neighborhood. Fortunately they are more

affordable and filled with nice neighbors so it's not too bad, but man it is ugly.

 0  Reply



X  2 years ago

 Reply to [David Hampsten](#)

I'm not up to speed on seismic building code but it looks a little fishy in terms of shear wall dimensions.

 0  Reply



qqq  2 years ago

 Reply to [X](#)

It should be fine as long as nobody leaves their garage door open during an earthquake.

Seriously, though, totally fishy. But it was built in 1938, decades before any meaningful seismic requirements.

 0  Reply



qqq  2 years ago

The caption's "In many Oregon cities, this is how a fourplex would be legally required to look" isn't quite true. In NE Portland's Eliot neighborhood, there are several four-plexes on 50' wide lots with a single standard garage door, leading to at least 6 spaces (1.5 per unit) inside the building, 1/2 level below grade so the garage door isn't prominent. Some had a few additional spaces in the back yard behind the building.

 1  Reply



Keith  2 years ago

While I totally support reducing or eliminating parking requirements, I think a one-size-fits-all approach has its downside. Reaching the multi-modal utopia will take time, and some areas will take longer than others. I believe a more nuanced and pragmatic approach to parking would yield better results in the long run. Off the top of my head – a few considerations:

- A big factor related to on-site parking cost is whether the jurisdiction requires a structure (garage/carport) or simply a spot to park on the property. Prohibiting requirements for garages/carports is a great start.
- If parking isn't provided on-site, cars won't disappear, they'll show up on the street. How many times have we had bike lane projects that became extremely difficult or impossible because of on-street parking demand and related political opposition? Instead of parking cost being borne by the car owner, it's publicly subsidized as on-street parking.
- More attention should be paid to minimum parking requirements for destinations like employment and commercial uses. One reason Americans drive is because it's been made relatively cheap and very convenient. Other than the Central City, parking is free and (overly) plentiful just about anywhere.
- Availability of travel options (walkable neighborhoods, bike infrastructure, transit) need to be available for households to realistically rely on fewer/no cars. The availability of these options varies widely across Portland metro and the state. What makes perfect sense near SE Division may be very different in Tigard or Gresham.

Like many issues, there's no silver bullet.

 7  Reply



rick  2 years ago

 Reply to [Keith](#)

Downtown Tigard has just about zero bicycle lanes except for parts of ODOT's stroad of Pacific Highway. Greenburg Road and Hall Blvd have smeared-away bike paint lanes. The Tigard Street Trail has an awful cargo bike-unfriendly gate by the sidewalk where the trail ends.

 1  Reply

**Evan Manvel** 2 years agoReply to [Keith](#)

To me, there's very little more one-size-fits all than parking mandates.

The data from [King County](#), the Bay Area, Hillsboro, Albany, Corvallis, and Portland show over and over the demand for car parking varies a lot from project to project, even in similar areas. Hence, I'm in favor of letting the market adjust to those nuances (while managing public on-street parking well — which is admittedly difficult work, but even places like La Grande have permits in high-demand areas).

What we've seen across Oregon is local builders usually include some car parking (as that's what their tenants want) even in places without costly, one-size-fits-all mandates.

Proposals in Eugene to develop parking-free housing downtown have had the lenders require builders to include very expensive structured parking (i.e. parking garages) to get the loans.

Yes, there's no silver bullet. And you may not be entirely correct that cars won't disappear — the [academic research \(albiet limited\)](#) is pretty clear providing off-street parking increases car ownership and use. The magnitude of that is [still up for debate](#).

3 Reply

**Fred** 2 years agoReply to [Evan Manvel](#)

I agree that one-size-fits-all solutions are usually terrible. A requirement to *provide* parking is just as bad as a requirement *not* to provide parking. And when developers are *not* required to provide parking, they often put the burden of providing it on the community generally, since people still own cars and they park them on the streets, making life worse for everyone else.

I'm interested in thinking in new ways about this issue — away from a model where people park in front of their houses to one where parking is an amenity, like shopping, and you pay for it separately. Wouldn't it be nice to have more developments like Culdesac in Tempe, AZ (<https://www.fastcompany.com/90434128/if-you-want-to-live-in-this-new-arizona-neighborhood-you-cant-own-a-car>) where there is NO provision for cars of any type? I want a neighborhood where I don't have to worry about some driver running me over when I walk the dog. People in car-free communities will still own cars — they'll just have to figure out where to store them, by renting a stall in a garage nearby, perhaps.

I don't like the way this problem is framed b/c there's no good solution as long as we keep talking about "minimums." Instead we should be talking about about a more holistic framework that takes the total car-ownership challenge into account. Right now parking is considered a *free* amenity that comes with car ownership, and that's just wrong.

1 Reply

**Evan Manvel** 2 years agoReply to [Fred](#)

There's nothing in the rules that's a requirement not to provide parking.

As you note, there is a problem with mismanaged on-street parking.

That's mainly because cities decide to provide free/deeply subsidized car storage on the public street. And most areas aren't managed at all.

Want car storage/parking (200 square feet of storage), privately provided? That'll usually start at \$50 a month in low demand areas, going up from there. Probably at least \$100/month in areas Portland provides permits. So \$600 to \$1200/year.

Want an on-street parking permit from the City? That's \$75 a year (\$195 in Northwest, unless you're low income).

So the City is providing an item worth \$600-\$1200 item for \$75 (To be fair, many cities, such as Salem, are \$15/year — and it's hard to directly compare non-reserved spots in neighborhoods with a dedicated spot not near your home).

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The politics around this are difficult. People think they have the right to store a car (but not a storage item, or have a parklet, etc.) on the street for very little cost. (You can skim the [TGM guide to managing on-street residential parking here](#)).

👍 0 ➔ Reply



Hello, Kitty 2 years ago

➔ Reply to [Fred](#)

Fast forward 20 years, when the robot cars have arrived and are widely deployed... urban parking will simply no longer be an issue.

It's a problem that will solve itself. Squabbling about it now is just a waste of time.

👍 3 ➔ Reply



Evan Manvel 2 years ago

➔ Reply to [Hello, Kitty](#)

Unclear on the timeline (the promise of self-driving cars has been overhyped, but in theory we'll get there).

But yes, reducing costly mandates now makes sense given the future reduction in demand for on-site parking at each site. Forcing the building of spaces that will be unneeded in the future into building site plans for buildings that will last 80-100 years is pretty wasteful.

That's why managing the huge amount of existing parking better makes more sense than building a bunch more.

👍 0 ➔ Reply



Scott Kocher 2 years ago

Awesome! There are a surprising number of those garage-front multi-plexes around Portland. Most can fit one street tree between every third garage door, if large tree wells are added in the curb zone (which is currently wasted asphalt). Here's one in NW that shows the amount of space in the right-of-way that is available for trees or other placemaking: <https://goo.gl/maps/8nquTs2abdwCdXQf6>

👍 5 ➔ Reply



qqq 2 years ago

➔ Reply to [Scott Kocher](#)

That's a great idea. Dividing that long curb cut into several groups of two or three (so you'd drive at a slight angle right or left from the curb cut into the garage) so you had a row of street trees would totally transform the view towards that facade (plus give tenants views of trees instead street traffic).

I wonder if PBOT would balk at not having much clearance from the edge of the curb cuts to the trees (I think 5' min. is the standard)?

👍 0 ➔ Reply



citylover 2 years ago

I mean...that is sort of how some of them look in my neighborhood (Kerns). But yeah, I don't see Oregon going for parking minimums. Certainly not with any projects using public funds.

👍 0 ➔ Reply



zuckerdog 2 years ago

Two words:
Frontage fees

👍 2 ➔ Reply

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SEATTLE'S LOWRISE MULTIFAMILY ZONES

IMPORTANT NOTE: Some areas have neighborhood-specific regulations that are not reflected here. Please consult the Land Use Code for individual projects.

THIS ZONING SUMMARY IS FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY

This document describes development that is generally permitted in lowrise multifamily residential zones. For specific regulations and exceptions, please refer to Chapter 23.45 of the Seattle Municipal Code (SMC). If you have additional questions, you may email a Land Use Planner at www.seattle.gov/sdci/about-us/contact-us, or visit the virtual Applicant Services Center (ASC) at www.seattle.gov/sdci/about-us/who-we-are/applicant-services-center for assistance. For more detailed or project-specific information, please call the ASC at (206) 684-8850 to arrange for a paid appointment. Due to the complexity of the code, questions cannot be answered by phone.

Regulations common to all lowrise multifamily zones

Green Factor

Green Factor is a scoring system that increases the quantity and improves the quality of landscaping. Landscaping is required to achieve a Green Factor score of .60 or higher when more than one new dwelling unit is proposed. Credit is awarded for green roofs, rain gardens, planters, green walls, landscaping, plantings in the adjacent right-of-way, and other features.

Amenity Area

Amenity area is space that provides active or passive recreational opportunities. It is either private space intended for occupants of a single dwelling unit, or common space available for use by all occupants. In LR zones, all amenity area must be unenclosed. Minimum dimensions and other standards apply.

Motor Vehicle Parking

No parking is required in urban centers, station area overlays, or urban villages within a frequent transit service area. Development within Alki and the University District must provide 1.5 spaces per unit. In all other areas, 1 space per unit is required.

Required vehicular parking must be provided on-site, or off-site on a lot within 800' that is not in a single family zone. Alley access is required if an alley is present, with some allowances for street access under special circumstances.

Mandatory Affordable Housing (MHA)

MHA requires new construction to include affordable housing or contribute to a City fund for affordable housing. New construction on lots in an LR zone with an MHA suffix of M, M1 or M2 are subject to Chapters 23.58B and 23.58C. The MHA suffix determines the payment or performance amount.

Design Standards

Design standards provide visual interest and contribute to an attractive streetscape. Street-facing and side facades must be articulated, use varied building materials, or incorporate other architectural features. Street-facing facades must have prominent pedestrian entries and a minimum area of window openings. There are specific design standards for each multifamily housing type.

Design Review

Development greater than 8,000 square feet is subject to design review. There are three types of design review: full, administrative, and streamlined. The project size and site characteristics determine which type applies. Full design review is conducted by a neighborhood Design Review Board. Administrative design review (ADR) and streamlined design review (SDR) are conducted by SDCI staff. Development undergoing design review is not subject to the multifamily design standards.

Projects may request departures or adjustments from a limited number of development standards if the resulting project better meets the intent of the adopted design guidelines.

Green Building

Development may voluntarily meet a green building standard in exchange for additional development capacity, such as extra floor area or height. The green building standards save resources and promote renewable, clean energy. Development must demonstrate adherence to the LEED, Built Green, Passive House, Living Building Challenge, or Evergreen Sustainable Development certification program.

Housing Types:

Development standards apply according to the following housing types: cottage housing, rowhouses, townhouses or apartments.

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) are allowed with single-family dwelling units, rowhouses, and townhouses in LR zones, subject to specific development standards per 23.45.545.1. ADUs do not count towards the density limit.

See SMC 23.84A.032 for complete housing type definitions.

Cottage Housing



Individual cottage house structures are arranged around a common open space; 950 square feet (sf) is the maximum size allowed for each cottage.

Rowhouse



Rowhouses are attached side by side along common walls. Each rowhouse directly faces the street with no other principal housing units behind the rowhouses. Rowhouses occupy the space from the ground to the roof. Units can not be stacked.

Townhouse



Townhouses are attached along common walls and occupy the space from the ground to the roof. Units can not be stacked. Townhouses may be located behind other townhouses as seen from the street.

Apartments



Multifamily housing that is not cottage housing, rowhouses, or townhouses is considered apartments. Apartment units may be stacked.

LR1

Lowrise 1

Areas characterized by low-density, small-scale multifamily housing types, which are similar in character to neighborhood residential zones. Most appropriate outside of Growth Areas¹.

	MHA Suffix	No MHA Suffix	MHA Suffix	No MHA Suffix	MHA Suffix	No MHA Suffix	MHA Suffix	No MHA Suffix
Floor Area Ratio (FAR)	1.3	1.0	1.3	1.0	1.3	1.0	1.3	1.0
Density	No limit	1 unit / 1,300 sf	No limit; 1 unit / 1,300 sf on interior lots less than 3,000 sf		1 unit / 1,300 sf		No limit ²	1 unit / 1,300 sf ²
Building Height³	22'		30'		30'		30'	
Building Setbacks	Front 7' ave., 5' min. Rear 0' w/ alley; 7' w/ no alley Side 5' min.		Front 5' min. Rear 0' w/ alley; 7' ave., 5' min w/ no alley Side 0' where abutting another rowhouse; 3.5' or 5' when abutting a SF zone		Front 7' ave., 5' min. Rear 7' ave., 5' min. Side 5' min.; 7' ave., 5' min. for facades greater than 40'		Front 5' min. Rear 10' w/ alley; 15' min w/ no alley Side 5' min.; 7' ave., 5' min. for facades greater than 40'	
Building Width	No limit		No limit		60'		45'	
Façade Length	The maximum combined length of all portions of façades within 15' of a lot line that is neither a rear, street, or alley lot line shall not exceed 65% percent of the length of that lot line, or 40' for a rowhouse development.							

LR2

Lowrise 2

Areas characterized by multifamily housing types in existing small-scale multifamily neighborhoods with arterial streets. Most appropriate within Growth Areas¹.

	MHA Suffix		No MHA Suffix		MHA Suffix		No MHA Suffix		MHA Suffix		No MHA Suffix		MHA Suffix		No MHA Suffix	
	Growth Area	Outside Growth Area	Growth Area	Outside Growth Area	Growth Area	Outside Growth Area	Growth Area	Outside Growth Area	Growth Area	Outside Growth Area	Growth Area	Outside Growth Area	Growth Area	Outside Growth Area	Growth Area	Outside Growth Area
Floor Area Ratio (FAR)	1.4		1.1		1.4		1.1		1.4		1.1		1.4; 1.6 with specific amenity area requirements		1.1	
Density	No limit		1 unit / 1,300 sf		No limit		1 unit / 1,300 sf		No limit		1 unit / 1,300 sf		No limit		1 unit / 1,300 sf	
Building Height³	22'				40'		30'		40'		30'		40'		30'	
Building Setbacks	Same as LR1 with additional upper-level setback requirements based on height limit and proximity to a neighborhood residential zone per SMC 23.45.518.															
Building Width	No limit				No limit				90'				90'			
Façade Length	Same as LR1				Same as LR1				Same as LR1				Same as LR1			

LR3

Lowrise 3

Areas characterized by multifamily housing types in existing moderate-scale multifamily neighborhoods with good transit service along arterial street and near commercial zones. Most appropriate within Growth Areas¹.

	MHA Suffix		No MHA Suffix		MHA Suffix		No MHA Suffix		MHA Suffix		No MHA Suffix		MHA Suffix		No MHA Suffix	
	Growth Area	Outside Growth Area	Growth Area	Outside Growth Area	Growth Area	Outside Growth Area	Growth Area	Outside Growth Area	Growth Area	Outside Growth Area	Growth Area	Outside Growth Area	Growth Area	Outside Growth Area	Growth Area	Outside Growth Area
Floor Area Ratio (FAR)	2.3	1.8	1.2	1.2	2.3	1.8	1.2	1.2	2.3	1.8	1.2	1.2	2.3	1.8	1.5	1.3
Density	No limit		1 unit / 1,300 sf		No limit		1 unit / 1,300 sf		No limit		1 unit / 1,300 sf		No limit		1 unit / 800 sf	
Building Height³	22'				50'	40'	30'		50'	40'	30'		50'	40'	40'	30'
Building Setbacks	Same as LR1 with additional upper-level setback requirements based on height limit and proximity to a neighborhood residential zone per SMC 23.45.518.															
Building Width	No limit				No limit				150'	120'	150'	120'	150'	120'	150'	120'
Façade Length	Same as LR1				Same as LR1				Same as LR1				Same as LR1			

¹ Growth Areas include urban centers, urban villages, and station area overlay districts.

² Family-sized housing requirement applies per SMC 23.45.512.B

³ Additional height allowances apply per SMC 23.45.514.

From: [Phil Cornell](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: Proposed parking regulations
Date: Sunday, March 12, 2023 5:56:15 PM

Add me as a party of record for the proposed parking regulations.

Looks like the city is at it again, trying to force something on Olympia residents without our input. Scheduling a hearing with such short notice that almost no one can attend is a strategy of a government taken over by special interests.

As a resident of Olympia for over 50 years, I am ordering you to cease and desist any furtherance of this proposed plan until city residents have had a sufficient opportunity to review and comment on the proposed action. Eight days is not enough time to review this plan since you have made it so difficult to obtain any information about it. Eight days is not enough time to free up my schedule so that I may attend the hearing.

The City of Olympia has a long track record of holding these so-called public hearings and then disregarding all public input and proceeding with the plan as written. This is not democratic government, this is dictatorship.

We, the residents of Olympia, are your boss, failure to listen to our input is insubordination.

Phil Cornell
1502 15th Ave SW
Olympia, WA 98502
360 515-1263

From: [Leah Melvoin](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Cc: ["JUDITH BARDIN"](#)
Subject: Reducing parking requirements
Date: Tuesday, March 14, 2023 9:33:58 AM

Hi,

I understand you are the point person for the city's plan to reduce parking in Olympia. I feel strongly that the city is not considering the impacts to residents, neighborhoods, and the environment.

Specific concerns:

- The city says that reducing parking will increase housing and housing affordability but provides no guarantees that this will motivate developers to make new units more affordable. This was the case in Seattle and it has been disastrous for affordable housing there.
- This type of zoning is based on an assumption that in the future residents won't have cars. This has proven to be false in every city that has enacted the same zoning. In fact, the lack of parking hits dense neighborhoods the hardest and that in turn hurts families. When I lived in Seattle they reduced parking on Capitol Hill. The impact was felt by businesses and people alike. Capitol Hill is denser, but the cost for rent and housing has skyrocketed. Because of crime, the grocery stores are closing. Many seniors I know who live there (with no car) have to walk miles to go to a grocery store. There's no bus that connects. It's awful.
- Residents in dense neighborhoods have guests. They take up parking and displace residents. This REALLY hurts families.
- Olympia's bus service is infrequent in the later evening, on weekends, and holidays. Last Thanksgiving there was no bus service at all. Many destinations require a bus transfer which can take a lot of time.
 - Many people, especially those of lower income have two jobs and need a car to get between jobs.
 - Most bus stops have no shelter. People have to stand in the rain to wait for a bus.
 - Many streets have no sidewalks to walk to a bus. Accessing bus service without sidewalks is very difficult for persons with disabilities.
- The United States Postal Service requires residents to provide 10 ft on either side of a mailbox to give mail trucks access. This takes up a parking space. If someone parks too near a mailbox, mail will often not be delivered.
- The city has not provided a study of residential parking capacity in the different neighborhoods. Many neighborhoods, especially older ones have limited street parking available. Houses may not have garages or driveways and parking may already be tight.
- There has been very limited public outreach to neighborhoods that will be adversely affected by changes to parking. That's unacceptable.

I will close by saying that no one moves to Olympia to live in a "dense" situation. They come here for our beautiful single-family neighborhoods. If the city proceeds with these policies, only developers benefit. These policies will destroy the quality of life for every future generation. We will be the last to enjoy a yard, parking, trees, homes where kids can play safely.

Rather than doing this, focus efforts on repurposing Capitol mall and or rezone all of the other crappy strip malls. You don't need to destroy our way of life this way. There are other options!

I'd appreciate being kept in the loop on this.

Thank you,

Leah Melvoin.

From: [Linda Malanchuk-Finnan](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Cc: [Linda Malanchuk-Finnan](#)
Subject: City Parking Policies
Date: Tuesday, March 14, 2023 3:56:46 PM

I am opposed to any changes in the City Of Olympia's current parking policies. It looks like the city representatives think no apartment dweller has a car when these days, every family has at least one car and usually two in order to get to work, go grocery shopping, get to facilities as needed. Most working class families still have both partners working to make ends meet. Our bus transportation system is pretty poor for someone to base getting to work and home and maybe to stores or pick up children from childcare. Every time there is a downturn in our economy, bus transportation services are cut back or dropped totally. So to expect families to depend on bus service for significant necessary daily travel is a lottery that does them a disservice.

In addition, we have seen that contractors can buy enough lots in a neighborhood, knock down the existing housing and build complexes that often are NOT affordable to low income and working families so we have lost housing instead of the promised gain. At the same time, having 8-plexes in a residential neighborhood with no parking puts a premium on the streets that we are trying to keep clear for the safety of school children, buses and fire trucks.

This sounds like a way to put money in the pocket of builders who make the most money from higher priced homes, not a way to help first time home buyers, especially people of color historically locked out, from getting one. There is no guarantee in the proposed policies that it will actually result in more affordable housing, only "a promise", and we have seen what "a promise" turns out not to be with the various tax concessions made to apartment and condo builders downtown.

I am strongly opposed to the proposed changes in parking policy as well as housing zoning brought to us by the Olympia City Council to date.

Linda Malanchuk-Finnan
3122 28th Ave SE
Olympia, WA 98501
360-357-7272
lryh@hotmail.com

From: [Cindy](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: Olympia Planning Commission: Attn Joyce Phillips
Date: Thursday, March 16, 2023 7:26:14 AM

One example ~ Sidewalk Café, 601 Capitol Way N

To eat there generally I have to park, at a meter, 2 blocks away.

Walking to the café I was approached by a homeless person, pan handling ~ I did not 'feel' comfortable

While I love their food, due to the lack of parking spaces, I rarely battle it
Another thought

When people have company ~ their guests usually drive to visit them. And where do they park?

At a condo in Seattle I visited the family and again, parked blocks away, walking to their address in the wind and rain! Never got warmed up again, until I got home to Tumwater and took a hot bath.

My son lives in East Elmhurst, New York ~ he has a co-op, not enough parking, so his option is on the street.

Mind you, on certain days vehicles cannot park, as it blocks service vehicles, the signs are posted 'no parking', like we do for Lakefair parades ~ however, their signs are WEEKLY (very inconvenient).

Have you been to St Peter's Hospital lately? I spend more time looping their parking lot looking for a place to park than I do in the building!

Seems to me an off-site parking lot would be handy, with a shuttle for the staff ~ like SeaTac airport parking lot shuttle services.

Think outside of the box ~ give the developers more options ~

Thank you for your time ~ and goodluck!

Cindy Martin

Preciously owner of DC Cab (a local transportation service)
360 791-8927

Joyce Phillips

From: Joyce Mercuri <Chela2@Q.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 16, 2023 1:22 PM
To: Joyce Phillips
Subject: Olympia Planning Commission, Attn: Joyce Phillips: Residential Parking

Hello Joyce:

I am writing with comments about the proposed reductions in residential parking requirements.

I am strongly OPPOSED to the proposal. While it sounds great on paper to remove parking, it is impractical, is unfair to the lower income tenants of the buildings, and will result in crowded conditions in surrounding neighborhoods. It RAINS a lot in Olympia and people will always use cars or some other vehicular way of getting around, especially at night. There is not now, and will probably never be, enough bus service to get people where they need to be.

ALSO... It is unfair and unworkable for low income, marginalized people!

While this might somewhat help the cost of housing, it is inherently unfair to lower income people. The idea here is to reduce the number of people who have cars completely (unless you are assuming they will just crowd their cars into surrounding neighborhoods). If people living in these places don't have ability to have a car, then how can they get to their jobs (e.g., folks who work at the call centers way out in Lacey, or who have nighttime work?). How can they shuttle their kids around to school and activities? How can they run errands such as grocery shopping with toddlers in tow on a bus, carrying their purchases.

How are visitors to these buildings supposed to be accommodated, unless they park in the local neighborhood? That will result in overly full and jammed residential streets like in Seattle.

It does not make sense to remove parking!!!!

Sincerely,
Joyce Mercuri
804 Milas Avenue NE
Olympia

From: [Janae Huber](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Cc: [CityCouncil](#)
Subject: Parking
Date: Thursday, March 16, 2023 9:11:48 PM

Dear members of the Planning Commission -

The parking proposal you are considering lacks the urgency of our housing crisis and completely ignores the climate crisis.

The City has advertised this proposal as a reduction in parking requirements. Given that, I eagerly listened to your March 6th briefing. Yet, when I dug into the proposal, I saw that it actually represents very little reduction and in some categories a doubling of allowable parking. For example:

- For multifamily housing built for **low and extremely low income residents, there is no reduction** in required parking. Again, this proposal is being brought to you as part of the *Housing Action Plan* with the expressed goal of increasing Olympia's supply and improving the affordability of housing.
- For market rate **units built near transit, there is no reduction** in the parking minimum.
- For **studio apartments**, another option for people seeking more affordable units, **the reduction proposed is only 25% less** than the current requirement.

These three categories have the potential to benefit the most from reduction in parking requirements. Low income residents need access to more units built as affordably as possible and yet we're still proposing .75 parking spots per unit. This not only reduces the amount of space available for housing units, it adds approximately \$10,000 to the cost of each unit.

When we build multi-family housing near transit, we are creating precisely the scenario where people can live a car-lite lifestyle. And yet, we are proposing a minimum of .75 spots per unit (0% reduction from current). If that's built as structured parking, we're adding \$25,000-\$50,000 per unit to the price.

As written, this proposal wholly misses the mark. Olympia needs a compact development pattern that supports diverse housing, and prioritizes affordability and carbon reductions. This proposal does nothing to move Olympia toward that necessary future.

I urge you to help us join the more than 200 cities and towns nationwide that have eliminated parking minimums in their communities.

Janae Huber
Olympia

Janae Huber
janae.huber@gmail.com

Resolution to the Olympia Planning Commission

The purpose of this resolution is to urge the Olympia Planning Commission’s March 20th hearing be delayed until such time that a thorough analysis of the proposed amendments to the residential parking requirement code can be performed and then disseminated at least 30 days before the hearing.

Whereas, the Olympia Comprehensive Plan PL11.5 places this caveat on parking reductions:

“...reduce parking space requirements but avoid significant overflow into residential areas; support parking structures, especially downtown and in urban corridors; designate streets for on-street parking where safe.”

Whereas, the city did not meet its stated public outreach commitment made in its application for the Commerce Department grant (see below) and thus did not build a stronger understanding of the need for their recommendations, particularly by surrounding neighborhoods.

“We anticipate conducting an especially high level of public outreach around the reduction of parking requirements (Objective One) so that we can build stronger understanding of why this is an important step for meeting housing, land use, transportation and climate adaption goals along with address concerns about parking impacts to surrounding neighborhoods.” – Olympia HAPI Application 10/7/21

Whereas, a city commissioned survey in Portland found that despite robust and extensive transit alternatives, 72% of residents in new apartment buildings owned cars and the Census’ 2021 American Community Survey (ACS) showed that nationally 79% of those living in apartments had one or more vehicles and **90% of those living in apartments in Washington state** had one or more vehicle (1 ton or less),

Whereas, Olympia, lacking a transit system comparable to Portland, and

- is more likely to have a greater car ownership rate than Portland and be closer to the Washington average, and
- lower income individuals are more likely to have multiple part-time jobs and work in the service industry and Olympia’s definition of “frequent transit routes” and the level of service of our current transit system is inadequate to meet their needs in terms of hours, days of operation and frequency,

Whereas, no data has been presented demonstrating that the proposal would “avoid significant overflow into residential areas”,

- there is no provision proposed for managing such significant parking overflows when they do occur, and
- there is no process for a neighborhood to appeal the impact of a zero-parking policy in terms of analysis or remediation,

Whereas, there is no provision requiring developers to pass savings from reduced construction cost on to future renters,

Whereas, the City's commitment to “robust” public engagement has not happened,

Whereas, the Olympia Planning Commission instructed staff to make significant changes to the draft proposal shared with the Recognized Neighborhood Associations with the result that it changed it from a "reduction" to the complete "elimination" of minimum parking requirements for multi-family units with 3 or more units, and

- the significant changes were not presented until March 13, 2023, just seven days before the Planning Commission hearing on March 20th,
- no supporting documentation for the changes and its effects on overflow to neighborhoods were presented, and
- there is inadequate time and information for RNAs to evaluate and inform their members,

Therefore, we adopt this resolution requesting the March 20th hearing be delayed until such time that the parking impact analysis can be performed and disseminated at least 30 days before the hearing.

Approved by unanimous vote on 3-16-23

From: [Catherine Bander](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: City of Olympia new parking regulations
Date: Friday, March 17, 2023 9:54:29 AM

Dear people,

I am not in favor of reducing required parking spaces for residences. Yes, it is ideal to have residents use public transportation or their own legs. Not going to happen! Eliminating parking requirements will move the vehicles on to the street as has happened in my neighborhood, near St Michaels Church. The Easterly, an apartment building on Eastside street was built a few years ago with the idea that the residents could use the parking next door - used to be a credit union. Residents of the Easterly are parking on Eastside Street, and 9th Ave. There are 3 duplexes on 10 Ave, each unit has a garage and driveway. However, the residents own more than 2 cars and the excess vehicles are parked on both sides of 10 Ave.

These two examples show that family units have more than one vehicle. Also, even if they live on a bus line they still have vehicles.

Reducing parking requirements will not eliminate vehicle ownership, just moves the problem onto public roads, causing more congestion.

Catherine Bander
Olympia resident

From: [Joy Griffin](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: No on no ...new developments need to provide parking
Date: Friday, March 17, 2023 10:18:47 AM

I'm a voting citizen living in olympia, here on the westside, and we already have wars with our neighbors about parking. Please do not pass new development regulations that they don't need to provide parking. New developments should have 2 parking spaces per appt/townhouse. It's totally insane to propose no parking for folks. It will totally create more crime. My neighbor already threatens me when I'm forced to park in front of his house as somebody else is already parked in front of my house. Please make olympia a better place to live, not worse.

Joy Griffin

A concerned citizen of Olympia

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From: [Kathy McCormick](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Cc: [CityCouncil](#)
Subject: OPC discussion on Parking Requirements
Date: Friday, March 17, 2023 12:04:18 PM

Dear Planning Commission Members

The City of Olympia has been “nattering” around the edges of reduced parking requirements for 25 years. I know because I served as staff to the Olympia Planning Commission for many of those years. Once again I fear that valuable Olympia staff, Planning Commission and Council time is being spent without moving the City toward its housing goals for dealing with what has become a housing crisis of availability, affordability and environmental concern.

Given the amount of publicly available parking on city streets, I believe there should be no minimum requirements. Builders of housing are going to provide the amount of parking deemed necessary for the viability of the project. The city should be encouraging curbside parking.

Curbside parking:

- Uses the available asphalt as fully as possible
- Reduces the need to use more land to store cars and increase impervious surface in the process (requiring even more land and cost for water retention on site)
- Decreases car speed by increasing street edge “friction” increasing safety for all modes of travel
- Allows more land to be used for human habitable space rather than expensive square footage for car storage

Given the housing and affordability crisis and the goals of the City Housing Action Plan - not to mention City and Regional Sustainability goals - this is NOT the time to once again make timid - or in some cases in this proposal - NO changes to parking minimums.

Use this opportunity to make a real difference in the way we use land:

- Encourage full use of existing street edge parking
- Reduce the cost of building housing in every way possible
- Use the built environment as fully as possible to house People Not Cars!

Sincerely,

Kathy McCormick
2420 Columbia St SW
Olympia, WA 98501

From: [Jo Pierson](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: Oly Planning Commission ATTN Joyce
Date: Friday, March 17, 2023 5:43:15 PM

Re: Zero Parking Proposal

Restricting parking to zero parking serves no one but the developer. It does not serve the community. In fact, it lessens the quality of life for those living in multiplex dwellings and for their neighbors.

The article online did not offer a reason for the proposal--I will guess that it was on behalf of a developer who would not be willing to give up his own multi-car garage! Developers want all the property to generate income, and parking is not income generating.

I lived for many years in the high density/low to zero parking nightmare called the San Fernando Valley in Southern California. It was not uncommon to be forced to walk for blocks after parking my car, carrying groceries, my briefcase, and keeping my toddler close enough for safety's sake. Succinctly--it sucked.

Please remember that you serve the community.

Thank you,

Jo Pierson
1616 11th Ave SW
Olympia, 98502

From: [Andy Carter](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: Parking Requirements for Developers
Date: Sunday, March 19, 2023 10:11:01 AM

I don't know if the story is true, that parking regulations for new developments are being reduced or eliminated, but if so I object. I believe that new single family homes are required to have at least one parking space; I further believe that multi-family homes are required to have at least one parking space per unit.

Developers are required to mitigate their impact created by the development; requiring at least one (or mor) parking space per unit is a major mitigation that must be required for development in the City.

New development may be beneficial for the city, but not at the expense of the public.

Anthony Carter

Andy

From: [Barbara Buchan](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Cc: [Bev Bassett on behalf of OSD&LN](#)
Subject: Review 3/20/23 of new parking regulations
Date: Sunday, March 19, 2023 2:41:54 PM

Please allow more time for review of the proposed regulations. Some of the proposals just announced defy common sense or are not tenable.
It appears that the City is not really interested in working with the neighborhoods.
Please rethink your current proposals.

Thank you
Barbara Buchan
924Quince, N.E.



Virus-free www.avast.com

From: [ComcastIMAP](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Cc: [Leonard Bauer](#); [CityCouncil](#)
Subject: Fwd: [Blog] Walkable archipelagos are emerging across the US
Date: Sunday, March 19, 2023 4:24:57 PM

Joyce,

Please provide this article to the Planning Commission for Monday nights hearing.
This is another good article support about the value of minimizing parking.

Thank you.

Best, Mike

Mike McCormick
360.754.2916

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Brandon G. Donnelly" <b@brandondonnelly.com>
Date: March 19, 2023 at 3:02:36 AM PDT
To: Mike <mike.mccormick@comcast.net>
Subject: [Blog] Walkable archipelagos are emerging across the US
Reply-To: us7-36ec175a20-20615f3b95@inbound.mailchimpapp.net

The daily blog for city builders

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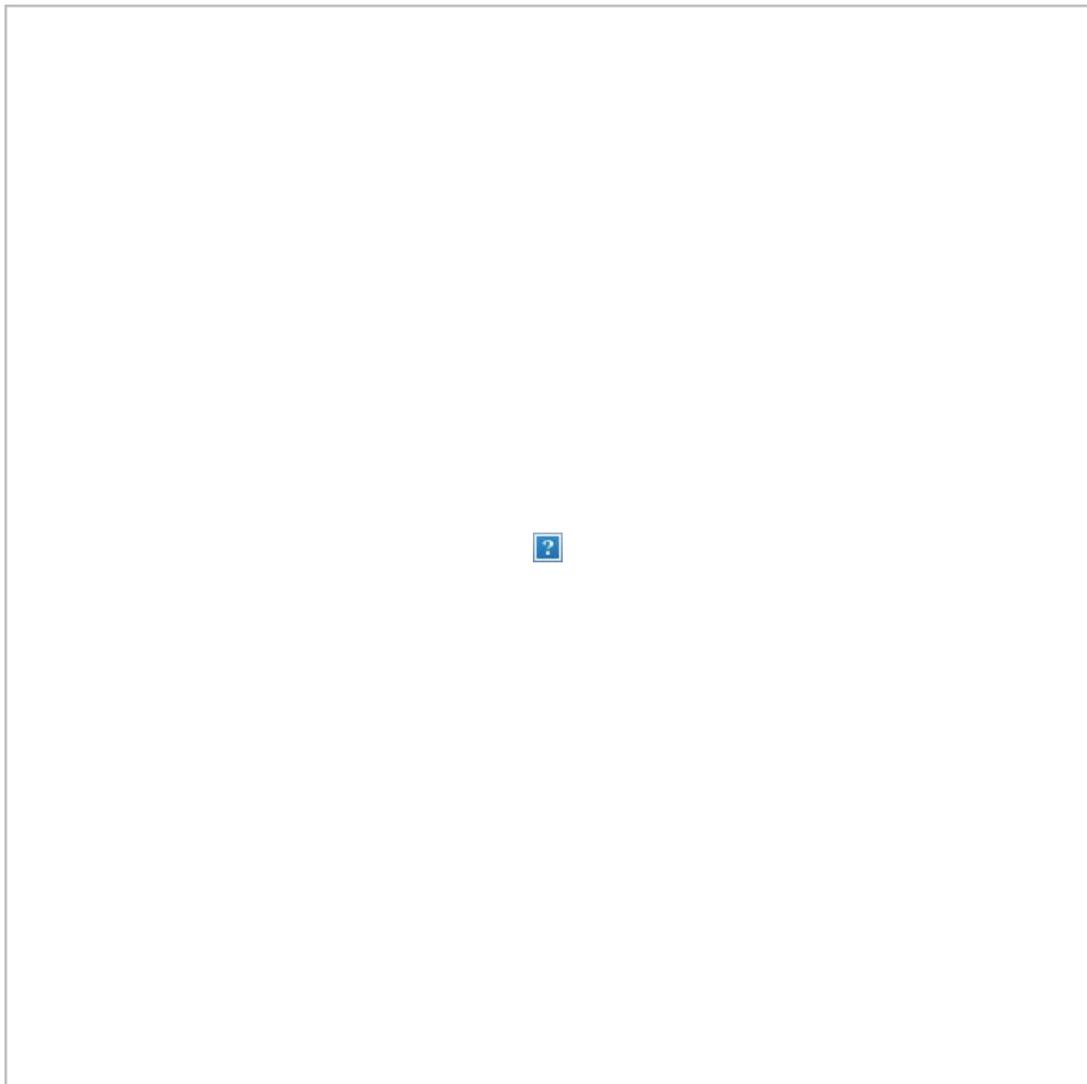
Walkable archipelagos are emerging across the US
Mar 18, 2023 10:55 am | Brandon Graham Donnelly

We have [spoken before](#) about how walkable urban communities punch above their weight. In the US, only about 1.2% of land is, on average, designed and built for walkability. And yet, walkable neighborhoods in the top 35 metro areas account for about 19.1% of total US real GDP.

At the same time, because walkable communities are a rarified

commodity, they usually come at a premium. According to some sources, it's to the tune of 30-40% when you look at home prices and rental rates. This again suggests that humans actually like and want this type of urbanism.

Which is probably why there's a growing interest in building more of it. Here's a recent article from Bloomberg CityLab and here's a photo of Culdesac's new completely car-free community under construction in Tempe, Arizona (this doesn't look like the Arizona I know):



But in addition to just giving people more of what they want, there are also real economic benefits to stripping out parking and to overall more compact development. Charlotte-based Space Craft is another developer focused on car-light and transit-oriented apartments, and they have seemingly managed to make their

projects more affordable as a result:

“Our product offered lower rents to residents, \$100 to \$200 below our competitors, and was the best product in the market because we were able to reinvest some of the savings from parking,” said [Harrison] Tucker, who sees walkable urban neighborhoods becoming their own real estate investment class. “The economic case was just very strong.”

This also flies in the face of the common argument that developers will always profit maximize and charge whatever the market will bear for their spaces. So why even bother trying to make it easier and cheaper to build? But this is not true! Lower development costs, as we see here, can and will translate into lower rents and higher quality buildings.

I also agree with Tucker that we will see walkable urban neighborhoods, and their associated building typologies, become an important real estate asset class. For all of the reasons that we talk about on this blog, this is where our cities are headed.

However, it’s going to take some time. I like the metaphor (mentioned in the above article) that, right now, we are creating “walkable archipelagos” or walkable islands in seas of cars. With the right connectivity (transit, micromobility, and so on), these islands can do just fine. But over time, I suspect we’ll see a lot more land reclamation. Good.

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- My NFT photography [Foundation]
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**Some of these things generate \$, which helps to pay for this newsletter*

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From: [Alice](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: City development
Date: Monday, March 20, 2023 5:35:18 AM

Hello,

I'm concerned about the "no minimum parking" plan. I disagree with the proposal. Parking provides a safe place for vehicles, thefts, breaking, and hit and runs are already a problem that will become worse with parking on the street. Also safety for pedestrians is an issue as people walk, ride bikes and utilize side walls or streets when there are no sidewalks.

These are only a few of the problems with the proposal but public safety should come first.

Thank you, Alice Steele

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Beverly Bassett](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Cc: [Beverly Bassett](#); [CityCouncil](#)
Subject: New Regs with ZERO parking!
Date: Monday, March 20, 2023 4:21:18 PM

Developing Olympia with as little as ZERO parking for new residential development is simply preposterous! We have no rapid transit, obviously, and none is planned. Our bus service is hourly for most residents of this city. Bus stops may be blocks away from many people—if they are able to walk to a bus stop.

Many Olympians have young children and multiple jobs working odd hours and shifts. Most Olympians have a car and need that car to get around. Those are the facts. And there are no plans in place to improve our current bus service.

The street I live on, in the 1200 block of Marion northeast, currently has three black houses with little off-street parking, and residents park on both sides of the street blocking fire and emergency access much of the time. Most Olympia neighborhood streets have no sidewalks which forces people to walk down the middle of streets choked with cars already. When pedestrians, pets or young children, or elderly or infirm walkers are hit by cars, their blood will be on your hands.

I am infuriated and disgusted by the City's and Planning Commission's callous disregard for the ordinary people of Olympia that is demonstrated by the City's proposed new parking regulations which will turn our home into a dystopian hellscape of malevolent mis-planning which serves nobody but developers and their sycophants inside Olympia City government.

I demand that the City of Olympia and the Planning Commission reorder your standard operating procedure from one which prioritizes the wishes and desires of developers to one which prioritizes the needs and realities of our citizens and taxpayers first and foremost for a change!

Sincerely,

Beverly Bassett
1218 Marion St NE
Olympia, WA 98506
bev@bevinoly.com

March 19, 2023

Dear Chair Nejati and Members of the Planning Commission:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment of the changes to Olympia's parking requirements. I have reviewed the current draft of the changes. I have also had a chance to read the March 16 email comments of Janae Huber and the March 17 email comments of Kathy McCormick and whole heartedly concur with their analysis. I recommend you pay close attention to their comments.

My understanding is the reason the City pursued making these changes was from the recommendations in the *Housing Action Plan* on how to make housing more affordable. Further, a reduction in parking requirements would also help reduce greenhouse gas emissions by encouraging housing near transit and reduce the need to be dependent on an automobile. The current draft does little to assist with affordability or a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions impact on climate change.

Two bills before the Legislature, if passed, could institute requirements that could impact parking requirements and assist in the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. HB 1110 has passed the House and is being considered by the Senate. This proposed legislation would prohibit requiring off street parking as a condition of development for middle housing within a quarter mile of a major transit stop. HB 1181 would require the City to plan for significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. HB 1181 does not address parking requirements specifically. Nevertheless, reducing automobile trips, one of the major contributors of greenhouse gas emissions, would help the City meet these requirements. Reducing parking requirements create incentives to reduce auto trips. Both bills have significant Legislative support. These possible amendments to the Growth Management Act should be considered as you make your recommendations on parking changes.

Thank you for the time and effort you devote to City planning issues. It is important work.

Best regards,
Holly Gadbow
1625 Sylvester Street SW
Olympia, WA 98501
(360) 789-3616

cc: Joyce Phillips
Leonard Bauer
Olympia City Council

From: [Leslie Wolff](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: Olympia Planning Commission, Attn: Joyce Phillips
Date: Monday, March 20, 2023 9:08:13 AM

Good morning, Joyce.

I would like to submit my concerns regarding the Planning Commission's potential decision to not require any parking for future multifamily housing developments.

While I agree that moving away from individual vehicle dependency is a worthy goal, we simply aren't there yet.

We do not have adequate public transportation to make this vision a reality yet. A lack of buses outside of "regular business hours" including late night transit makes it impossible for many of our community members employed in the service industries, among others, to make it work without a car. The commission must use a big picture approach when creating policy. Our transit must be made more equitable and accessible before decisions that will potentially harm people's ability to hold a job are made. Without options, people will continue to drive and will be forced to park in expensive lots or on the streets.

In addition, without sufficient public transportation there is a very real possibility that small businesses in our downtown area will be hurt by a lack of options to get to businesses. And a lack of parking with those spots taken by residents. We need to make downtown easier to access for people who chose not to drive before we remove residential parking.

Thank you,
Leslie Wolff

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Karen Messmer](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: please include for planning commission hearing info 3/20
Date: Monday, March 20, 2023 9:53:06 AM

Please send to planning commission as hearing comments for 3/20 hearing on parking.

Karen Messmer

Parking –

Reducing parking requirements for some types of housing in some specific areas may be warranted. However, the current zoning table in the code to change these regulations is too blunt of an instrument. There are specific areas that would be negatively impacted by increased car parking with no on-site spots.

Along major streets such as Boulevard and Capitol Way, 22nd Avenue – there is no on street parking allowed. If units are added along these streets without any parking on site we could see problems with sidewalk, bike lane or shoulder parking. This already happens, for example, on 22nd and Boulevard when people have garage sales. This puts people who are walking at risk when their only choice is to walk around those vehicles into the street. This is along fairly busy streets, not just low traffic neighborhood streets.

This situation needs to be applied in theory to some situations throughout town to see how it actually will play out. This could show what could work in some areas and it seems likely it will not work in some locations.

Using the current parking code format for this – applying it to all housing in certain zones – is not be the best way to do this. Using overlay areas or specific street frontage designations might be a different way to apply this.

Also, in the draft for the hearing - the cottage housing bike parking references 'on street parking' which doesn't really have anything to do with bike parking. So this one seems confusing.

From the table -

Cottage Housing One (1) space per unit or one and one-half (1.5) spaces per unit if on-street parking is not available along street frontage (One (1) space per twenty (20) linear feet).

Long Term Bike Parking - One per five (5) units, or one (1) per three (3) units if no on-street parking.

From: [Rhonda Porter](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: Hearing on Parking Regulations
Date: Monday, March 20, 2023 10:10:42 AM

I am urging the Olympia Planning Commission's hearing on parking today be delayed until such time that a thorough analysis of the proposed amendments to the residential parking requirement code can be performed and then disseminated at least 30 days before the hearing.

Olympia Resident
Rhonda Porter

From: [Margaret and Jim](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: Olympia Planning Commission, Attn: Joyce Phillips"
Date: Monday, March 20, 2023 1:08:50 PM

Good afternoon.

On behalf of the Eastside Neighborhood Association, I would like to submit the following comments on the proposal before the Planning Commission to eliminate parking space requirement for residential developments up to 100 units.

I have reviewed the proposal, the printed version of the City's survey and the comments that have been submitted to date as well as a summary of the process that has been followed to date.

The Eastside Neighborhood Association supports the resolution submitted by the Council of Neighborhood Associations to delay action on this proposal.

I am confident that City staff would get an A+ for ensuring the minimum outreach requirements that were all met. However, if the goal of public outreach is to engage the public in a meaningful dialog to inform decisions, the City has clearly fallen far short of that mark. It is truly disappointing that the city is relying so heavily on surveys, that as Judy Bardin pointed out in her comments, are severely flawed and designed, intentionally or un-intentionally, in a manner that favors the city's preferred outcome.

I would also like to convey the Eastside Neighborhood Association's objection to the proposal itself.

The Eastside Neighborhood is bordered by Eastside Street, 4th Avenue, Boulevard Road and I-5. Our neighborhood is well served by transit, but poorly served by the City in terms of sidewalks, bicycle facilities and, in some locations, stormwater infrastructure. The vast majority of our streets have no sidewalks at all and where they exist, they are likely broken and crumbling.

While we have a number of concerns with both the proposal and the process, our primary concern is pedestrian safety. Walking in our neighborhood means taking to the streets. The elderly, the handicapped, parents with strollers, small children all must use the street to travel through most of our neighborhood. Implicit in this proposal is that, if transit is nearby, walking a few hundred yards is acceptable. This is not the case when there are no sidewalks, the streets are lined by parked cars and pond-size puddles due to lack of stormwater facilities. This is exactly the situation on Frederick Street, between 4th Avenue and 7th Avenue. There are several other examples throughout the Eastside Neighborhood.

The description, prepared by City staff, that opens its survey naively suggests that apartments with no parking will attract people that choose to live without a car. Having grown up in a high-density urban east coast city I have already experienced the result. People will assume they will find parking somehow and the streets will be clogged with parked cars. This will only make worse the challenges to pedestrians where there are no safe facilities as is the case in most of the Eastside Neighborhood.

Sincerely,
Jim Rioux on behalf of the Eastside Neighborhood Association's Board of Directors

From: jacobsoly@aol.com
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: Public Hearing Comments, Proposed Residential Parking Code Amendments
Date: Monday, March 20, 2023 1:12:06 PM

Hi Joyce

I will be unable to attend this evening's Planning Commission public hearing re proposed residential parking code amendments.

Please make this email available to the Commission as my official comments.

Commissioners:

I am concerned about what appears to be a doctrinaire approach to some of these parking standards that ignores the practicalities of daily life.

The idea of zero minimums is especially troubling.

I have seen this approach work quite well -- when I lived in Manhattan, where the public transit system is extensive and where housing density is very high. The transit system, featuring both subways and buses, not to mention thousands of taxis, make it practical to get everywhere easily. And the high housing density allows for grocery stores and pharmacies, etc. to be present within a few blocks of all residences.

No place in Thurston County fits that description. And TRPC population projections make clear that this situation will not change for many, many years.

Everyday activities like grocery shopping and taking kids to soccer games and getting medical services require that many people have vehicles. That is why so many apartment dwellers have cars today and will need them in the future.

I urge you to think of everyday activities as you consider parking code amendments.

Bob Jacobs
360-352-1346

720 Governor Stevens Ave. SE
Olympia 98501

From: [Colleen](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: Parking reduction
Date: Monday, March 20, 2023 1:25:40 PM

Dear Ms. Phillip,

I am opposed to decreasing the parking spaces required for all types of residential housing for the following reasons:

- 1) There are few sidewalks in my neighborhood, compromising pedestrian safety if more cars have to park on the street

- 2) I have physical limitations so walking to and from the bus stop nearest to my house would be very painful and difficult for me.

- 3) If parking space is decreased it would jeopardize my ability to drive my care for essential needs related to finding ample parking space throughout the city.

- 4) I really don't see why a reduction in parking space is necessary except to grab a few more feet for housing or to try to force people onto public transportation, which is very poor in Olympia.

Sincerely,
Colleen Bradford
1712 13th Ave SE
Olympia, WA 98501
(360) 970-8634
c_brad@comcast.net

Sent from my iPhone

From: [JUDITH BARDIN](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: My comments for the Parking Regulations
Date: Monday, March 20, 2023 2:57:28 PM

Hi Joyce,

Here are my comments for tonight's hearing on the proposed parking regulations. Can you please send them to the OPC.

Thank you, Judy

Comments:

My name is Judy Bardin and I presently live in Southeast Olympia, though I recently lived in Northwest Olympia. I feel that such a drastic reduction in parking requirements is a mistake. There is a lot I could say about what is wrong with the ordinance, but I will highlight a few considerations.

- Mail - in much of Northwest Olympia mail is delivered by a mail truck at mailboxes at the street. The United States Postal Service requires that residents leave 10 feet on either side of a mailbox so that mail can be delivered. This takes up a parking space. If that space is filled, the mailman will not deliver the mail.
- Electric car charging - electric cars are being incentivized nationally and locally and more and more people have electric cars. If there is no space to park a car, how will it be charged?
- On my street in southeast there is one side of the street utility barrel pickup taking up a lot of the parking space on that side of the street.
- Many streets in Olympia don't have sidewalks, so walking to buses is not safe and is very difficult for people with disabilities.
- The transportation system is not robust, service is nonexistent or limited in the later evening on weekends and holidays.

I want to share a recent experience. I had hired someone to help me with gardening on a Sunday summer afternoon. She lived in Northeast Olympia and coming from a second job. It took her close to two hours with a bus change to get to my house in the Northwest. When she arrived, she could only work for about an hour and a half before she had to leave because the last bus was at 6:30 pm. Based on that experience, I now often pick her up by car when she works for me.

No analysis had been done of parking conditions by various neighborhoods. Some neighborhoods have double car garages, and large driveways, and parking is ample. Other, especially in older neighborhoods, houses may not have garages, driveways, or sidewalks and the neighborhood may already be parked up. The City needs to look at different areas of the City in formulating regulations. It promised this type of data analysis and a robust public process in its grant application to the Department of Commerce. Neither have been done.

Judy Bardin
3129 Hoadly St SE
Olympia, WA 98501

From: [Phyllis Booth](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: New Parking Regulations
Date: Monday, March 20, 2023 4:15:03 PM

March 20, 2023

To the Olympia Planning Commission:

My family and I have lived within the City of Olympia since 1995. We moved from the Yelm area because we did not want a two car lifestyle and bus transportation was inadequate for our needs. Back in 1995, Boulevard Road had great bus service. However, when we had our second son I attempted to take him with me on the bus to shop and do a few errands. What I found was that riding the bus with an active young child and packages was dangerous, especially in the rain. I tried to adapt many times, but gave up as the bus rides added two hours to my day as well as a lot of stress.

What I did succeed with was going down to one car and carpooling and using the bus without children on the weekends. But I was successful without a car only when I had someone to watch my child or my husband did not have to travel outside of Olympia with work colleagues which was often.

Many times, I have written and testified in person to the Planning Commission. I even applied to be on the Planning Commission after watching in person the Olympia City Council for many years but was never granted that opportunity. What I have found over many decades is that the Olympia Planning Commission is stacked and told what to do and most of the time the commission does what developers want. But I am writing these comments to go on record as having tried.

When someone's child or someone's grandparent is tragically killed because the infrastructure for safe transportation was not in place such as parking, you will be held accountable.

Phyllis Booth
Olympia WA

From: [Lisa Fleming](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: Parking
Date: Monday, March 20, 2023 7:11:06 PM

30 year resident of Olympia. Decreasing parking will push people into parking on neighboring streets, taking away those neighbors' parking. I do not think it is realistic to expect that all households will only have one car. When I worked for a big box retailer almost all the part-time and full-time employees drove their own cars to work. The bus system didn't work for them, even with transfers.

Lisa Fleming

From: [marti walker](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: Proposed Parking Code Amendments
Date: Tuesday, March 21, 2023 5:45:06 PM

Ms. Phillip,

I am very much opposed to the proposed parking code amendments. There are many areas in Olympia that currently have over crowded street parking forcing residents to park far from their homes. If these parking code amendments are passed it would allow developers to build apartment buildings with no required on site parking. This will cause competition and conflict for on street parking, making it impossible for all citizens to find adequate parking. Portland tried not requiring parking and had to back off from this policy because it was unworkable.

Martha Walker
619 Central St SE
Olympia, WA 98501

From: [Beverly Torguson](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: Parking ordinance proposed changes
Date: Tuesday, March 21, 2023 6:30:04 PM

Hi,

We are opposed to changing the off street parking requirements to zero. It is not realistic. People love their cars and their trucks even more. It represents freedom and Americans love their freedom. We wish you would not listen to a very small group of very loud people, but think about this in a more realistic way. And, as far as those people that are concerned about the environment, gas powered vehicles will probably be replaced by electric vehicles but that will take time and electric vehicles will still need parking.

'Walkable city/neighborhoods' is a good sound bite that you use in an election campaign to get you elected. But, it is not realistic. Cities were walkable in the 50's with Mom and Pop stores in every neighborhood. But, those stores got out competed by the big box stores and they are never coming back. Their prices were too expensive. And, how many houses do you need to tear down to make room for all those Mom and Pop stores to try and retro fit into our city? Again, not realistic and counter productive.

As far as using public transit for every day errands and other activities, how do I carry lumber from Home Depot on a bus? Or, bags of mulch? How do I carry many bags of groceries from Costco? How about trying to carry a 40 inch TV on a bus? How do I get to Mt. Rainier without a car? What about us senior citizens that can't walk very well? Right now I have an injured knee and can not walk two blocks to the bus stop let alone many blocks to either shop or to see a friend. I can barely get out of my car and walk from the parking lot to the store.

If removing off street parking requirements is about reducing the cost of housing, again, not realistic as developers are in business to make as much money as they can. They will not pass the savings on down to customers. And, if they are a publicly held business, they are required to make as much money as possible for their investors.

If you think getting rid of cars is such a great idea, then I say, 'YOU GO FIRST!' Go ahead. Do it now and see how well that goes for you.

Bev Torguson

From: [Peter Trenholme](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: Proposed new construction parking space requirements
Date: Tuesday, March 21, 2023 8:17:02 PM

Mr. Phillip:

First, an apology: I have not, actually, read your proposal, so this is a response to a hearsay note stressing that, if adopted, vehicle ownership and usage would become less desirable. (The writer of the note assumed that that was an obvious "bad thing.")

I'd like to suggest a more carrot-and-stick approach: Keep the number of spaces about the same as currently set, but require many of them to be "electric vehicle only" charging stations.

By the time (4 to 5 years? from adoption) the exponentially increasing degradation of the planet's carrying capacity will have become much more obvious.
(In fact, you might consider a requirement that the archaic parking spots be pre-wired for conversion to electric vehicle support desirable.)

Peter Trenholme

2011 Roxburg CT SE
Olympia, WA 98513-3428
USA

(360) 489-9379 [Cell]

From: [Bill Bruns](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: Residential Parking Proposal
Date: Tuesday, March 21, 2023 8:50:44 PM

Hi Joyce,

Residential parking minimums should be removed entirely.

Given the freedom to build housing without off-street parking, there is little doubt most developers would continue to build off-street parking at the current, established rate. This is because American car centrism--inept as it has generally proven at building anything except suburban sprawl that lacks sidewalk life and public life--is the order of the day. Americans have largely accepted suburban sprawl as if it were an inevitability, and developers will continue to build in accordance with this misconception. This is no surprise because most Americans have never been presented with an alternative. Residential parking minimums effectively preclude an alternative. When cities are built to make driving personal vehicles as easy and as cheap as possible, it is no surprise that most people who can afford it will drive.

Presented with an alternative, developers that lack creativity (most but not all) would not change their current parking strategy one mote. One need look no farther than Grass Lake Village or Woodbury Crossing for a flavor of what passes as residential development today. These are dreary places that lack vitality and interest. There is no joy to walk there and for this reason there are rarely people on the street. Unless action is taken to add interest to these developments (they are certainly not neighborhoods), they are destined to be tomorrow's slums.

To deprive developers of the *opportunity* to build housing without parking minimums is the same variety of misjudgment that *allowing* ADUs would result in all manner of societal chaos. Olympia has shown that allowing ADUs has in fact not proven an issue at all. In fact, based on my extremely informal review of walking around Olympia, ADUs have not been built on a major scale even many years after they were first permitted. From my understanding, the City is actively encouraging ADU development to address its insufficient housing: the very same housing crisis that is largely due to Olympia's car centric design, a core tenet of which is residential parking minimums.

Parking minimums are also discriminatory against people who are able to but choose not to drive. You may have guessed at this point in my argument that I am one of them.

NW Olympia where I live is a poor place to walk. I have lived in Olympia for less than a year and have almost been hit by cars more times than I can recall, despite extreme caution. I do not feel comfortable biking in Olympia and have fallen out of the habit entirely. Harrison Raceway and the other major roads around the monolithic, impermeable-to-foot-based-travel Capital Mall-Auto Row complex are representative of the type of madness parking minimums encourage. These are not places for people; these are places for cars.

Olympia prides itself in doing things differently. There is truth in this. However, as far as urban planning goes, Olympia is firmly in the more of the same category. Give people the option to make their own choice about parking and some people, slowly at first, will choose differently. Removing residential parking minimums presents no risk to Olympia and in fact

is necessary long-term for Olympia to become a livable, walkable, and community-oriented city.

Thank you,
Bill Bruns

From: [Lorie Hewitt](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: Comments on Olympia's Proposed Parking Amendments
Date: Wednesday, March 22, 2023 11:40:50 AM

Dear Planning Commission Staff:

After listening to the hearing on March 20th, I have some comments and questions.

First—I am confused about the overall objective for the parking changes down to zero spaces for multifamily buildings. Is the purpose to get more housing built OR is the purpose to create more affordable low income housing? If it's the latter (which appears in your Housing Action Plan), I would like to see the data showing that developers who have no obligation to provide parking spaces then go on to price their rentals as affordable for lower income residents. Is there a strong correlation between less parking spaces and lower rents?

In addition, I would like to see the data you have used that shows that buildings with no parking work well for low income residents. Have you surveyed lower income folks and found they don't have cars. Or they don't mind searching all over for a parking space downtown or in neighborhoods? Have you asked the Social Justice and Equity Commission to review this proposal? If yes, what were their comments? If no, I recommend that you ask them to review the current proposal.

What other strategies did the City consider to provide low income housing to residents? Instead of trying to leverage parking, how about direct subsidies to renters so they can afford market rate housing. You could collect this from developers through an impact fee.

Alternately, if you are just trying to make it expeditious/profitable for developers to build more housing (not necessarily low income) by eliminating the parking space requirement, do you have data that folks who can afford market rate housing are not owners of automobiles, or don't care if they have to search for a parking space in the area? Or do developers generally add parking spaces anyway to attract market rate renters who have cars?

Commenters at the hearing mentioned Portland's foray into zero parking space territory and withdrawal from it. What data has Portland gathered to answer these questions? What have you learned from their experience?

Second— I know it's difficult to balance the radical changes needed to combat climate change with today's reality and challenges. In general, I am glad to see some reductions in required parking spaces because some folks won't have cars and some are able to ride bikes or use transit easier than others. However, our transit system here in Olympia does not appear to be ready for this drastic change in parking to

zero. Several folks at the hearing yesterday mentioned their negative experiences with public transit in Olympia. From those comments it seems pretty clear that residents lodged in housing with no parking for their cars will not just be able to use buses to go everywhere. I suppose, looking into the future, maybe some of today's younger folks are opting not to own cars and your assumption might be that they use Uber/Lyft for transportation. Again, if this is an assumption, do you have data to support this? And if this is your future vision, how does this help lower income people/families, who maybe can't afford Ubers and Lyfts, thrive in housing with affordable transit?

In our efforts to curb climate change, someone at the March 20th hearing mentioned that there has been and continues to be a big push to transition to electric cars. Where will apartment dwellers charge them if there aren't any parking spaces?

Third--How does a zero parking requirement affect downtown Businesses? I have only had time to consult one business owner. This person thinks this strategy is awful. She is already challenged to find all day parking near her downtown business. She has to pay to park her car in a lot. How will more demand on parking affect her? Also, how will it affect me when I need my car to visit businesses downtown. Will it be even harder to find a parking place?

Fourth-- I'm confused why the new requirement for a tri-plex is still 5 spaces (why not a little less?). It appears that when you add one more unit to make it a fourplex, it is then zero. What's the logic to reduce to zero at the fourplex stage? Since fourplexes and garden apartments might be pretty common infill structures in existing neighborhoods with already full street parking, there should be some parking allotted per unit for these new buildings.

Lastly, I second the points made in testimony presented on March 20th by both Larry Dzieza and Judy Bardin. I hope you can take the time to reconsider your proposal in light of the very important comments people have made.

Thank you for the extension on the comment period and the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,
Lorie Hewitt
401 18th Ave SE
Olympia

From: [Garth Edwards](#)
To: [Aiesa Johnston](#); [publicworks](#)
Cc: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: Re: Opposed to reduction in parking spaces
Date: Wednesday, March 22, 2023 11:57:26 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Hi I reached out to Max, he informed me that it is CPD and Joyce would be the contact. I have cc'd her on this. If I'm incorrect Joyce could you advise?
Thanks
Garth

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From: Aiesa Johnston <ajohnsto@ci.olympia.wa.us>
Sent: Wednesday, March 22, 2023 11:53:00 AM
To: [publicworks](#) <publicworks@ci.olympia.wa.us>; [Garth Edwards](#) <gedwards@ci.olympia.wa.us>
Subject: FW: Opposed to reduction in parking spaces

I was unsure of who to send this to, so I sent it to both Public Works (pretty sure needs to go to transportation) and Garth.



Aiesa (I-e-SA) Johnston (She/Her) | Program Assistant
Community Planning and Development
ajohnsto@ci.olympia.wa.us
office: 360.570.3742
601 4th Avenue East, Olympia
PO Box 1967, Olympia, WA 98507

From: Jean <jeanmeyn3@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 22, 2023 11:00 AM
To: [cpdinfo](#) <cpdinfo@ci.olympia.wa.us>
Subject: Opposed to reduction in parking spaces

Please forward this to Planning Commission and City Council.

I understand that the City is considering a reduction in the required parking spaces to assist development of new housing. As a 40+ year resident of the Olympia area and City resident continuously since 2008, I am opposed to any regulation that reduces parking spaces in downtown Olympia. It's already very difficult to find a parking space when go downtown to shop or go to an event. It is a deterrent to folks using downtown businesses. If you make it worse with this regulation, even fewer people will want to go downtown.

Apparently, one reason for proposed regulation is to encourage use of public transit. People have cars now, I doubt that this approach would force people to use public transit, at least not the Olympia public transit in its current form and limited schedules.

Thank you for recording and considering my opposition,
Jean Meyn
Parkwood Drive
Olympia, WA

From: [Gwendolyn Nehs](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: Parking Proposal
Date: Wednesday, March 22, 2023 12:02:07 PM

Good afternoon,

I strongly object to the be proposed parking plan. I believe it would be disadvantageous to folks who have more than one job or a job with odd hours. I also believe it will make our neighborhoods less walkable.

As a non- driver, I know that it is very challeng to live in Olympia without a car. Errands that would take two hours in a car take all day or weekend. Evening shifts are less desirable for me, especially in the winter when it is dark. I work near Martin Way and Sleater- Kinney and I do not feel safe walking to the bus stop and taking the bus after dark.

I also believe that not having parking at units does not mean folks moving in will not have cars. It just means folks will be parking elsewhere. I already feel unsafe as a pedestrian on some of the streets where there are no sidewalks and lots of parked cars. I feel that not requiring parking for me units will lead to more congestion and make it more difficult for folks to walk to the store or to the bus stop or to the park.

Please reconsider the new policy. Thank you.

Gwendolyn Nehs (she/ they)
Squaxin Land (Olympia, WA)

From: [Pier Petersen](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: Comment in support of new parking regulations
Date: Wednesday, March 22, 2023 12:12:38 PM

Reducing or eliminating requirements for off-street parking in certain new developments.

Thank you,
Pier Petersen
1724 Bigelow Ave NE
Olympia, WA 98506

From: [Jamie Phelps](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: Comment on Olympia Proposed Parking Code Amendments
Date: Wednesday, March 22, 2023 2:06:37 PM
Attachments: [signature.asc](#)

I'm writing because I am opposed to the reduction in off-street parking requirements.

I live on the west side of Olympia and I regularly find streets in my neighborhood and other nearby neighborhoods are already overrun with parked cars. Many streets have cars lining both side, and this makes it difficult to navigate when there are cars traveling in opposite directions simultaneously and dangerous for vulnerable road users such as pedestrians and cyclists.

Unless prohibitions of street parking are correspondingly increased, reducing the off-street parking requirements will only serve to exacerbate the safety of navigating our neighborhood streets.

Respectfully,

—

Jamie Phelps
Olympia, Washington

Joyce Phillips

From: Terry Furst <tlfurst@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 22, 2023 2:08 PM
To: Joyce Phillips
Subject: Proposed change in multi-family unit parking requirements

Dear Ms. Phillips,

I am writing to register my concerns about this proposed rule change in the City of Olympia.

I have lived in multi-family housing in Washington DC, and even with residential parking permits, it can take a half hour to find a parking spot even multiple blocks from your building. I have even been given a citation for stopping in front of my building to unload groceries before parking blocks away. It is truly a nightmare when there is not enough parking for the number of residents in an area.

Yes, there are now things like grocery delivery services, but these increase the cost of already high-cost groceries for the people most unable to afford such services. This parking plan also forces residents to look for paid parking opportunities nearby, which is also unaffordable for many multi-family housing residents.

I fully support the goal of increased use of public transportation and other forms of less- polluting types of transportation; however, Olympia has not kept up with this need. Our public transportation system is almost useless for many residents.

When I transferred my job at Providence Centralia Hospital to Providence St. Peter Hospital, I was very excited to start using Intercity Transit to commute to work. Unfortunately, It literally would have taken me 1 1/2 hours each way by bus for what was a 10-minute drive. I spoke personally to an IT employee to verify I was reading the schedule correctly and I was. Even she admitted it was not viable for me to use the bus.

This plan may be appropriate for the future in Olympia, but it must be considered in conjunction with major improvements to the public transportation system and likely other factors that play into the needed change in public behavior.

Terry Furst
2004 Allegro Dr. SE
Olympia, WA 98501

From: [Ann Margaret Phelps](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: Concerns about parking
Date: Wednesday, March 22, 2023 5:58:03 PM

Hello,

I'm writing to express my concerns about reductions in off street parking requirements for new developments. There are already too many cars parked on the streets in our neighborhood! As a runner and cyclist I already feel unsafe enough due to the reduced visibility. I cannot understand why so many concessions are made for developers without any regard for the folks who already live here.

Thanks,
Ann Margaret Phelps
SWONA resident, taxpayer, and voter
Sent from my iPhone

From: [Linda Myers](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: Parking regulations
Date: Wednesday, March 22, 2023 8:16:08 PM

Please require parking for multi family housing developments. Parking in neighborhoods around town is already horrible. Many people need to commute out of the area or at odd times and will never use public transit. This is a bad idea!

Get real!

Thank you

Linda Myers

From: [Linda Luther](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: MY COMMENT ON THE Olympia Proposed Parking Code Amendments
Date: Thursday, March 23, 2023 12:48:39 AM
Attachments: [Residential Parking Proposal Summary.pdf](#)
[Chapter 18.38 - HEARING DRAFT Revised Sections Only Print to PDF.pdf](#)
[CNA Resolution to Planning Commission.pdf](#)

I am responding to your e-mail by telling you I am against any change in the current Olympia Parking Codes. In other words, I don't approve the proposed parking code amendments.

Sincerely,

Linda Luther
1100 Fern St SW Apt 43-104
Olympia, WA 98502

Begin forwarded message:

From: South West Olympia Neighborhood Association <swolyna@gmail.com>
Subject: Fwd: Comment Period Extended - Olympia Proposed Parking Code Amendments
Date: March 22, 2023 at 1:18:21 PM PDT
Cc: Oly CNA <cna.olympia@gmail.com>

Hello Sou'Westiders -

Those of you at the SWONA meeting know that the Olympia Planning Commission is proposing some drastic reductions in off-street parking requirements for new developments. (A proposal with very little time allowed for public input)

Our friends at the Coalition of Neighborhood Association (CNA) successfully got the Commission to **extend public comment to April 7.**

Forwarded email below is from the city with info on **how to make public comment.**

Get educated: Attached are two city documents, plus the CNA resolution demanding an extension for public comment, and why. It's important reading.

Thanks,
Ryan

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Joyce Phillips** <jphillip@ci.olympia.wa.us>
Date: Tue, Mar 21, 2023 at 2:27 PM
Subject: Comment Period Extended - Olympia Proposed Parking Code Amendments
To: Joyce Phillips <jphillip@ci.olympia.wa.us>

You are receiving this email as a designated contact person for your
Recognized Neighborhood Association.

Please share this with your neighbors.

The Olympia Planning Commission extended the public comment period on the proposed residential parking code amendments. Comments will be accepted through Friday, April 7, 2023 at noon. A summary of the proposed changes with information on how to provide comments and the proposed code language are attached. The information is also being posted to the Housing Action Plan webpage at www.olympiawa.gov/hap but it may take a day or two for that to occur.

If you have questions or would like to submit comments, please contact Joyce Phillips, Principal Planner, at jphillip@ci.olympia.wa.us or 360.570.3722.

Joyce Phillips, AICP, Principal Planner

City of Olympia | Community Planning and Development

601 4th Avenue East | PO Box 1967, Olympia WA 98507-1967

360.570.3722 | olympiawa.gov

Note: Emails are public records and are eligible for release.

From: [Amy V](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: residential parking proposed modifications
Date: Thursday, March 23, 2023 8:12:39 AM

Hi.

I live in SW Olympia.

I am much more OK with the modifications than my neighbors who are more of the NIMBY/how-does-this-change-affect-me mindset.

However, I can understand why they felt blindsided, so thanks for extending the comment period.

I read through the suggested modifications on your website (https://cms7files.revize.com/olympia/Document_center/Government/Codes,%20Plans%20&%20Standards/Housing-Action-Plan/Public-Hearing-Draft-Parking-Code-Amendments.pdf).

My only 2 comments are:

1) under 18.38.080 (p.4): looks like you're completely eliminating giving any written notice to homeowners: that seems extreme-I suggest modifying the paragraph to spell out exactly what the notice will be rather than adding the bit about See codes X and Y: that doesn't help people know what the modification is and there's not a link to the codes so I for one have no idea how what's there is different from what was in the paragraph.

2) in Table 28.01 (p.11): why keep required storage space by remove the requirement that the space be large enough for a bicycle? If we want people to use fewer cars, give them a place to store a bicycle (we moved out of an apt and bought a house after 2 bikes were stolen because there was no place to store them). As more people have the electric bikes, give them a place to store them. How much larger does a storage space have to be to have room for a bike? Answer: not that much bigger. Don't make that change.

Otherwise, I agree with your intent to provide more housing and wish you well in getting past those who just want to keep things the same.

Amy Viveiros
830 Decatur St SW
Oly WA 98502

From: [Hannah McLean](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: Comment on Residential Parking Proposal
Date: Thursday, March 23, 2023 8:29:51 AM

Good morning Joyce,

I would like to comment on the proposed changes to the parking requirements. Thank you for extending the date for public comment.

I am worried that there has been no (public) information provided looking at the effects of the reduction in parking requirements on surrounding neighborhoods.

Bike theft and crime downtown have been on the rise. I would love more short and long term bike parking but I'm not going to ride my bike downtown when it doesn't feel safe to lock it up outside.

Residents are already seeing the impact of the reduced/exempt parking requirements downtown. People who take evening classes at the Olympia Center often have to park several blocks away because the residents living in the new apt building on Columbia and State park in the parking lot. I am certainly not against walking extra blocks but when classes get out at 9pm, I don't always feel safe walking that far to my car, especially when people have been harassed and assaulted recently in the Percival Landing area. The available parking at night downtown is now in the areas where many homeless people camp for the night.

In addition to the issues raised by the CNA related to lower income individuals are more likely to have jobs that require cars, I wanted to reiterate safety concerns about bikes and access to downtown parking that exist today. Limiting access to safe parking will keep pushing people away from downtown and make it a less safe place.

Thank you,
Hannah

From: [Owen Thompson](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: FW: Residential parking proposal comment period extended
Date: Thursday, March 23, 2023 9:25:12 AM

I'm not sure if I qualify as the public but for what it is worth, I think this is a great idea!

Go Joyce!

Owen

From: City of Olympia <news@olympiawa.gov>
Sent: Thursday, March 23, 2023 9:17 AM
To: Owen Thompson <othompso@ci.olympia.wa.us>
Subject: Residential parking proposal comment period extended



Residential Parking Requirements

The City of Olympia is proposing reductions in the amount of automobile parking spaces required for some residential uses, including residences

that are close to transit routes.

The changes proposed are the result of the City's Housing Action Plan and a strategy to "expand the overall housing supply by making it easier to build all types of housing projects." The plan calls for the City to consider how it can, "reduce parking requirements for residential uses, including for multifamily developments near frequent transit routes."

What's Next:

- There is still time to comment on the proposal! The Planning Commission extended the public comment period until noon on Friday, April 7, 2023.

To stay informed of this effort, sign up to be a party of record for this proposal by contacting Ms. Phillips. You can also receive Planning and Development updates from the City of Olympia at olympiawa.gov.

To view the proposal summary for information about how to comment, and view the draft code amendments click the Read More button below.

[Read More](#)

Contact

Joyce Phillips, AICP, Principal Planner
Community Planning & Development
360.570.3722
jphilip@ci.olympia.wa.us



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From: [Mike Lasch](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: Parking Reduction Proposal comment
Date: Thursday, March 23, 2023 9:44:45 AM

I just wanted to say that I'm all for some reduction as long as we're simultaneously expanding public transit in the area, e.g. running more often to more places for longer hours. Otherwise, folks get stuck at home between 7am-10pm, and not everyone works during normal business hours - especially low-income folks, who are the people who likely won't have cars. Without an increase in transit, those people will be forced to "bum" rides from friends and coworkers, pay for expensive ride-share and taxi services, and so on.

Also, again, I'm all for reduction but reducing the requirement to zero I think is an overstep, and will result in way too much all-day street-side parking with no place for folks to park when they want to visit businesses during the day. This will GREATLY impact downtown area business - I'm a business owner myself (EverWorks coworking office on Legion Way), and parking is *already* one of the biggest concerns for my customers.

Thanks for listening!

-

Mike Lasch // EverWorks LLC

From: [Jeremy Mott](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: Residential Parking Proposal comment
Date: Thursday, March 23, 2023 10:04:33 AM

Hi Joyce,

I wanted to mention that I appreciate your efforts on navigating the proposal and the outreach and engagement. I understand that some folks and the CNA have pushed back on the process but, despite only replying now, I feel that I have been informatively kept in the loop since the start.

I support the changes to the residential parking requirements. Existing parking requirements--which are excessive, fairly arbitrary, and auto-centric--contribute to sprawl and inflate development costs. The proposed changes are fairly modest, in my opinion, but represent a step in the right direction for Olympia's livability. These changes ("tweaks") will not, themselves, meet Olympia's environmental goals or appreciably make a dent in housing affordability but neither will they lead to some radical dearth of parking. For the reasons outlined by the city, these changes are a commonsense, incremental policy step that is in line with what residents want.

I live in a largely single-family residential area in Oly's SE. We are family of 4, not cost-burdened, and own and use a single car. We also walk, bike, and use transit regularly. Car dependency is a fact of life, but continuing to "roll out the red carpet" for cars is just untenable in 2023. To do so detracts from current residents' quality of life and--at the margins--keeps some residents out. My family *loves* the Wildwood center and that sort of vibrant and valuable neighborhood center is surely the result of grandfathered, albeit commercial in this case, parking requirements.

Also, Oly has fantastic transit service and that level of service is interdependent on use. Our 'supply' of transit is great and these parking changes (again, only marginally) might help with demand so we can retain great Intercity Transit service in the future.

Thanks,

Jeremy Mott
3001 Edgewood Dr SE
360-561-1939

Separate from my comment, but topical, I came across this recently. It promises to be an interesting read!:

<https://harpers.org/archive/2023/04/henry-grabar-paved-paradise/>

[\[Readings\]](#)

Lots to Lose

by [Henry Grabar](#)

Adjust Share

From Paved Paradise, which will be published next month by Penguin Press.

Parking psychosis is a regular feature of American life. The former NFL safety T. J. Cunningham was killed over a parking dispute at a Denver-area high school. In Las Vegas, Shane Pacada died of a bullet to the chest in a fight over a parking space. In the suburbs of Washington, D.C., a man was charged with attempted murder for shooting a neighbor who had parked in his spot. Twenty-eight-year-old Thomas Rodriguez was killed in Dallas after an argument over a parking spot. All of this took place in February 2019.

These fits of rage are eruptions of a common urge that is also shared by non-homicidal drivers. They are expressions of the same fear that rises into view anytime our parking comes under threat, whether it's in the neighborhood lot or at the curb in front of your house. It's not hard to grasp what makes parking a fixation: without a place to park, you can never get out of the car. A parking space is nothing less than the link between driving and life itself, the nine-by-eighteen-foot portal beyond which lies whatever you got in the car to do in the first place. Every car trip must begin and end with a parking space, and in no uncertain terms. Whoever said life was about the journey and not the destination clearly never had to look for a place to park.

I once missed an entire summer afternoon at the beach because I refused to pay for parking. While I hunted for a spot, my passengers (wisely) took the ferry without me. We expect parking to be immediately available, directly in front of our destination, and most importantly, free. It would be unimaginable to hold any other good or service to the same standard.

But the forces of time, space, and money conspire in such a way that no thriving place can meet more than two of these three needs. Free and convenient but not easily available? That's street parking in any big-city neighborhood. Convenient and available but not free? That's the ferryboat parking lot I left in a huff. Free and available but not convenient? That's where I parked when I missed the boat. It is the expectation and pursuit of all three parking qualities that leads us into parking psychosis.

Many of us have brushed against the threat that undergirds a parking claim. In Hawaii, you might see a spot marked with an upside-down bucket labeled "kapu," a word borrowed from the ancient Hawaiian system of rules governing forbidden acts. Kapu violations are no longer capital offenses, but still worth taking seriously. In Chicago, "dibs" is in effect after a snowstorm, the implements of which might include a chair, a piano bench, a wheelchair, and all manner of nativity figurines. In my head I've always imagined the message is that you or your car might be attacked with the object being used to save the space.

The significance we assign to good parking in our personal lives is surpassed only by our ignorance of its systemic consequences. Parking is integral to the way things work and yet persistently overlooked. It determines the size, shape, and cost of new buildings, the fate of old ones, the patterns of traffic, the viability of mass transit, the life of public space, the character of neighborhoods, the state of the city budget: in short, every aspect of our spread-out environments in which it is virtually impossible to live without an automobile. In our quest to make it as easy as possible to park we've made it awfully hard to do anything else.

The need for a perfect parking space has shaped the country's physical landscape. It has become the organizing principle of American architecture, making our designs bigger, uglier, and farther apart, from the parking-first design of the strip mall, to office towers sitting atop their garage pedestals, to the house itself, in which the garage is often the largest room.

What's more, in many municipalities, there are laws requiring every building to include parking. These prevent us from creating more housing—especially affordable housing—because parking costs so much to construct and takes up so much space. If the Empire State Building had been built to the minimum parking requirements of a contemporary American city, the surface area of its parking lot would cover twelve blocks. In the Seattle area, parking makes up 10 to 20 percent of the cost of construction of multifamily buildings and drives up apartment rents by 15 percent.

Anybody who wants to build a small apartment building in the United States must first confront a multivariate financial geometry problem that begins with how many parking spaces can fit. The size, quantity, and shape of the housing follows from there. Sometimes, with just one parcel, it's hard to make anything work at all. Buy the lot next door and you could unlock some economies of scale—like a driveway with stalls on each side. Buy four and—well, most small-time developers couldn't afford four, even if they could find four adjacent properties. Parking is the immovable object at the heart of neighborhood architecture.

As a result, we have simply stopped building small buildings. Parking requirements have helped to trigger an extinction-level event for bite-size, infill apartment buildings like row houses, brownstones, and triple-deckers; the production of buildings with two to four units fell more than 90 percent between 1971 and 2021.

The apartments that do get built are clustered in megastructures whose designs are dictated by parking placement. One popular model is the "Texas donut," in which a ring of apartments encircles a five- or six-story parking garage (this is the type of building you see in the cool neighborhoods of growing cities). Another is the "parking podium," like Chicago's corn-cob Marina City, in which the housing sits atop the parking.

Requiring parking spaces is essentially levying a tax, one that drives up the cost of new homes and stops a countless number from being built at all—precisely in the neighborhoods where it is possible to live happily without a car. Parking requirements for new buildings function as a protection racket, forcing new residents to pay for something that old ones get for free on the street and do not want to share. More than half of baby boomers, a group that tends to dominate local politics, say that free parking is more important than affordable housing in their neighborhoods. This anxiety leads the way to Malthusian thinking about cities: when the impact of new neighbors is measured out in parking spaces, every place starts to look crowded.

While there are still some corners of this country where parking is worth fighting for, in most of the nation the fight was over decades ago. Parking is plentiful. The country builds more three-car garages than one-bedroom apartments. More square footage is dedicated to parking each car than to housing each person. By some estimates, there are as many as six parking spaces for every car. It is this sea of parking, in which destinations bob like distant buoys, that renders mass transit, biking, or walking difficult and dangerous.

The grayness of a city where it's easy to park is embedded in the word *parking* itself, which once referred to the patches of greenery, tiny parks, that sprang up curbside. Now it describes the opposite: the lifeless blacktop. Our cities are full of moonscapes used to store cars. In Los Angeles County, parking now occupies two hundred square miles of land. As a single parking lot it would form a square of asphalt stretching from LAX to Sherman Oaks to Pasadena to Downey. Or, for non-locals, a three-story garage the size of Washington, D.C. And this in a place where people routinely complain about how hard it is to find parking.

A world that wasn't organized around parking would allow us to find our feet. It seems clear that most people would like to be able to leave the car behind once in a while. One reason that Americans retain such nostalgia for college is that it was the only time in our lives when so much was within walking distance. We take our vacations to places where we can get out of the car—Charleston, Manhattan, Miami Beach, Rome. Housing prices reflect the desirability of such destinations, making anything but a brief stay off limits to all but a few.

Without parking baked into our streets and architecture, how many more people could live in walkable places like these? How many car-dependent places, freed from parking laws, could grow into neighborhoods where people could ride bikes? Where a family with three cars could get by with two, and a family with two cars might manage with just one? In

that world, it would be easier, not harder, to find a spot, and much easier to live in a place where you would not need to drive quite so often. Kids could walk to school and adults to the grocery store. In a world with better parking, there might be fewer places to park, but in place of those old parking spots would emerge a city so much richer and fuller and fairer that we would not think twice about the one we had lost.

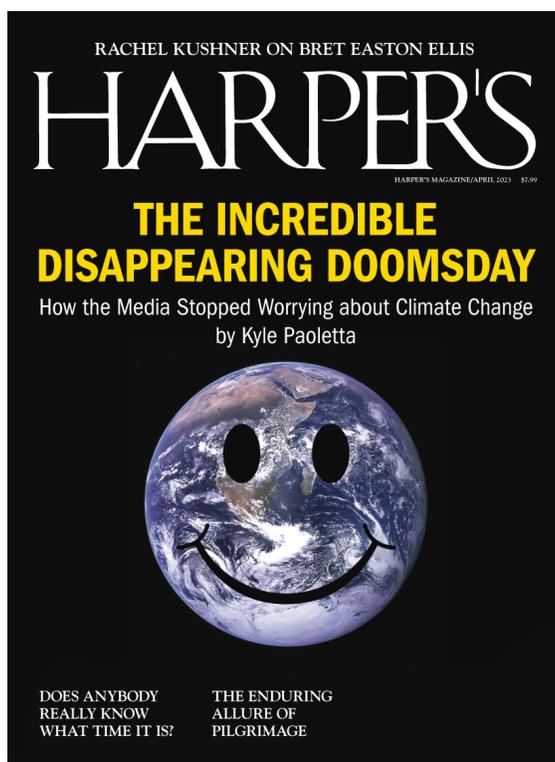
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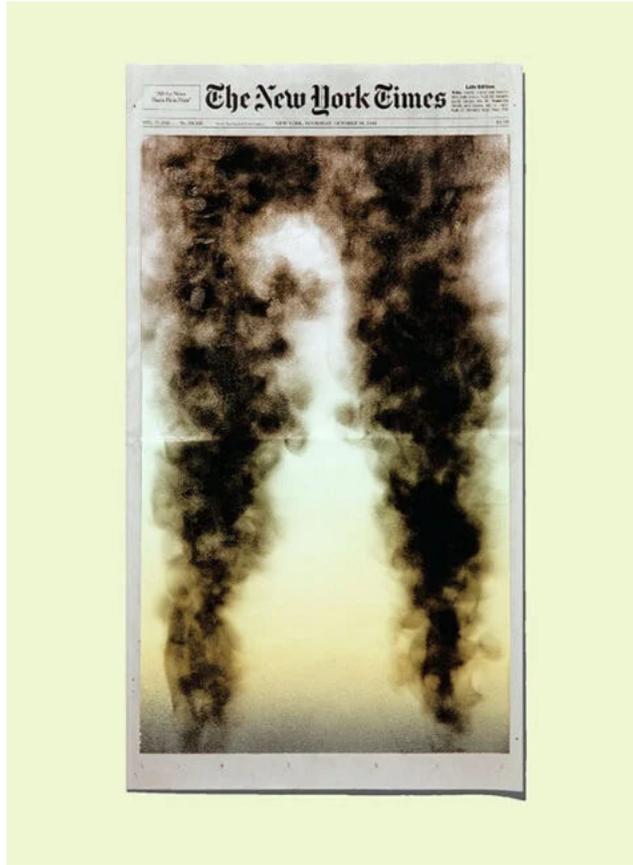
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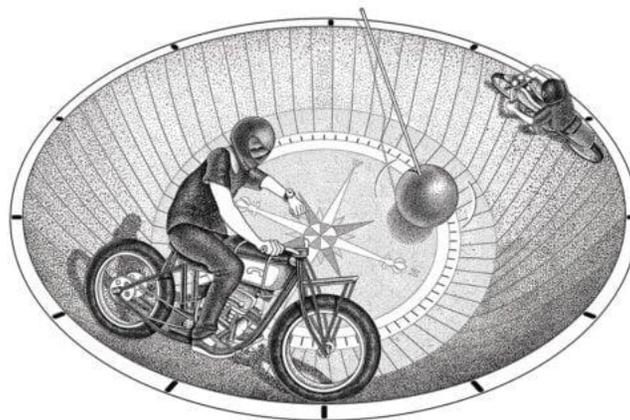


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From: [E. Pat Vernon](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: Parking code amendments
Date: Thursday, March 23, 2023 11:00:01 AM

Hello Joyce. I am reading over the summary of proposed amendments, and then looked at the code to see the actual modifications. What section of the code are the parking modifications in. Admittedly, I did a quick review trying to find them, if you could point out the reference it would be appreciated. Living downtown at the Boardwalk Apartments where parking is already scant, I am interested in the preserving what little we have. Once I see the actual language, I will be able to ask questions or comment officially if necessary. Thanks so much.

Pat

Joyce Phillips

From: Beverly Torguson <bevtor@comcast.net>
Sent: Thursday, March 23, 2023 12:28 PM
To: Joyce Phillips
Subject: re: proposed parking ordinance changes

Hi,

I've been thinking more about your proposed changes to the parking ordinance and it is starting to feel like this is a very regressive type of change. It will affect middle and low income people adversely and not the upper 1% wealthy people. Washington state already has a regressive style of taxation and this just seems like another regressive solution to try and fix a problem. I'm not sure it is fair to put an undue burden/sacrifice onto regular everyday people just trying to make their way through life when the upper 1% aren't doing their share. Not even close. They have large limos, multiple mansions, private jets, and even private islands. It's like kings and queens telling their serfs to live in huts and be happy because it's for the greater good, somehow. I am not willing to sacrifice my lifestyle until corporate America starts doing their share. And, when will that happen? Probably never. As far as doing this for the greater good to either help people get more housing or help the environment, that is a big assumption to be making. There is no proof that developers will pass down the savings or make more housing. As for the environment, electric vehicles are being pushed by the governor as the new future for cars.

Bev Torguson

From: [duncan green](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: Residential Parking Code Amendments
Date: Thursday, March 23, 2023 12:43:34 PM

Hi Joyce,

I'd like to offer a personal comment on the proposed amendments to the residential parking code.

I am absolutely in favor of expediting the construction of affordable housing, and reducing car use in our city. It is my job and my passion to encourage people to get around by bike instead of driving, and my dream to see a world without cars.

And, there are people in need of housing that have so little income or have other barriers to car ownership that they would not need a parking space. On the other hand, many lower income folks must travel far to work and may have more than one job, making public transit and/or biking unviable options for a daily commute. Until transit options expand vastly, I see a potential for inequity in who bears the burden of reduced parking. So, I hope this is an issue that is being considered and addressed, and that the proposed changes do not negatively impact the very people they are intended to serve.

Thanks for the opportunity to share my thoughts.

Duncan Green

From: [Veronica Jarvis](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: Residential parking proposal comments
Date: Thursday, March 23, 2023 2:06:03 PM

Hi Joyce!

Here commenting on this proposal as a local resident, not through my work at TRPC. I think reducing parking requirements in any form is a great idea. I truly don't think they go far enough and would love if the City would propose eliminating all parking requirements as many cities have done.

<https://parkingreform.org/resources/mandates-map/>

I know I am preaching to the choir, but eliminating unnecessary parking can allow our community to build more housing, make trip distances shorter and more realistic for bike/walk/transit trips and generally improve the look and feel of our community without all the wasteful parking lots.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Take care,

Veronica Jarvis

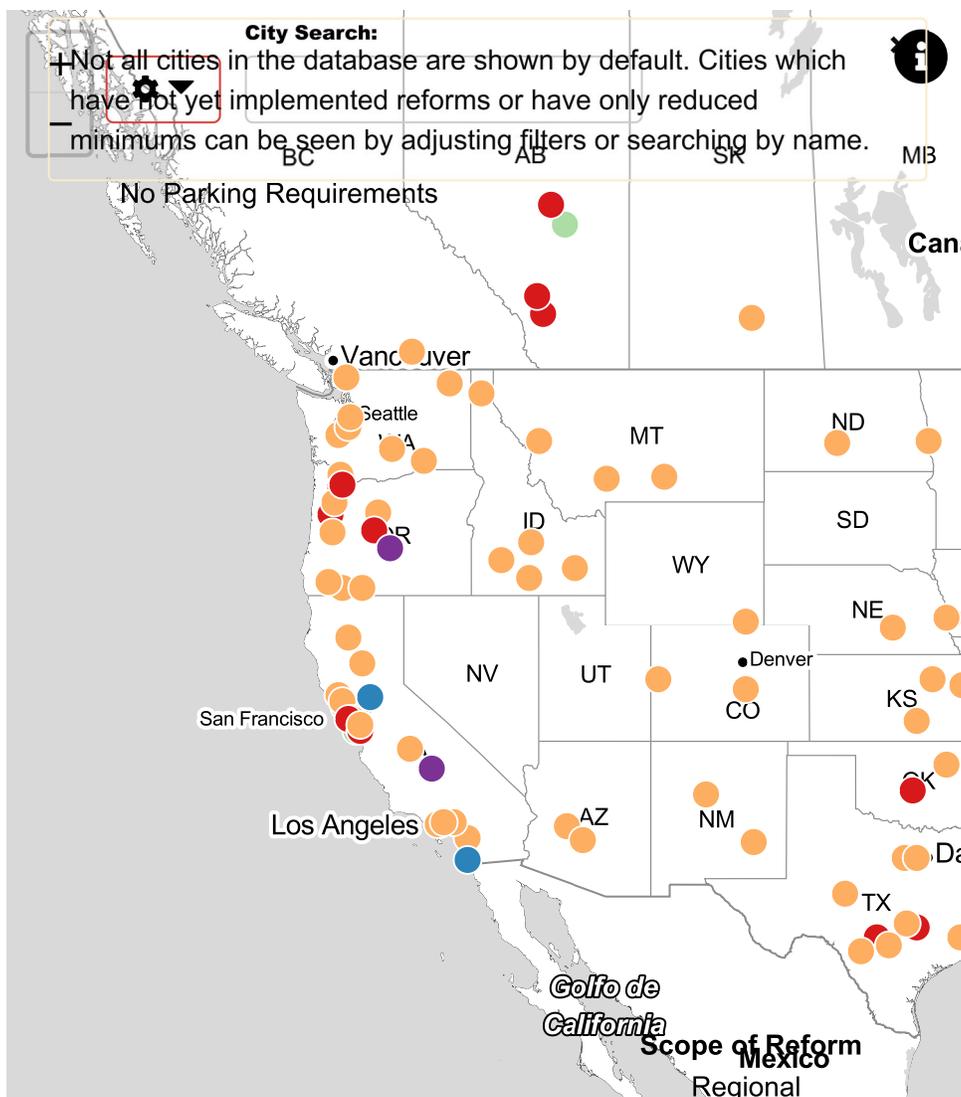
Parking Reform Network



Explore the reforms of over 200 cities on the map below. Click the info icon in the upper right corner, or **scroll down on this page**, for definitions and insights. You can [submit an update or new report here](#) and send feedback to map@parkingreform.org

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Progress on Parking Mandates



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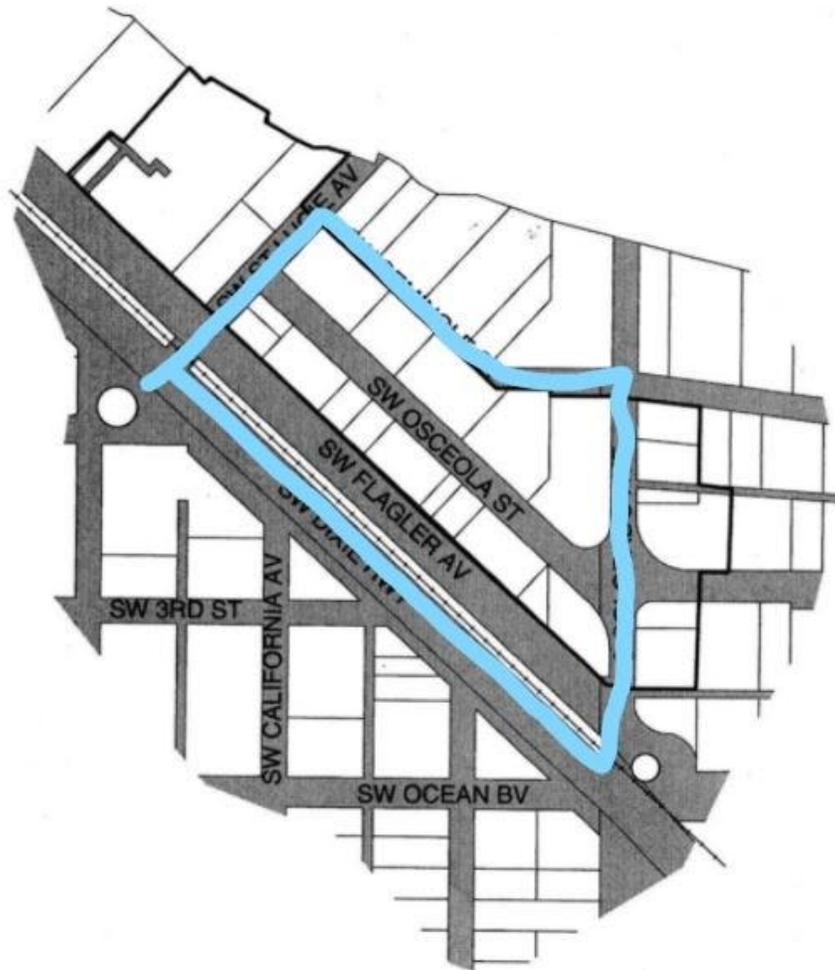
Costly car parking mandates are required for housing and commercial uses in most North American cities and towns. Over the last century, these costly requirements have contributed to urban sprawl, lack of abundant and affordable housing, car dependency, and climate change. In recent years, however, many places have implemented reforms to these mandates, exempting new buildings from parking. Sometimes these reforms are limited to certain streets or businesses, sometimes to particular land uses, and sometimes based on requirements like proximity to transit or inclusion of affordable housing, but it's clear that parking reform has momentum!

Key Takeaways

- **When it comes to parking codes, multifaceted is the norm and simplicity is the exception.** The most simple way to integrate parking reform in a zoning code is simply: “there are no provisions that establish a minimum number of off-street parking spaces for development for all land uses”, this is easy to implement, clear for readers to understand, and a tremendous advancement in making your city more livable. But more often, communities address a variety of use cases through writing many, many provisions. A zoning code commonly includes provisions to eliminate minimums in a central business district for all land uses...another provision to eliminated requirements for just commercial land uses along a specific corridor...another provision to be eligible to reduce residential requirements in another area...another provision to reduce a percentage of parking requirements if additional bicycle parking is included on site...another provision about maximums along pedestrian-oriented or transit-oriented land uses...you get the picture. While these provisions are an important step to accomplish parking reform, high levels of intricacy can create confusion for incoming developments, make it more technically challenging for staff to make adjustments, and limit growth. As the success of citywide parking reforms

continue to increase, we hope the number of provisions will continue to decrease.

- **A very large number of cities have eliminated minimum requirements for a very small portion of their communities.** Of the 200 examined codes, approximately 20% have abolished or reduced parking mandates citywide. The remainder have eliminated parking requirements in specific areas such as a central business district, main street, or historic district. In fact, several codes limited parking reforms to two to four blocks within a downtown or commercial district, as seen below. Eliminating minimum parking requirements is progress no matter which way you cut it, but limiting it to such an insignificant area also limits the positive impacts of these policies. Cities with such boundaries should consider expanding them to mirror the pace of their population, density, and development growth.



ii. *Parking requirements.*

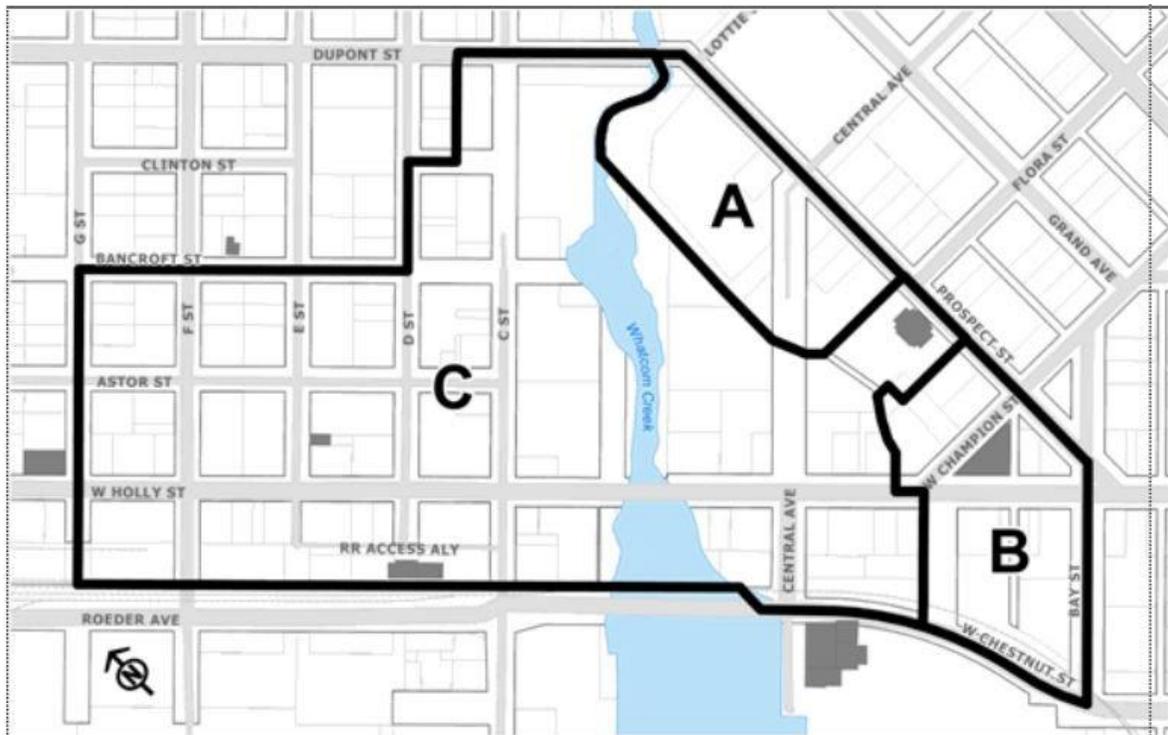
- a) Properties located in the "Old Downtown District" shall be exempt from the parking requirements of this Code.

One example of a small downtown district

20.35.075 Old town overlay district – Parking.



A. Uses on Tracts A and B as shown on Figure 20.35.075 are exempt from parking requirements, except for hotels and motels, which shall provide the number of spaces required in BMC [20.12.010\(B\)](#).



Another example of a district with parking exemptions

- Parking reform heavily leans toward commercial land uses.** More often than not, parking requirements for commercial land uses are the first to go. Nearly every map entry eliminates mandates for commercial/retail development, facilitating walkable downtowns and commercial districts, but residential reform is just as important and has much more conservative parking ratios. Parking requirements for residential land uses are typically reserved for individuals and remain vacant for large portions of the day. Tackling residential parking requirements remains a major opportunity in the parking reform movement.

- **Parking maximums are not uncommon.** Parking maximums (a required cap on the total number of parking spaces constructed) have been a polarizing reform strategy in recent years due to concerns surrounding developer push-back and vehicle access limitations. But with 45 code entries—many of which being in communities with under 50,000 people—they seem to be less controversial than anticipated. One of the many benefits of having a crowdsourced map is that communities adopting bold and progressive reforms can share their accomplishments, encourage others to do the same, and create a cycle of parking reform throughout the country. But don't take our word for it, check out the map to read more about these policies and check out what's new below.

Definitions

What does “implementation stage” mean?

- Proposed – This reform has been proposed by an elected/appointed official or by a planning department, etc. Bend Councilor Proposes...
- Planned – The city has approved a long range plan or other aspirational guide to study removal/reductions in car parking. Could also be planning commission passage.
 - <https://www.mlive.com/news/ann-arbor/2021/01/ann-arbor-kicks-off-new-round-of-talks-about-bigger-buildings-outside-of-downtown.html>
 - <https://www.sacbee.com/news/local/article248544635.html>
- Pilot – The city has temporarily reduced car parking requirements as a pilot.
 - Passed – City Council or the governing planning body has passed the parking reform policy. (Make note when the policy is to go into effect)
 - https://www.berkeleyside.com/2021/01/27/berkeley-parking-reform?goal=0_aad4b5ee64-aa3e0327bf-333370437
- Implemented – The policy has gone into effect and is the current law of the land.
 - <https://usa.streetsblog.org/2018/12/17/san-francisco-eliminates-parking-minimums/>

- <https://portland.gov/bps/better-housing/news/2019/12/19/city-council-votes-adopt-better-housing-design>
- Repealed – Parking reform has been reversed due to legal challenges or superceding legislation.
 - https://www.oregonlive.com/front-porch/2013/04/porland_city_council_approves.html

What does “affected land use” mean?

- Commercial – the reform applies to commercial uses
- Industrial – the reform applies to industrial uses
- Other – the reform applies to other uses (eg: schools, churches, arenas)
- Low-Density Residential – the reform applies to single family homes, duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes...
- Multi-Family Residential – the reform applies to apartment buildings, midrise, etc.
- High-Density Residential – the reform applies to very large apartments, condos, towers.

What does “Scope of Reform” mean?

- Citywide – the reform applies citywide (special exemptions, hazard zones, etc. are OK)
 - <https://wsbt.com/news/local/south-bend-city-council-votes-to-end-parking-space-minimum-for-businesses>
 - https://www.berkeleyside.com/2021/01/27/berkeley-parking-reform?goal=0_aad4b5ee64-aa3e0327bf-333370437
- City Center/Business District – Reform applies to certain centers, corridors and districts.
 - <https://www.advertiserandtimes.co.uk/parking-christchurch>
- Transit Oriented – Reform is based on transit stations and bus lines.
- Main Street/Special – Reform is specific to certain streets, historic districts, etc.
 - <https://abcnews4.com/news/local/city-council-allows-no-minimum-parking-requirements-on-king-street-to-drive-business>

- <https://www.msn.com/en-us/travel/news/charlotte-oks-car-free-residential-development-in-effort-to-reduce-housing-prices/ar-BB1adgEJ?ocid=msedgntp>

What does “Policy Change” mean?

- Reduce minimum parking requirements – ratios have been lowered, but not eliminated. This could be overall or based on inclusionary housing, transit proximity, etc.
- Eliminate minimum parking requirements – parking requirements can be completely avoided, either by-right or by reasonable condition.
 - https://www.berkeleyside.com/2021/01/27/berkeley-parking-reform?goal=0_aad4b5ee64-aa3e0327bf-333370437
- Parking maximums – limits on the amount of parking which can be built.

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From: [Greg Griffith](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: Residential Parking Proposal
Date: Thursday, March 23, 2023 2:56:39 PM

Hello, Joyce. I am glad the Planning Commission decided to extend the public comment period on proposed code amendments for parking for residential developments, as I did not get a chance to comment by the deadline on Monday.

That said, I support the proposed amendments that will eliminate mandates to provide parking in certain residential areas. I believe that developers should have the option to not provide parking if their market studies should show there is a viable market where car ownership is not a high priority. In essence, I think the market should determine if parking is needed to be provided by developers/property owners.

If not building parking helps housing affordability, so much the better to help increase the supply of affordable housing. However, in my mind, eliminating parking mandates is more about quality of life, enhancing our streetscape, community design, public safety, improving air and water quality. I also recommend eliminating parking mandates for commercial and office developments...I am sure you have data that shows how much of Olympia's ground surface is covered by asphalt/concrete and unused 99% of the time.

Having made the comments above, I also hasten to state that I entirely understand the pushback you are hearing for eliminating the parking mandate. After all, this is America where driving and parking one's car wherever and whenever we want 9 (and for free) is considered a sacred right. Certainly, developers should be afforded the option to provide parking in circumstances, settings, neighborhoods, and for populations where ready access to an automobile is necessary. How about guaranteed 24/7 ride access and/or neighborhood subscriber motor pools?

In conclusion, I support the proposed elimination of a minimum parking mandate and developers using market drivers to determine how much (if any) parking should be provided. I do support flexibility and affording developers options regarding providing parking...after all, "one size does not fit all" as the old saying goes. But in the long run, I believe this is a needed and important step to not only providing more affordable housing, but also for a safer, morfe walkable, greener, and more livable community.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.
Greg Griffith

From: [James King](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Cc: [Bigelow Highlands](#)
Subject: Parking Requirements
Date: Thursday, March 23, 2023 3:18:37 PM

Joyce Phillips

I sent an earlier e-mail and this is an amplification of that e-mail.

I agree with the maximum being 1.25 spots, but as pointed out in some comments to the Planning Commission ZERO does NOT allow for repair trucks, delivery trucks or guests and I would suggest at least one parking space per unit in apartments with 10 or more units. The example you use is downtown, but downtown in the evening has lots of on street parking, but when you move outside downtown on street parking is at a premium. Also I have noticed that when one chooses to go downtown in the evening to take advantage of the great businesses, parking is often full. Could it be that residents are taking the parking spaces?

Also I would require one bicycle parking space per unit instead of using that as a mitigation strategy, especially since we are attempting to move toward more of a bicycling culture.

Thank You

James King
Humanity Over Flag

From: [Comcast Account](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: comment on parking proposal
Date: Thursday, March 23, 2023 3:48:28 PM

I support revisiting parking requirements, but the current approach is flawed.

1. To start, I would like to offer personal experience. **Multifamily units need at least one parking slot.** In the 1980s I resided in downtown San Francisco living what appears to be the ideal that the City is aiming for. I was one of three people living in an old “0 parking requirement” two bedroom apartment on the second floor of an apartment building that was situated directly at a stop of the J-Line light rail system, the ground floor shops included a vegetable stand, and we were within walking distance of the Noe Valley shops and grocery. Furthermore, my partner was able to take the J-Line directly to work. We did not have children, we were sub-lesers because the person holding the lease had divorced and could not afford a two-bedroom on his own, but nor could he afford to leave it so it was probably not a happy situation for him but he was very gracious about it. It was sufficiently cramped that he had to store his kayak on the kitchen ceiling. This, I think, was a typical reality of San Francisco in those “vibrant” days. It was enjoyable for young adults, but not a situation that we, or he, would have continued at the point where we had children. *Out of three adults* — despite extreme competition for parking where people would stare outside their windows to jump on open spaces, would travel several blocks to find a space (often where the vehicles were at greater risk of breakins and theft), and despite the need to move the cars of the street on a regular schedule to make way for the sweepers or risk towing and fines — *we had two cars*. Why? First, for *work purposes*. One lived on the J-line, and we other two each often commuted on the subway all the way across the bay for work, but usually we had work in directions that didn’t jibe with the public transportation system. In my case, I did catering gigs that were in the evening and could be all over the place. Second, we needed ability to visit family; and we all wanted to recreate, especially evenings and weekends (remember the kayak). Even the San Francisco public transportation system and density did not meet these needs. There were no car sharing services at the time, which may have been an option for dropping one car, but the household would without doubt have continued to have at least one car under the most ideal circumstances for density that can be realized in the United States.

Frankly, nowhere in Olympia offers the potential of access to work, services and recreational opportunities that I had in San Francisco, or even Portland, Ballard, Baltimore, or Oakland when I lived in those dense urban spaces. Only in Baltimore did I live without any access to a car or motorcycle, and I paid for it by being stuck in a food desert, having to rely on friends for occasional trips to a decent grocery store, and walking in bad weather and at night in unsafe areas. When I got a unit in a row house with room for a car in the alley, my quality of life and my level of personal safety shot up considerably. Clearly I am not anti-urban. But only a demographically small number of people would be able to make Olympia work for them as a quality lifestyle *over the long term* without a car. And now we are trying to encourage electric cars, so that means providing a charging infrastructure that encourages EV adoption. When considering affordability, you cannot isolate the cost of housing from all the other aspects of standards of living related to housing that also have their needs and costs. Market-rate builders must be held to standards that assure they are building for long term needs and quality of life, not to improve short term statistics.

2. Parking downtown on Friday or Saturday evening to enjoy the amenities can already be a

discouraging nightmare. Adding more and more residents to the competition for street parking will discourage access to nightlife in congested high density areas. This is not conjecture or downtown-bashing, it's the voice of experience in other places. It's one reason why successful nightlife districts are often connected to light industrial and/or commercial districts rather than residential ones — there's a reliable reservoir of vacant parking space during hours of recreation. But Olympia and also the Port seem to be heading toward wanting the street scenes and residential areas combined, so parking had better be very carefully considered. Residents cannot sustain a vibrant street scene.

3. There is **not a geographically sound, data-driven basis for trying to link restricted parking to changing the patterns of how people use transit in Olympia**. The data tells us that the city *cannot* achieve the scale and densities needed to actually impact use of public transit (ask the Department of Commerce and Puget Sound Regional Council about this). Also, the work transportation patterns are wrong for trying to accomplish this. Ask TRPC for the data. This problem is another way that cost savings to builders will simply shift the burden of paying for/accommodating to parking scarcity to people who have to travel by car to work.

It is an absolute joke to imagine that most Olympians can get to work via transit provided they live within a quarter mile of a route. If it is honest about the data collected on work transportation patterns, the city should stop using this concept of proximity to transit altogether in its planning. It is great when people can take transit to work, but it very rarely works out that way. **People live near transit routes that have nothing to do with the direction they go to work (or school).**

4. **Building scale and place should be more precisely accounted for based on what has worked in comparable communities.** It can make sense to allow 0 parking for a single ADU in an uncongested neighborhood. Residential areas and mixed use areas can cope with less parking for smaller units, if they are in the right places where there is a reservoir of street parking available. That is very different to allowing a larger scale developers with greater cumulative impacts to build to greatly reduced parking standards, especially in areas that are already congested.

5. Communities that have successfully reduced their parking requirements to help achieve affordability have done so in the context of **larger planning initiatives and where conditions are appropriate**, not just as a tweaking of code. See for example this Sightline article on Buffalo, New York: <https://www.sightline.org/2022/10/12/big-reforms-big-growth-buffalo-parking-rewrite-pays-off/> Buffalo and its "form-based Green Code" is clearly a model that many urbanists in Olympia want to emulate, but it involved completely throwing out the old code and, as a planning leader observes, Buffalo is a Rust Belt city dealing with losing population, not a west coast city dealing with population pressures; and "30 percent of households in Buffalo do not have a car at all, largely due to poverty not by choice." As a place without congestion issues, parking requirements didn't make sense for Buffalo, so taking parking out of permit requirements was a sensible tool for cutting house building costs without ending up just shifting the burden away from builders and onto car-owning residents.

The matrix proposed by Olympia seems to get it **exactly wrong** in some instances. It is reducing or taking away the parking requirement in the high congestion areas that are reliant on tourism; in the low income units where the income earners having a car can spell the difference between being able to travel to work and thus put a roof over their heads or not; and in larger-scale units. The only proposal that makes sense as a way to match need to building

cost, is the reduction to one per unit for studios. Depending on the circumstances, the commercial zone reductions might be possible, but it is hard to comment without a map.

6. It is a particularly bad mistake to assume that low income people will benefit more from (theoretically) lowered building costs than from having safe reliable access to their automobiles. One of the worst things about living in an apartment complex can be having your car, that you need to get to work, to shop at the faraway or dangerously traffic-heavy grocery store, and/or transport your kids or elderly/disabled family members to various services, repeatedly broken into or stolen because you have to park it on unsafe streets. Just consider the shopping issue alone. If you can't afford a babysitter and don't have the time for making arrangements like that anyway, you have to pack everybody up to come along with you to the store. You appreciate a residential complex that provides enough parking, and even perhaps gates it off at night and/or provides night security. If you have ever lived that way, you know this. This is why a policy like this should not even be considered without **targeted equity-based outreach to the impacted communities.**

Helen Wheatley
Olympia Resident



BIG REFORMS, BIG GROWTH: BUFFALO'S PARKING REWRITE PAYS OFF

A Q&A with one of the planners behind the mid-sized NY city's successes.



Author: **Catie Gould**

(@Citizen_Cate) on October 12, 2022 at 12:30 pm

As more cities and states lift costly parking mandates, what will happen next? Chris Hawley has seen the future.

Hawley, first as an activist, then as a city planner in Buffalo, New York, worked to remove minimum parking requirements citywide in 2017 under the city's new form-based "Green Code." ("Form-based" focuses on building form, including its physical appearance and relation to the street, rather than regulating uses, like commercial or residential.) Now five years later, Buffalo's population is experiencing significant **growth for the first time since the 1920s**, and new homes and businesses are popping up left and right. Hawley shares the story behind the numbers.

CAN YOU START BY INTRODUCING YOURSELF?

First, I was an activist advocating for a new zoning rewrite, along with friends of mine. We felt that the zoning code was the core problem behind a lot of our development controversies and was a stumbling block to get the walkable, mixed-use development that was consistent with our historic character. The 1953 zoning code—adopted the same year that Elvis Presley recorded his first song in Memphis—was ancient. It had been overlaid hundreds of times and grown to an unsustainable 1,804 pages of regulations.

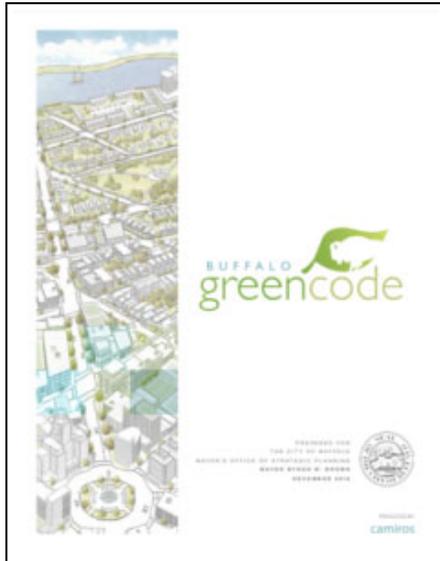
We were in a good position with our new mayor Byron Brown to throw everything in the garbage and start from scratch. He remained committed through politically difficult conversations, which included 242 public meetings over a seven-year period.



Chris Hawley. Photo by Buffalo Obscura, used with permission.

SOUNDS GRUELING AND EXPENSIVE.

Writing a zoning code doesn't involve many ribbon cuttings. But I think that Mayor Byron Brown understood that once the new zoning code is adopted, every ribbon cutting is a victory for the Green Code, which is what we ended up calling it.



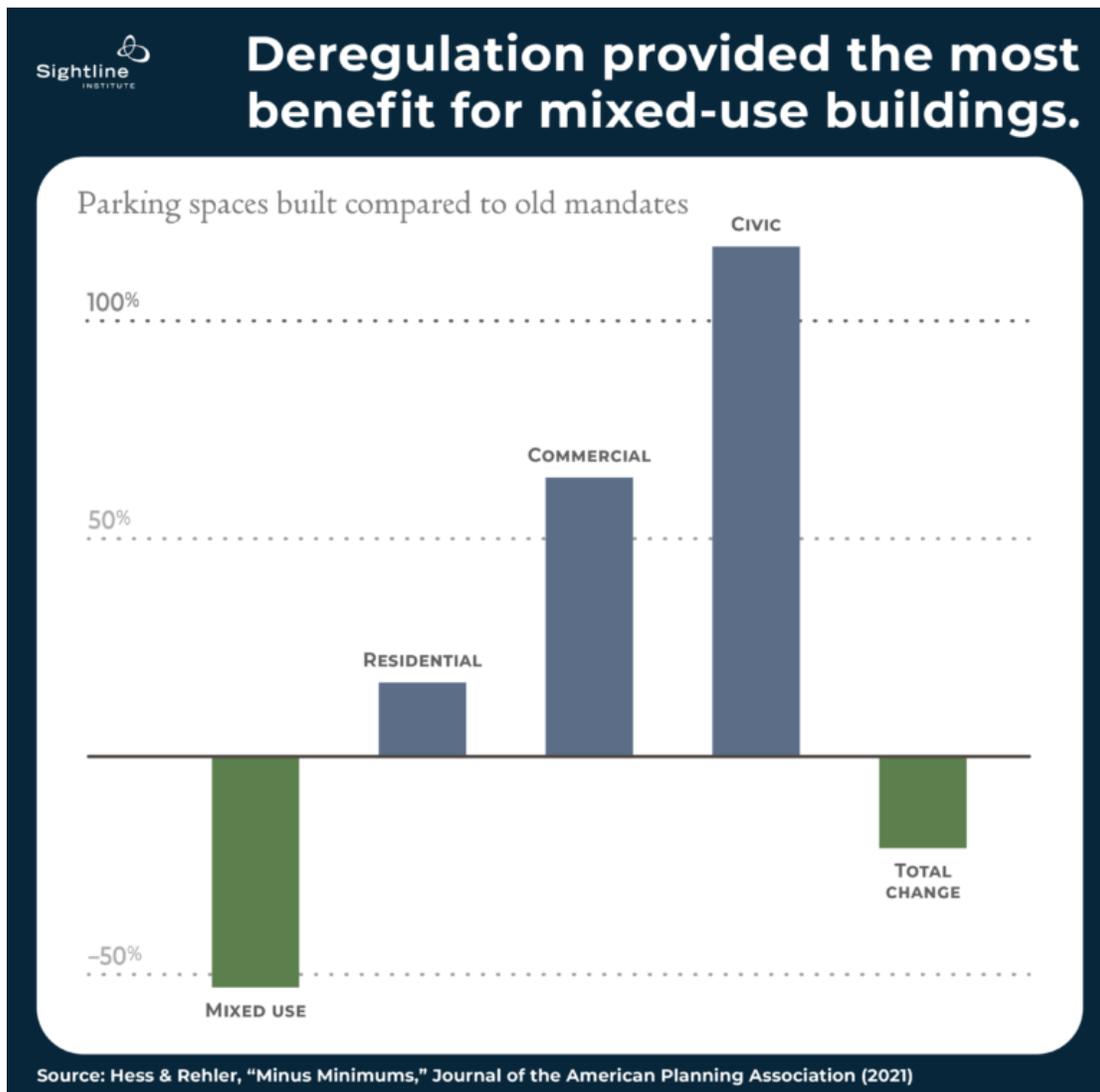
The new development code is 338 pages long, a fifth of the size of the previous code.

A lot of planners advocate for a much more incremental step-by-step approach to adopting form-based codes. That is expensive and doesn't provide a lot of returns for a municipality, if you are applying it only in very small areas.

There is an advantage to a complete rewrite of your land use and zoning regulations, which South Bend [Indiana] and Hartford [Connecticut] have also learned. When we tackle individual topics, particularly controversial ones, on a bite-sized basis it's easy to get stuck politically—the common council spent eight months on a chicken coop ordinance. But when it's one giant package, that can mute controversies about particular elements, whether it's height or density or certainly whether to have minimum parking requirements.

WHAT KINDS OF CHANGES HAVE YOU SEEN IN BUFFALO SINCE GETTING RID OF PARKING REQUIREMENTS?

Daniel Hess, a professor at the University of Buffalo, looked at the first two years of development activity that went through major site review. He found that developments were **providing less parking than was required under the old code**. In particular, mixed-use projects often provided substantially less.



We have a few cases of new construction where zero parking was provided. 15 Allen Street was our first zero-parking construction project. It was one block from a metro rail station and had 12 units of housing and two shopfronts. Another one was for 201 dwelling units downtown close to a public library and adjacent to a new grocery store.

I really wish that study had looked at staff-level reviews for smaller-scale projects. I think if that had been undertaken, their findings would have been even more pleasantly surprising. Smaller projects in particular benefited the most from the elimination of minimum parking requirements. Big developers with big projects have a lot more capacity financially to provide parking if they want to. Under the old code they could always get variances: they have expensive attorneys and relationships in City Hall. Smaller-scale projects don't have those kinds of resources, or they're constrained by the size of the site.



New apartments and retail at 15 Allen Street, Buffalo, New York. Image from Google Earth.

Mixed-use is a lot easier now. We relaxed density restrictions in residential zones and eliminated them entirely in mixed-use and downtown zones. We even legalized some degree of mixed-use within most residential zones. We have a tradition in Buffalo of corner shops and taverns that are kind of mixed in with our neighborhoods, sometimes mid-block too.

One of my proudest achievements in the code allows commercial buildings built before 1953 to be reused for a wide range of commercial uses regardless of what zone it's located in. That has led to a [flourishing of new immigrant enterprises](#) in our working-class neighborhoods, where we're seeing the largest increases in population.

I bought a corner tavern, which had long been shuttered. It could not reopen without a use variance under the old code. There was no off-street parking. As a result of the new code, I was able to reopen the tavern as a nonprofit social hall. Dozens of entrepreneurs have been able to undertake [similar projects across the city](#) without any real regulatory hurdles.



A 1914 pre-prohibition bar reopened for the first time since 1991, after being purchased by Chris Hawley in 2020. Photo by Eugene V. Debs Hall.

HAS OVERALL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY INCREASED?

Absolutely. They don't make the news as often as they used to because we increased the threshold for projects that require a public hearing, which is a significant change.

Under the old code, we basically adopted mandatory site plan review for virtually any project over \$50,000 in value regardless of its character or routine nature. Now on average, if it's a smaller-scale project that meets the letter of the code, they're guaranteed to get their building permit within 30 days.

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I can say with confidence that the increased level of development that we're seeing is much higher-quality. Before, conventional suburban development was the norm, and now walkable mixed-use development is the norm. Developers generally favored the code change because of the easier process. They told us consistently that the best thing for investment is predictability.

Under Buffalo, NY's Green Code...



Source: Hess & Rehler, "Minus Minimums," Journal of the American Planning Association (2021)

WHAT ARE THE POLITICS AROUND PARKING IN BUFFALO?

We are a Rust Belt city, and we've lost about 55 percent of our population [since the 1950s], so we don't have the congestion concerns you might see in other cities like Seattle or Boston, where on-street parking constraints are a major political football. There was only one neighborhood where parking was a significant concern. Most people were surprised we even had minimum parking requirements.

Our experience since 2017, when the code went into effect, has been very, very good. We're no longer requiring variances if you want to provide less parking or no parking, so it doesn't come up as often. Before the new code was adopted, when residents got a notice in the mail saying that a developer or business owner wanted to move forward on a project and provide less parking than the minimum, that created controversy and conflict. In meetings we have about development now, parking just doesn't come up as often. That's one of the most unexpected and pleasant surprises that have come out of these five years we've had the code in place.

A QUESTION THAT REGULARLY COMES UP FOR ME IS, IF YOU GET REPEAL PARKING MINIMUMS, DO YOU NEED A HOLISTIC PARKING MANAGEMENT PLAN TO GO WITH IT?

To make the abolition of minimum parking requirements palatable, we adopted a required [transportation demand management] TDM plan for projects of a certain size, which requires a developer to explain what the anticipated travel demand is, and then how that travel demand will be

accommodated. It doesn't require you to provide parking but does require you to push for transportation alternatives like biking and walking.

I wouldn't say we have been tremendously successful with TDM—we're still trying to figure out that route. My only note of caution for other municipalities without large planning staffs is that managing a TDM plan requirement or other parking management strategies can be very time-consuming and burdensome on regulatory staff.

ARE THERE NOTICEABLE PLACES WHERE ON-STREET PARKING HAS GOTTEN BUSIER? THAT IS ALWAYS AT THE TOP OF THE LIST OF CONCERNS.

As neighborhoods become more popular, certainly parking supply becomes more constrained. We're doing more to track this downtown than anywhere else, but the anecdotal experience is there is still available parking for folks. We're using market-based pricing to manage demand on our public parking supply. We're still, of course, emerging from the pandemic. There simply just isn't the kind of demand that existed before.

WHAT PARKING MANAGEMENT TOOLS DO YOU DEPLOY?

Downtown, we have variable parking rates so parking can be anywhere from free to relatively expensive. That's a system of tools that we were putting into place before the pandemic started. The whole notion is that at any given time, at least 10 percent of the parking spaces will be open, so that people don't perceive that there is a parking constraint.

We have only one residential permit program in a neighborhood called the Fruit Belt. We have a growing medical campus on the edge of downtown with 17,000 employees, and some of those employees decided to park in the adjacent neighborhood rather than the paid ramps. The common council rushed to create this pilot residential permit program.

It's important to consider that about 30 percent of households in Buffalo do not have a car at all, largely due to poverty rather than by choice. All neighborhoods are still served by public transit, and we have a really strong bike culture in Buffalo. Relative to other American cities, we started off with a really good base. What we're trying to do is build a city where you can thrive without a car, rather than simply survive without a car.

This transcript was edited for brevity and clarity.



Catie Gould

Catie Gould, senior researcher, Transportation, writes about climate and transportation policy. She brings a decade of experience in engineering and data analysis into Sightline's efforts to decarbonize our transportation system. Prior to coming to Sightline, she led advocacy work for better bike and bus infrastructure in Portland and wrote about local transportation issues. Originally from rural Maine, Catie loves exploring new cities on bikes, camping, and reading. Find her latest research [here](#). Email her at [catie \[at\] sightline \[dot\] org](mailto:catie@sightline.org), and follow her at [@Citizen_Cate](#).

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For press inquiries and interview requests, please contact [Serena Larkin](#)

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From: jacobsoly@aol.com
To: growthtalkolywa@lists.riseup.net; Joyce Phillips
Subject: Re: [growthtalkolywa] comment on parking proposal
Date: Thursday, March 23, 2023 4:15:43 PM

Thanks to Helen for taking the time to send some practical information to the city.

Let's hope it can break thru their doctrinaire mindset.

BobJ

In a message dated 3/23/2023 3:48:39 PM Pacific Standard Time, hwheatley22@comcast.net writes:

I support revisiting parking requirements, but the current approach is flawed.

1. To start, I would like to offer personal experience. **Multifamily units need at least one parking slot.** In the 1980s I resided in downtown San Francisco living what appears to be the ideal that the City is aiming for. I was one of three people living in an old “0 parking requirement” two bedroom apartment on the second floor of an apartment building that was situated directly at a stop of the J-Line light rail system, the ground floor shops included a vegetable stand, and we were within walking distance of the Noe Valley shops and grocery. Furthermore, my partner was able to take the J-Line directly to work. We did not have children, we were sub-lesers because the person holding the lease had divorced and could not afford a two-bedroom on his own, but nor could he afford to leave it so it was probably not a happy situation for him but he was very gracious about it. It was sufficiently cramped that he had to store his kayak on the kitchen ceiling. This, I think, was a typical reality of San Francisco in those “vibrant” days. It was enjoyable for young adults, but not a situation that we, or he, would have continued at the point where we had children. *Out of three adults* — despite extreme competition for parking where people would stare outside their windows to jump on open spaces, would travel several blocks to find a space (often where the vehicles were at greater risk of breakins and theft), and despite the need to move the cars of the street on a regular schedule to make way for the sweepers or risk towing and fines — *we had two cars*. Why? First, for *work purposes*. One lived on the J-line, and we other two each often commuted on the subway all the way across the bay for work, but usually we had work in directions that didn’t jibe with the public transportation system. In my case, I did catering gigs that were in the evening and could be all over the place. Second, we needed ability to visit family; and we all wanted to recreate, especially evenings and weekends (remember the kayak). Even the San Francisco public transportation system and density did not meet these needs. There were no car sharing services at the time, which may have been an option for dropping one car, but the household would without doubt have continued to have at least one car under the most ideal circumstances for density that can be realized in the United States.

Frankly, nowhere in Olympia offers the potential of access to work, services and recreational opportunities that I had in San Francisco, or even Portland, Ballard,

Baltimore, or Oakland when I lived in those dense urban spaces. Only in Baltimore did I live without any access to a car or motorcycle, and I paid for it by being stuck in a food desert, having to rely on friends for occasional trips to a decent grocery store, and walking in bad weather and at night in unsafe areas. When I got a unit in a row house with room for a car in the alley, my quality of life and my level of personal safety shot up considerably. Clearly I am not anti-urban. But only a demographically small number of people would be able to make Olympia work for them as a quality lifestyle *over the long term* without a car. And now we are trying to encourage electric cars, so that means providing a charging infrastructure that encourages EV adoption.

When considering affordability, you cannot isolate the cost of housing from all the other aspects of standards of living related to housing that also have their needs and costs. Market-rate builders must be held to standards that assure they are building for long term needs and quality of life, not to improve short term statistics.

2. Parking downtown on Friday or Saturday evening to enjoy the amenities can already be a discouraging nightmare. Adding more and more residents to the competition for street parking will discourage access to nightlife in congested high density areas. This is not conjecture or downtown-bashing, it's the voice of experience in other places. It's one reason why successful nightlife districts are often connected to light industrial and/or commercial districts rather than residential ones — there's a reliable reservoir of vacant parking space during hours of recreation. But Olympia and also the Port seem to be heading toward wanting the street scenes and residential areas combined, so parking had better be very carefully considered. Residents cannot sustain a vibrant street scene.

3. There is **not a geographically sound, data-driven basis for trying to link restricted parking to changing the patterns of how people use transit in Olympia.** The data tells us that the city *cannot* achieve the scale and densities needed to actually impact use of public transit (ask the Department of Commerce and Puget Sound Regional Council about this). Also, the work transportation patterns are wrong for trying to accomplish this. Ask TRPC for the data. This problem is another way that cost savings to builders will simply shift the burden of paying for/accommodating to parking scarcity to people who have to travel by car to work.

It is an absolute joke to imagine that most Olympians can get to work via transit provided they live within a quarter mile of a route. If it is honest about the data collected on work transportation patterns, the city should stop using this concept of proximity to transit altogether in its planning. It is great when people can take transit to work, but it very rarely works out that way. **People live near transit routes that have nothing to do with the direction they go to work (or school).**

4. **Building scale and place should be more precisely accounted for based on what has worked in comparable communities.** It can make sense to allow 0 parking for a single ADU in an uncongested neighborhood. Residential areas and mixed use areas can cope with less parking for smaller units, if they are in the right places where there is a reservoir of street parking available. That is very different to allowing a larger scale developers with greater cumulative impacts to build to greatly reduced parking standards, especially in areas that are already congested.

5. Communities that have successfully reduced their parking requirements to help

achieve affordability have done so in the context of **larger planning initiatives and where conditions are appropriate**, not just as a tweaking of code. See for example this Sightline article on Buffalo, New York: <https://www.sightline.org/2022/10/12/big-reforms-big-growth-buffalos-parking-rewrite-pays-off/> Buffalo and its “form-based Green Code” is clearly a model that many urbanists in Olympia want to emulate, but it involved completely throwing out the old code and, as a planning leader observes, Buffalo is a Rust Belt city dealing with losing population, not a west coast city dealing with population pressures; and “30 percent of households in Buffalo do not have a car at all, largely due to poverty not by choice.” As a place without congestion issues, parking requirements didn’t make sense for Buffalo, so taking parking out of permit requirements was a sensible tool for cutting house building costs without ending up just shifting the burden away from builders and onto car-owning residents.

The matrix proposed by Olympia seems to get it **exactly wrong** in some instances. It is reducing or taking away the parking requirement in the high congestion areas that are reliant on tourism; in the low income units where the income earners having a car can spell the difference between being able to travel to work and thus put a roof over their heads or not; and in larger-scale units. The only proposal that makes sense as a way to match need to building cost, is the reduction to one per unit for studios. Depending on the circumstances, the commercial zone reductions might be possible, but it is hard to comment without a map.

6. It is a particularly bad mistake to assume that low income people will benefit more from (theoretically) lowered building costs than from having safe reliable access to their automobiles. One of the worst things about living in an apartment complex can be having your car, that you need to get to work, to shop at the faraway or dangerously traffic-heavy grocery store, and/or transport your kids or elderly/disabled family members to various services, repeatedly broken into or stolen because you have to park it on unsafe streets. Just consider the shopping issue alone. If you can’t afford a babysitter and don’t have the time for making arrangements like that anyway, you have to pack everybody up to come along with you to the store. You appreciate a residential complex that provides enough parking, and even perhaps gates it off at night and/or provides night security. If you have ever lived that way, you know this. This is why a policy like this should not even be considered without **targeted equity-based outreach to the impacted communities**.

Helen Wheatley
Olympia Resident

The GrowthtalkOlyWA List Administrator/Moderator is Walt Jorgensen.
Direct all questions about GrowthtalkOlyWA to him at waltjorgensen@comcast.net

Some of us use a pseudonym instead of or in addition to our real name. Here is a list to help you identify participants in the message thread.

Lisa R.....northbeachcomm
Lisa R.....lee riner
Kim Dobson.....Parallel University Radio Show
Larry Dzieza.....Larry of Nottingham
Bob Jacobs.....jacobsoly
Zahid Chaudhry.....AZ
Peggy Bruton.....Elsa ???
Peggy Bruton.....Gimleteye
Meryl Bernstein....space4now
Deane Rimmerman....olyecology
Helen Wheatley.....Comcast Account
Steve Salmi.....Dr. Lemming

As you encounter others, please advise Walt

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From: [Comcast Account](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: parking and affordability
Date: Thursday, March 23, 2023 6:37:34 PM

The affordability mantra of the Puget Sound Regional Council is Supply, Stability and Subsidy. There is not enough focus on the latter two elements, which are more resident/tenant-centered.

The most direct and impactful way to link affordable housing to parking for a significant number of multi-family unit dwellers right now and into the future, would be to prohibit landlords from charging extra rent for parking spots. This common practice effectively raises the rent on many units, as most people have no real choice but to pay the extra amount. (Proving, once again, that working people need their cars and will pay extra for them if forced to carry that burden, and that landlords charge according to what the market will bear.)

Not only should there be a sufficient number of parking spaces to provide for the real needs of tenants, but at least one space per unit should be provided at no extra charge.

Helen Wheatley
Olympia Resident

From: [John Saunders](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: Comment on Proposed Residential Parking Code Amendments
Date: Friday, March 24, 2023 10:29:29 AM

Dear Ms. Phillip:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed amendments to the residential parking requirements of the City of Olympia.

I am strongly in favor of the proposed amendments. I believe that Olympia needs to eliminate barriers to the construction of new housing for all levels of income and that reducing the burden of parking is one way to accomplish that goal. I appreciate that the proposed parking requirements are flexible depending on needs of specific residential projects and that they reflect the availability of frequent transit where possible.

Best of luck to you and the City in implementing these needed changes.

Sincerely,

John O. Saunders
301 18th Ave SE
Olympia, WA 98501
johnosaunders@me.com
M 360-259-0288

From: [Steven Hernandez](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: comment on the housing proposal
Date: Friday, March 24, 2023 1:28:07 PM

Building multi family housing without parking is wonderful in idea but sufficiently lacks foresight.

The city of olympia does not have the transit system nor drivers to accommodate such a proposal. It also feels like this is a hurried project to get more housing up and force the local city to just accommodate it, which will put a strain on parking in the area. I work in state government as does my wife.

Expecting those apartments to move and those families to not need vehicles for their jobs is profoundly incompetent. Please ensure you either follow the law as is or build parking as part of the complexes, like an underground garage. Otherwise it just screams of a cash grab to build housing to rent and then expect the locality to accommodate it.

From: [Sean Ferguson](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: Support for more housing and less parking - support for changes to parking requirements
Date: Friday, March 24, 2023 2:52:28 PM

I support the changes to the parking minimums as I understand that the goal is to provide the option to not include a parking space for each unit, which should lower the cost and offer the possibility of more affordable housing. Eliminating a mandatory minimum requirement can make it easier to build more housing and we need both more housing overall and ideally affordable housing and this is a good method to encourage that development.

Thanks,
Sean Ferguson

From: [Esther Grace Kronenberg](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: Parking requirements
Date: Friday, March 24, 2023 3:16:36 PM

Dear Joyce Phillips,

At this time, it is unreasonable to expect new residents of Olympia's to-be constructed multifamily units not to have cars. I have lived in big cities like New York and San Francisco. Getting around New York without a car was easy. There are buses and subways every few blocks that go just about everywhere, all the way from the top of the Bronx to the tip of Brooklyn. San Francisco's public transit, though not bad, wasn't nearly as comprehensive as New York. There were places farther from the downtown area that had sparse service, and honestly, a person with children, an elderly person and those who are trying to shop and have to carry back heavy bags, still had a tough time. Bottom line - even in cities with decent public transit, there is a need for a car.

By contrast, Olympia is not at all pedestrian friendly. The entire West side was built after the onset of cars, and so that's the way it functions. Pedestrians are few and far between because there's almost no walkability to places people need to get to.

Additionally, public transit in Olympia is more a courtesy than an efficient way to get around. The bus routes are extremely limited. For example, you can't get from Harrison and Cooper Point to Black Lake Blvd and Cooper Point, a short ride of less than 2 miles, without having to get off one bus at the mall and hop on another and who knows how they're timed. For someone trying to shop, it's pretty impossible in terms of time and effort. I don't think it's any better for most people who are trying to get to work. Buses don't run after certain hours, or infrequently if they do, and they certainly don't go to many neighborhoods in the area. It shouldn't have to take you 2 hours to get to work by bus when you could get there in less than 30 minutes by car, but that's the way it is right now. To pretend otherwise is deceptive and foolish.

On top of that, I thought Olympia was going to encourage EV use. Where will people charge their EV's if there is no parking? It just doesn't make sense.

This is an idealistic but unworkable idea. It seems the only people who will benefit from the lack of a parking requirement are the developers. Frankly, I'm sick and tired of the City accommodating developer interests to the detriment of the residents of this City who pay your salaries. Like the tax breaks, this clearly is another giveaway.

It would be wonderful not to have to rely on cars - but the reality is we do. It's completely backwards to eliminate parking before a robust public transit and community/pedestrian infrastructure is in place. It's especially hard on those low-income families who rely on their cars and need to have a safe parking spot close to home.

Get the Capital Mall area right first. Make it a village that enhances community and makes getting to essential services easier on foot or public transit. Then you can propose reducing parking. To do so now is disrespectful to the needs of your fellow residents.

Thanks for your consideration.

Esther Kronenberg

From: [Gavin Plesko](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: Olympia Parking
Date: Friday, March 24, 2023 4:16:14 PM

Hello,

I am a resident of Olympia, I went to high school in Tumwater, and Evergreen for college. I now live downtown and have been loving all of the improvements to the downtown area in the past few years.

I think we should remove parking requirements for new construction throughout the entire city. The focus on cars in limits housing, as well as makes areas outside of downtown difficult to walk around. Olympia has invested in its transit so well, and we should continue to leverage that by removing requirements on parking. The giant parking lots also make the West side feel less safe to walk through than downtown. The Westside is a prime location for high density housing, and would make Evergreen students have so many more options. I graduated from Evergreen in 2017 because it was the most affordable school I could find, and with how expensive it is now to live on the westside, and the cost of cars these days - there is no way that I could have afforded to go to college without incurring some serious debt.

There are so many reasons for removing the restriction on parking, and I can't think of any reason why we would need much more parking, especially with how amazing our transit system is.

Thank you for taking my comment.

From: [Drew Beck](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: Public Comment
Date: Friday, March 24, 2023 4:18:10 PM

Hello, my name is Drew Beckvonpeccoz, I live in West Olympia. I would like to leave a public comment regarding the Proposed Parking Requirement Reduction. I am strongly in favor of this code change, I think it is very important to Olympia's future that we reduce the parking requirements for new housing. Olympia needs dense affordable housing desperately. Additionally, and this is very important, we absolutely must improve and expand the bus system in Olympia in order to accommodate this increased housing density. This is absolutely crucial to the success of this plan.

Thank you

From: [Keith Jewell](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: Parking Proposal Comment
Date: Friday, March 24, 2023 4:37:23 PM

Hello -

Thank you, thank you, for eliminating most of the parking requirements. Based on the pattern of construction, it's clear that the minimums will almost always be exceeded, so it may make little practical change. It's still an important message, and I appreciate that the City is considering it.

Best,

-K

From: [LARRY BLANTON](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: New parking rules
Date: Saturday, March 25, 2023 3:21:28 PM

TO: Joyce Phillips

I am strongly opposed to the City of Olympia's misguided and punitive proposed change to residential building parking requirements.

Many families require both parents to work just to make ends meet, this means two cars. Your suggestion to take public transportation

is insulting, as crime has significantly increased in Olympia due to soft on crime policies. Addicts are now taking drugs on buses and

trains. How can you go grocery shopping or pick up kids from school without a car?

To allow buildings with zero parking spaces will reduce parking for struggling business.

This proposal even wants to limit parking spaces to 1.25 per unit, regardless of how many bedrooms the unit has? This is the height

of arrogance, forcing people to risk their personal safety and reduce their quality of life just to promote a neurotic crusade against cars

and personal freedom.

Lawrence Blanton
Olympia WA
98513

From: [Kurt Wochholz](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: Parking restrictions
Date: Saturday, March 25, 2023 4:08:40 PM

Can public transportation take me to the addresses of my individual job sites with all of my tools, run me around to suppliers, take me back to the job sites, and then on to the next job as I determine throughout each day? Most contractors work out of their residences not some expensive office location.

How is wishing something were contrary to the population's existence supposed to make it so? This whole plan is putting the cart before the horse. Restricting the number of parking spaces at apartment complexes has backfired for Orange and LA counties in California in the past. They had to go back and increase the spaces to fit reality at great expense later.

Kurt Wochholz

From: [Elizabeth Carp](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: Parking proposal: support
Date: Saturday, March 25, 2023 6:37:11 PM

Hi Joyce,

I am writing in support of the City's residential parking requirement proposal. The city should be doing everything it can to lower rents. We also need to make our city less car-dependent for quality of life and environmental reasons (I work in environmental permitting and every day I see how habitat is destroyed by parking lots and sprawl). Reducing parking requirements is an important step towards both.

Thank you,
Lizzie Carp

From: [Carol Chestnut](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: New zero parking regulation for new development
Date: Sunday, March 26, 2023 10:49:09 AM

I strongly oppose the proposed zero parking and other revamped parking regulations that the City of Olympia is “considering” planning for developers. I think developers in Olympia are given way too many “freebies” already! And taking away the requirement of one parking space per unit is just another hardship for our citizens. I recently heard that someone living in the City Olympia was being required to move because she could not afford to stay there as the landlord recently instituted a charge of \$100 per month for parking privileges. How does that help with our housing problems?

I urge you to reconsider this new perk for developers!

Carol Chestnut
2304 22nd Ave SE
Olympia WA 98501

From: [John Gear](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Cc: [CityCouncil](#)
Subject: Parking Minimums Proposal
Date: Sunday, March 26, 2023 5:45:49 PM

Hello,

I STRONGLY support the staff recommendation on parking for multifamily housing.

Actually, I support something more aggressive — make the current minimum parking rule into a maximum, and eliminate the idea of mandated parking minimums in Olympia entirely.

As Prof. Douglas Shoup has shown again and again, including in his monumental book “The High Cost of Free Parking,” the minimum amount of parking to provide is a decision that should be left to the market, not to bureaucrats applying tables that have no basis in research or economic testing.

I am shocked to see that Olympia would be proposing to permit even more surface parking than is allowed today.

We have such a huge oversupply of parking in Olympia, meanwhile we have a terrible shortage of housing for people. Ultimately, those two things are intimately related — the more parking we require, the more unaffordable our housing becomes, while at the same time we make driving alternatives more difficult for people, because we’ve spread out to accommodate all that parking.

We are every day experiencing the negative economic and environmental consequences of centering automobiles rather than people in our development patterns, and parking minimums only aggravate every one of our problems.

Housing is becoming completely unaffordable to a greater and greater share of people, and yet we’re proposing to force developers to burden residents with the costs of parking, even when they would otherwise use the money to provide housing for people.

The current regional fire authority proposal is just another sign that we have bankrupted ourselves in the S. Sound region with an unproductive development pattern that doesn’t pay its own way, and parking is one of the greatest causes of development that is unproductive and unsustainable. As a recent Strong Towns video puts it, the root cause of our financial woes is “near rural densities with urban amenities.” Nothing hurts the provision of affordable urban amenities as badly as parking lots, which hurt water quality, climate emissions, and the likability of a place.

It is time to stop putting cars and only car users at the center of our thinking and start recognizing that our economic woes are almost entirely due to the way we build our places with cars at the center instead of amenities for all people, not just the ones who drive.

Our goal must be to make Olympia a place where everyone can participate fully in social, civic, religious, and economic life as first-class citizens without having to have a car.

People would fall over if you proposed that all developers must give all residents an electric

bike but, compared to a parking space, making developers give residents electric bikes would be far more helpful in terms of creating a cleaner city, with healthier people, and with a much more economically productive future.

Cordially,
John Gear

Let's live on the planet as if we intend to stay.

From: jhawk@gglbbs.com
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: Parking
Date: Monday, March 27, 2023 12:26:23 AM

(Joyce, I tried sending this email to you TWICE....it was returned twice. I had to do quite some sleuthing to finally find that your address was *wrong* at the bottom of the page in the email you sent out entitled "Residential parking proposal comment period extended", on 3/23/23. Here:

Contact

Joyce Phillips, AICP, Principal Planner
Community Planning & Development
360.570.3722
jphilip@ci.olympia.wa.us

That sure makes it hard to get a letter to a lead planner.
Is that how all your letters are signed?
Hope this reaches you...please confirm.)

Joyce, planners, and City Council....

Unlike many of my fellow residents who feel that downtown Olympia is a dangerous, predatory, or at the very least--a challenging environment to negotiate--I have spent years trying to encourage that if we don't support downtown businesses, arts, and events...we can't expect things to get any better.

I've attended classes and meetings at the Olympia Center for nearly 20 years, and continue to do so currently. I attend theater at Harlequin, shows at WA Center, readings at Browser's books, shop at the Farmer's Market, and can usually be found downtown each week at the Capitol Theater.

I bank there, I shop there, I eat and drink there every week. I have friends who own businesses there, and I make it a point to support all things 'downtown'.

But I can no longer find a place TO PARK.

I drive around at length for blocks and blocks, further and further from my destination.

To get downtown, I do not have the option to use the bus service because even though I live in the core of the city--next to OHS--there is only ONE bus that runs quite infrequently anywhere near my home...and it does NOT go downtown. I would need to transfer at Tumwater Square, after a wait, onto another bus to get there...and I live literally only a couple miles from downtown.

That's during the day--at night, the service ends by 8 or 9pm....less on weekends.

Olympia does NOT have a vibrant or serviceable transit system.

It does NOT serve the city in any way remotely similar to Portland or Seattle, or other urban areas which have changed their parking requirements to allow little or no parking with newer development.

They do that, as Olympia now wants to....claiming that transit will serve these residents' needs, so there is little or no need for parking.

There is some traction for truth in these larger cities which have fast & efficient & frequent bus service, light rail, metro, streetcars, and other means of transport.

Olympia does not even have a decent bus service.

I haven't seen the DASH in years, and there are few of us in the city who can get anywhere we would want to go on the bus.

I'd love to, I'd use it...but it's impossible.

If people in Olympia need to get to work, to school, to an appointment, to a Dr., want to frequent downtown, or get anywhere....

WE MUST HAVE A CAR.

I'm guessing upwards of 95% of Olympians do.

Have you done the research on this, before proposing drastically lower parking requirements??

If people still need a car to get around...where are they

supposed to park in this new suggested scenario??

Parking downtown has quickly become a hot mess.

It has been consumed by the quick increase in large downtown 'multi-family' complexes (a strange name given to housing which by its very nature--does not house many families at all).

I now have to walk many blocks in the dark at 9:30 at night after my ceramics class at the Oly Center, because there is never parking anymore at the free lot across the street from the Center.

You know, the one which was designed to serve people who take classes at the Oly Center....?

Why?

Because the folx in the new nearby apartment and condo buildings have discovered that great free parking. It's free from 4:30pm until the city would start any ticketing the next day at 10am....perfect for these downtown dwellers when they come home to roost each evening.

There is ALREADY INADEQUATE PARKING DOWNTOWN, yet you're suggesting encouraging this situation to get much worse.

Diamond lots are prohibitively priced, and the new residents downtown aren't using them...they're using the free spots on the street, and in the free City lots.

It's then incredibly frustrating to see the City walking into illusionary magical thinking, in which cars are still completely needed to get anywhere in Thurston County, but you're considering housing which will need zero to little parking included.

WE SIMPLY ARE NOT READY FOR THAT in this region. The city has not provided the needed transport for such. This is the reality.

I haven't even mentioned new housing in close-in neighborhoods and the chaos this will create for the already pressured street parking in those neighborhoods.

Olympia cannot put the cart before the horse.

Please reconsider before you create a worse mess for those of us who work hard to frequent downtown with our business and leisure, and who deserve to find parking when we come.

Reconsider before you create neighborhoods where residents cannot find a spot to park in front of their own homes, duplexes, or apartments.

Thank you~
Janine Lindsey
Olympia

Joyce Phillips

From: David Ginther
Sent: Monday, March 27, 2023 8:09 AM
To: Joyce Phillips
Subject: FW: Parking around apartment complexes

-----Original Message-----

From: Susan Zemek <zemeks@comcast.net>
Sent: Saturday, March 25, 2023 6:54 PM
To: David Ginther <dginther@ci.olympia.wa.us>
Subject: Parking around apartment complexes

Hi David,

I'm writing to express my concern about a proposal before the planning commission to exempt some apartments from providing parking. Please share this with them. No need to send me a response.

I am opposed to requiring no parking with new apartment complexes on arterials with transit service. While I applaud the plan to build denser housing and to find a way to incentivize it, to assume that the tenants won't have cars is faulty. What will end up happening is that the tenants will end up parking in the surrounding neighborhoods, making them even more undesirable. I assume that new apartments don't have to provide parking spaces for every tenant already, so maybe lessening the amount required is incentive enough. The neighbors shouldn't have to bear the full consequences so developers can make more money.

Susan Zemek
360-259-5138
zemeks@comcast.net

From: [Andy Barenberg](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Cc: [CityCouncil](#)
Subject: Parking Requirements
Date: Monday, March 27, 2023 9:44:38 AM

I am a resident of Olympia and a professor of economics at St. Martin's University. I am writing to support changes that would lower parking requirements.

Donald Shoup's estimates show that requiring parking spaces increases the cost of housing by up to 15%. This requirement can also make denser housing impossible on most lots and further increase housing prices. With a housing crisis in Olympia, we need to encourage more construction of affordable housing. Lower-income households are less likely to own cars and generally own fewer cars than wealthier households. Forcing developers to create parking spaces that their residents do not need prevents the creation of affordable housing for working-class Olympians.

The argument is often made that off-street parking is necessary to keep cars off the streets. However, adding off-street parking actually leads to more cars on the streets. A study of San Francisco housing lotteries found that families allocated to housing with parking owned more cars and drove more.

In order to meet the needs of working-class Olympians, provide affordable housing, and transition to more sustainable and less car-dependent transportation, we must do away with parking requirements

From: [Marg We](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: Parking codes
Date: Monday, March 27, 2023 12:14:10 PM

Ms. Phillips—I have been following the discussion of the Proposed Residential Parking Code Amendments. I do not believe that Olympia has the correct population demographics or infrastructure to have success with reduced parking requirements. I am 70 years old and live in a fairly walkable neighborhood on Olympia's westside with good access to several bus routes, but cannot imagine life without a car. I do take public transportation when it is time efficient, like going downtown. But further trips, like going to St. Peter's Hospital area services, are not really feasible on public transportation. Even if I were to move downtown, I would still want my own car. Many, many things would have to change before our culture is ready to live with less access to cars, and therefore, parking. Very few people I know here in Olympia do not have a car and most of my friends are environmentally conscious and many (including me) have changed over to electric or hybrid vehicles. Many of us who are older are not ready to trade in our cars for bicycles, walking long distances, or maneuvering bulky packages on a bus. And I can imagine that families with children are even more car reliant than many of us. I don't think that the attitude that making parking inaccessible will force people to give up having cars. We're just not there yet and many other things have to change first. I see it as wishful thinking on the part of the Planning Commission that reduced parking would benefit the citizens and businesses of Olympia.

Thank you for considering my comments. Margaret Wehrle

From: [ibehatch](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: Parking
Date: Monday, March 27, 2023 1:48:44 PM

What is being proposed in this bill will cause undo hardship on tenants and homeowners.

PLEASE vote this bill down !!!

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows

From: [Tracey Harbert](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: residential parking code amendments comment
Date: Monday, March 27, 2023 3:45:00 PM

Hi Joyce,

I'd like to add my comment on this issue.

Overall, I am not in favor of the amendment to decrease parking spaces. Particularly, I am against decreasing the required parking spaces for townhomes/duplexes/triplexes. Without being part of a comprehensive plan (better public transport, creation of villages with nearby grocery/restaurants and schools, requiring owner occupied ownership, etc), I think this amendment only benefits developers who can make more money by building more units and will leave owner occupants and tenants still paying a large sum of money for a home in a location that still requires them to drive to get where they need to go. For an example, please look at the plans that have been proposed for 1515 Middle St. The plan includes many pricey multiroom units but has difficulty providing parking spaces, lacks green space, would have traffic that is bothersome to the existing neighborhoods, and is in a location that still needs people to drive to get to work and grocery stores.

I am all for affordable denser housing, but it has to be done correctly so people can still maintain quality of life.

Thank you to the city planners for their efforts on this.

Tracey

From: [Tracey Harbert](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: residential parking code amendments comment
Date: Monday, March 27, 2023 3:45:00 PM

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Thank you to the city planners for their efforts on this.

Tracey

From: [Ehren & Ariana](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Cc: [Cheng Mayorga](#)
Subject: Vote Yes - Residential Parking Proposed Code Amendments
Date: Monday, March 27, 2023 8:40:03 PM

Good evening Ms. Phillip.

We are Ehren Cheng and Ariana Mayorga, and we currently live in a single family home at State and Central. We believe that increasing housing availability will make housing more affordable for all, even if that means less parking area. We all could benefit from denser living and a better public transit network.

We vote yes to the proposed parking amendments to remove barriers to construct more housing.

Sincerely,
Ehren and Ariana

From: [Anna Schlecht](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Cc: [CityCouncil](#)
Subject: Olympia's Proposed Revision of Parking Requirements
Date: Tuesday, March 28, 2023 8:34:02 AM

Greetings!

I'm writing to register **my strong support for the proposed changes to the City's parking requirements**. These changes will help to promote critically needed housing by right-sizing the required number of parking places. This is one of many changes needed to increase the housing stock and to keep the costs affordable to low & moderate income people.

We are living examples of the people who would benefit from such changes: we are keen to build another home on our lot to accommodate others in need of housing - a reduced parking requirement would greatly improve the overall design and would also keep the costs down. As LGBTQ seniors, we have many friends our age who are desperately in need of housing, we hope to be able to provide that in the most cost effective way.

When we first bought this place back in 1978, we intentionally picked a spot only half a block from a bus stop, a couple blocks away from a grocery with a pharmacy (Ralph's), a park (Lions Park) and our kids were delighted to grow up a few doors down from Eastside Big Tom's. More recently, our neighborhood's food offerings have expanded to include Left Bank Patisserie and rumor has it that a Vic's Pizzeria will go in across State Avenue in the old radio station. In short, we live quite happily with little need for a car.

In the decades we've been here, we've appreciated the walkability of the neighborhood as have our children, now grown & gone. As we age in place, we deeply appreciate living with a greatly reduced need for cars. Most of our trips are by foot or carpool (except of course for using the truck for painting projects - but that is a different story).

We urge you to press ahead on this proposed reduction of the parking requirement. And then onward to consider other changes to make it easier to increase the gentle density of neighborhoods like ours. As the sign says, we indeed are "**neighbors for more neighbors**".

Thanks & keep up the great work!

--

Anna Schlecht
annaschlecht@gmail.com
(360) 402-0170

From: [John Johnston](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: Parking Comments
Date: Tuesday, March 28, 2023 8:34:41 AM

Conflicted. Transit system functions as feeder system to transit centers. Not time friendly to take multiple points. Do like it from where I live because I can reach downtown, Fred Meyer lacey, AMTRAK. Use car when need to go to Tumwater or Medical at Hawks Prairie Lacey.

I can see street parking being an issue under proposal especially many areas of Olympia have narrow streets. Also can see demand for long term parking lots defeating the concept of land availability.

At this time I would prefer to see requirement for parking to be built under a multifamily building with requirement of 1 space per unit.

Maintain other current requirements pending review of transit patterns to improve usage of public transit.

John Johnston

From: [Ben Welna](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: Residential Parking Code Amendment Comment
Date: Tuesday, March 28, 2023 9:46:56 AM

Good Morning,

I am an Olympia resident writing in support of the proposed amendment to the residential parking code. Reducing the amount of required parking will provide more space for housing, make public transit more accessible, reduce traffic, and encourage use of public transportation. Adopting the proposed amendment will mean more space for cyclists and pedestrians in our public spaces. This will make multi modal transit safer and more accessible, and reduce air pollution and carbon emissions from personal vehicles.

Thanks,

Ben Welna

From: rmvanderpool7@gmail.com
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: RE: Residential Parking Minimums (public comment)
Date: Tuesday, March 28, 2023 3:50:59 PM
Attachments: [Getting There.pdf](#)

Good Afternoon,

I spent a little time thinking about this parking situation and wrote out some thought for the Planning Commission.

Attached is a quick 600 word argument for why the parking changes should and ought to occur.

Thanks again,

Robert Vanderpool

Getting There: Building for the Future

By Robert Vanderpool

Imagine the community you would like to live in, or better yet what types of communities you'd like to experience. I, personally, think of Allan Jacob's 1993 book *Great Streets*. Jacob included a variety of masterful neighborhood street renders from all over the world. Some streets are centuries old, and some include street parking. What makes these streets great is the history and community presence of each. Each street includes closeness, walkability, and safety. People on foot become the top priority in our hierarchy of needs. Places built for people first.

We must consider all decisions with people first, yet growth and prosperity isn't easy. We must consider people of all ages and backgrounds. To me this means all forms of transportation improving requiring street design flexibility and variety. Olympia, today, rarely has more than apartments and detached single family homes. Land is not cheap and is limited. If we want a vibrant fabric, we are going to need to make changes: limits on parking, zoning, congestion pricing, road diets, protected bicycle infrastructure, and density. Without these changes the streets will only be available to a few and fewer in the future.

Cities Most Grow

Cities are economic engines where people gather, growth, live, and die. Any city that doesn't grow, eventually dies. Furthermore, we don't own our cities ad infinitum. I have no claim to the land my ancestors purchased and stole. They, like myself, have no claim on what comes next. This is why the city is for new generations. Jeff Speck in his 2012 book *Walkable City* expresses the need for and the methods at which we can make cities more accessible through the focus on walkability. Speck expressed "the pent-up demand for walkable urban development..." and that "it will be a boon ... out of a foundation under the American economy for decades..." (Pg 23) We must consider where city growth is gaining traction. We must ask what type of community does the youth want? What features are important to a generation that drives less.

The Chicken & the Egg.

Our current cycle of arguments seems to rely on parking and public transportation. Intercity Transit's Strategic Plan Executive Summary states that the transit system is limited to either more routes or more frequent services. We need density along main corridors to develop transit. Transit needs to be worth the cost of admission. We cannot build a high-speed rapid transit system under our current conditions. The cost benefit analysis says build closer.

The main opposition to limited new parking in new developments derives from the lack of proper transit frequency. This would be a legitimate concern if Olympia was banning and eliminating current parking. If the city began removing miles of current parking. It would be a concern to many who are not multimodal or live outside of transit accessibility. I have good news for you, even in the densest European cities, some people still own and drive cars. People just don't have to drive. This zoning change only limits it future developments. That means parking will become more limited over a long period of time. Seattle has a higher population than Olympia, with much less available parking per

person than Olympia. Yet, Seattle is doing fine because rather than focusing on the cost and maintenance associated with cars, they can afford to focus on transportation, bike lanes, and sidewalks. All I ask is that we can consider the optimistic opportunity we can have by focusing on community.

From: earthographer2014@icloud.com
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: Proposed Code Amendments on Parking
Date: Tuesday, March 28, 2023 4:37:01 PM

This household is opposed to the code amendments stated in the March 2023 digital flyer and public hearing draft as they apply to reducing required parking per unit for either single family homes or multi-family apartments.

We have lived in Cyrene since 2016. It is a 100 unit sub-division approved in 2008 with 30 townhouses and 70 single family houses, located within ¼ mi of transit. However, the design required by the city gave us very narrow streets and extraordinarily limited on street parking.

The reality of living in this constrained parking community makes life more difficult than a more thoughtful design would have permitted:

- 1) single family homes have 2 car garages but most only can park 2 vehicles in the driveway.
- 2) as we have neither attics nor cellars, garages typically serve out of necessity as long term storage space rather than for parking.
- 3) if one vehicle is a pick-up truck they often overflow onto the sidewalks because our garages are too small to park a pick-up truck inside.
- 4) In a 3 or 4 bedroom home, when the owner has adult roommates or the home is a rental with adult roommates (approximately 10% of our single family homes are rentals; all of the 30 townhouses are rentals) parking is needed for 4 vehicles. These includes oddly sized “work” trucks and vans as attested by visible logos on the vehicles.
- 5) most homes and townhouses have no place for visitors, maintenance trucks, service vehicles, or delivery vans to either park or pull over to reduce street blockage. We had at least one incident during SuperBowl Sunday 2023 where an emergency vehicle could not operate properly as overflow parking occurred illegally in the cul-de-sac. Parking enforcement informed residents of this after the fact, as (after years of asking) they began showing up and ticketing. But they don’t tend to come on weekends or evenings when people are more likely to socialize and have company who arrive by private vehicles not transit.
- 6) Garbage collection services make moving through the streets difficult and many households place their collection cans in the street despite the efforts of the Homeowners Association.
- 7) Communities where there is a preponderance of rentals (40%+ of this subdivision) results in a great deal of moving-in and moving-out. These “moving” vehicles require physical space to park, though at Cyrene they are forced to completely block a street.

8) there is no safe temporary parking “pullout for the delivery or retrieval of mail from community mailbox locations.

The Proposed Amendment description “being by transit” creates a false narrative of our needs for mobility. During the Pandemic use of public transit halted or was severely truncated for some time as we adapted to social distancing. Some people had to give up public transit because of their high risk if they got Covid. This can happen again.

People need parking for company work vehicles along with their private cars. People need a place to plug in their Electric Vehicles. People work at places not readily accessible to transit, even at ¼ mile .

They need a vehicle for grocery shopping and carrying heavy purchases home. Try walking ¼ mile with a baby in a stroller, a 4 year old and 2 bags of groceries. Make sure you must cross a busy street like Cooper Point without a safe cross walk in order to get to your home as well.

If we have another large earthquake, vehicles can provide critical temporary shelter as we await emergency services or are required to relocate while response and reconstruction occurs.

While property developers would typically like to have fewer parking spaces to fit in more development and make more money in the short term, this does not mean the future users find the development functional.

It is suggested that less rubber stamping of “cookie-cutter” site design for residential development will create functional housing while meeting parking needs under the CURRENT provisions of Chapter 18.38.

While planning to meet a need for affordable housing is commendable, the City of Olympia should not become the self-appointed primary provider of such housing in Thurston County. We are geographically constrained by water, Tumwater/ Lacey boundaries and our stormwater drainage needs. Please consider the difficulties the residents of Cyrene experience daily because of a utopian ideal of getting people out of motor vehicles and onto transit.

submitted by: Judith A. Cichowicz M.S.
2615 Placid Ave NW
Olympia WA 98502

From: [Cary Westerbeck](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#); [CityCouncil](#)
Subject: Housing Action Plan, section 3i - parking reductions
Date: Tuesday, March 28, 2023 10:15:36 PM

Greetings, Olympia planning commissioners and city council,

I'm a planning commissioner (City of Bothell), and we are also working on housing and zoning code amendments, currently preparing to pass a middle housing code section we've worked on since fall of 2021, which includes parking reductions. As an architect and small developer it's hard to overstate how damaging parking mandates are to getting needed housing built. We research what we can park on a site, then we figure out what we can build. Parking is the tail that wags the dog. When we require dedicated on site parking we're prioritizing parking cars over housing people, and that's not right.

On the vast majority of housing projects, parking mandates **reduce** the number of homes dramatically. I have projects on the boards or completed that are four units that could've been twelve; six units that could've been twenty-four, with more like this that were planned but couldn't pencil out due to parking. Parking mandates kill much-needed projects on paper every day and most lawmakers have no idea how problematic they are.

Dr. Donald Shoup of UCLA has devoted his entire career to the study of parking and is now well known for his work. He wrote the 750 page book "The High Cost of Free Parking." He is quick to remind everyone that there is absolutely NO science behind parking mandates or minimums. Whether it's spots per bowling alley, or spots per cafe square footage, it's all arbitrary.

Developers and project owners are keenly aware of how much parking they need to make a project work. There is no need to mandate this. Free cities and counties of this ridiculous burden and the hubris that they know how much parking is needed. Parking mandates are hollowing out our downtowns, filled with massive parking lots that separate shops, services, and homes, making everyone drive more, and more car-dependent. Perhaps most importantly, they drive up the cost of housing construction significantly, and severely limit the number of homes that can be built on a site. Excessive mandated parking in turn causes air pollution, increased climate warming, increased traffic and congestion, and increased traffic violence. Nothing good comes from parking mandates, only problems.

The time of parking mandates and minimums is over, a damaging 20th c. relic. They have created nothing but problems, denuded our downtowns, driven up costs, polluted our air and streets, and taken away the ability to realize the highest and best use of countless properties. They are a scourge and cannot be eliminated fast enough. As you consider strategy 3i in your Housing Action Plan, I urge you to be bold in reducing or eliminating parking mandates if you want to see your city build more housing of all types. I guarantee it makes a difference.

Thank you for your consideration,

Cary Westerbeck

westerbeck|architecture llc

18234 98th AVE NE APT 301
Bothell, WA 98011
e: cary@westerbeckarchitecture.com
w: www.westerbeckarchitecture.com
p: 206.941.2163

From: [Julian](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: housing plan
Date: Tuesday, March 28, 2023 11:12:35 PM

get rid of parking, build as much dense housing as possible, get rid of the zoning laws. Olympia needs to develop if it wants to grow and nimbys are only getting in the way. I want to see apartment blocks going up. Also, why dont we have the sounder here yet? we are the capitol. the amtrak stop is already there. Just extend the service please.
Julian

From: [John Gear](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Cc: [CityCouncil](#)
Subject: Re: Parking Minimums Proposal
Date: Tuesday, March 28, 2023 5:56:47 PM

Please also share this great short video about the salutary effect of eliminating parking minima:



City of Olympia staff added this text box so the link address could be added:
<https://youtu.be/vUhOFUQDLQk>

On Mar 26, 2023, at 17:45, John Gear <gearjm@gmail.com> wrote:

Hello,

I STRONGLY support the staff recommendation on parking for multifamily housing.

Actually, I support something more aggressive — make the current minimum parking rule into a maximum, and eliminate the idea of mandated parking minimums in Olympia entirely.

As Prof. Douglas Shoup has shown again and again, including in his monumental book “The High Cost of Free Parking,” the minimum amount of parking to provide is a decision that should be left to the market, not to bureaucrats applying tables that have no basis in research or economic testing.

I am shocked to see that Olympia would be proposing to permit even more surface parking than is allowed today.

We have such a huge oversupply of parking in Olympia, meanwhile we have a terrible shortage of housing for people. Ultimately, those two things are intimately related — the more parking we require, the more unaffordable our housing becomes, while at the same time we make driving alternatives more difficult for people, because we’ve spread out to accommodate all that parking.

We are every day experiencing the negative economic and environmental consequences of centering automobiles rather than people in our development patterns, and parking minimums only aggravate every one of our problems.

Housing is becoming completely unaffordable to a greater and greater share of people, and yet we're proposing to force developers to burden residents with the costs of parking, even when they would otherwise use the money to provide housing for people.

The current regional fire authority proposal is just another sign that we have bankrupted ourselves in the S. Sound region with an unproductive development pattern that doesn't pay its own way, and parking is one of the greatest causes of development that is unproductive and unsustainable. As a recent Strong Towns video puts it, the root cause of our financial woes is "near rural densities with urban amenities." Nothing hurts the provision of affordable urban amenities as badly as parking lots, which hurt water quality, climate emissions, and the likability of a place.

It is time to stop putting cars and only car users at the center of our thinking and start recognizing that our economic woes are almost entirely due to the way we build our places with cars at the center instead of amenities for all people, not just the ones who drive.

Our goal must be to make Olympia a place where everyone can participate fully in social, civic, religious, and economic life as first-class citizens without having to have a car.

People would fall over if you proposed that all developers must give all residents an electric bike but, compared to a parking space, making developers give residents electric bikes would be far more helpful in terms of creating a cleaner city, with healthier people, and with a much more economically productive future.

Cordially,
John Gear

Let's live on the planet as if we intend to stay.

Let's live on the planet as if we intend to stay.

From: [Mike McCormick](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Cc: [CityCouncil](#); [Leonard Bauer](#)
Subject: Olympia's Proposed Revisions of Parking Requirements
Date: Wednesday, March 29, 2023 7:33:46 PM

I am writing to support the adoption of the proposed changes to the city's parking requirements.

No single action is going to solve our housing affordability problems; nor meet our sustainability goals or fully address our climate change challenges. The proposed changes to our parking requirements will contribute to our overall progress on these issues. While I would go further and allow zero parking in all our residential zones, reducing the minimum in our multifamily zones will be a big improvement. Financing for housing is complicated. Reducing parking will potentially reduce the overall cost of all new projects. Developers have the flexibility to build what they determine to be required to make a project feasible. Information provided during the development of this proposal indicated that the average amount of parking on our multifamily projects is 0.7 spaces per unit.

I do want to speak about the opposition we are seeing to these proposals. These folks sound passionate in their opposition. I can understand that. And they are familiar voices against other recent changes to our plans and regulations. They are uncomfortable with change. They fear how their neighborhoods will evolve—preferring no change. That might be fine, if it weren't for the challenges we face. Finding solutions that make folks comfortable won't get us where we need to get. We need to embrace some discomfort and lengthen our reach. These changes won't bring immediate changes many fear. The changes will be incremental and accrue over time. We can monitor the results as they occur and can make future adjustments, if needed.

We need bold steps. These changes are really quite small. They will make a difference. Please do the right thing and recommend the proposed changes to the city council.

Thank you.

Mike McCormick
360.754.2916

From: [Luke Bowerman](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Cc: [CityCouncil](#)
Subject: Support of Reducing Minimum Parking Requirements to Accommodate More Housing
Date: Saturday, April 01, 2023 7:27:58 PM

I am writing to express my support for reducing minimum parking requirements and specifically the city staff's most recent recommendation (on March 20th) to accommodate more housing. As our city continues to grow and housing becomes increasingly unaffordable, it is imperative that we take action to address this issue.

One of the main barriers to building more housing is the cost of providing parking. Minimum parking requirements can add significant costs to housing developments, making it harder for developers to build affordable units. By reducing or eliminating these requirements, we can help to lower the cost of building housing and increase the supply of affordable units.

In addition, reducing parking requirements can also have positive environmental impacts. Less parking means fewer cars on the road, which can lead to reduced greenhouse gas emissions and improved air quality. It can also free up valuable space for other uses, such as parks, bike lanes, and public transit.

I urge you to consider the benefits of reducing minimum parking requirements and support policies that promote more affordable housing and sustainable communities.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,

Luke Bowerman



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Olympia, WA 98506

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Fax: 360.754.7448

Serving:
Thurston, Lewis, Grays Harbor,
Pacific, and Mason Counties

April 3, 2023

City of Olympia Planning Commission
Attn: Joyce Phillips, Staff Liaison
601 4th Ave E
Olympia, WA 98507

Re: OMB Support for Removal of Minimum Parking Requirements in Olympia's Housing Action Plan

Dear Commissioners:

Olympia master Builders (OMB) represents nearly 500 members who seek to provide affordable housing for all economic segments of society. Our community, as well as our entire state, is suffering from a lack of housing. More specifically, we are suffering from a lack of housing options at every economic level. The largest element of this crisis that we can control are development costs. That is why at Olympia Master Builders we believe that the removal of parking minimums is one piece of solving the housing puzzle.

OMB applauds city staff for the inclusion of this idea in the city's Housing Action Plan, and we believe removing minimum parking requirements should remain an element of the plan. We understand there are concerns around neighborhood traffic and residential parking, but we would like to remind others that the purpose of removing minimum parking requirements is to reduce the cost of building housing and that is the most immediate and visible crisis in our community. Providing parking can cost anywhere from \$30,000 to \$60,000 per space. That adds to the cost of development, which adds to the end cost to the consumer and can add to rents. And every \$1,000 added to the cost of housing translates to 2,200 families being priced out of the housing market. Therefore, the decision we are ultimately making here is whether we want to see more people in tents and on our streets, while an inanimate object has a parking space for the night.

Furthermore, there have been no minimum off-street parking requirements in the downtown corridor for some time. And many would agree we are seeing a resurgence of the popularity of downtown Olympia with housing and business beginning to take hold in the area once again. And there is parking still. No minimum doesn't mean that developers do not provide any parking, it just means that the market decides how much parking is necessary. Developers understand that a percentage of folks will still need parking, and they have been consistent with providing what is needed. Parking reductions have been implemented in now thriving

Serving Thurston, Lewis, Grays Harbor, Pacific and Mason Counties

cities across the country, and some communities have even eliminated parking requirements entirely when close to adequate public transit. Communities are realizing that people need shelter and not always a place for a vehicle.

Finally, as previously mentioned, OMB's stated mission is to provide affordable housing for all economic segments of society. Unfortunately, our state is currently failing at this mission. One might only look out their window as they traverse the city streets and see the evidence of that failure. Thus, it is not only our mission, but our responsibility and yours to utilize every tool and idea available to reduce the cost of housing. We can start with simple fixes to the local regulatory process for building and remove minimum parking requirements where feasible. Simple acts like this could mean that instead of only adding 300 new doors to our community like we did last year, we can get closer to the 700 per year that are really needed.

In addition to our letter of support, we suggest reading the following peer-reviewed article from the American Planning Association "People Over Parking":

<https://planning.org/planning/2018/oct/peopleoverparking/>

For further information or questions please contact our Government Affairs Director, Jessie Simmons, at ga@omb.org or (360)754-0912 ext. 102.

Sincerely,



Jessie Simmons
Government Affairs Director
Olympia Master Builders

From: [CityCouncil](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: FW: Lots to Lose, by Henry Grabar
Date: Monday, April 03, 2023 11:22:33 AM

Per our Jabber conversation....

Dawn R Carvalho

Executive Services Assistant
Email: dcarvalh@ci.olympia.wa.us
Phone: 360.753.8065

From: John Gear <gearjm@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, April 1, 2023 7:45 PM
To: CityCouncil <citycouncil@ci.olympia.wa.us>
Subject: Lots to Lose, by Henry Grabar

One more to share on parking —

<https://harpers.org/archive/2023/04/henry-grabar-paved-paradise/?apcid=0060f5c4aeb5b5bba4864700>

From Paved Paradise, which will be published next month by Penguin Press.

Parking psychosis is a regular feature of American life. The former NFL safety T. J. Cunningham was killed over a parking dispute at a Denver-area high school. In Las Vegas, Shane Pacada died of a bullet to the chest in a fight over a parking space. In the suburbs of Washington, D.C., a man was charged with attempted murder for shooting a neighbor who had parked in his spot. Twenty-eight-year-old Thomas Rodriguez was killed in Dallas after an argument over a parking spot. All of this took place in February 2019.

These fits of rage are eruptions of a common urge that is also shared by non-homicidal drivers. They are expressions of the same fear that rises into view anytime our parking comes under threat, whether it's in the neighborhood lot or at the curb in front of your house. It's not hard to grasp what makes parking a fixation: without a place to park, you can never get out of the car. A parking space is nothing less than the link between driving and life itself, the nine-by-eighteen-foot portal beyond which lies whatever you got in the car to do in the first place. Every car trip must begin and end with a parking space, and in no uncertain terms. Whoever said life was about the journey and not the destination clearly never had to look for a place to park.

I once missed an entire summer afternoon at the beach because I refused to pay for parking. While I hunted for a spot, my passengers (wisely) took the ferry without me. We expect parking to be immediately available, directly in front of our destination, and most importantly, free. It would be unimaginable to hold any other good or service to the same standard.

But the forces of time, space, and money conspire in such a way that no thriving place can meet more than two of these three needs. Free and convenient but not easily available? That's street parking in any big-city neighborhood. Convenient and available but not free? That's the ferryboat parking lot I left in a huff. Free and available but not convenient? That's where I parked when I missed the boat. It is the expectation and pursuit of all three parking qualities that leads us into parking psychosis.

Let's live on the planet as if we intend to stay.

Let's live on the planet as if we intend to stay.

[\[Readings\]](#)

Lots to Lose

by [Henry Grabar](#)

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Many of us have brushed against the threat that undergirds a parking claim. In Hawaii, you might see a spot marked with an upside-down bucket labeled "kapu," a word borrowed from the ancient Hawaiian system of rules governing forbidden acts. Kapu violations are no longer capital offenses, but still worth taking seriously. In Chicago, "dibs" is in effect after a snowstorm, the implements of which might include a chair, a piano bench, a wheelchair, and all manner of nativity figurines. In my head I've always imagined the message is that you or your car might be attacked with the object being used to save the space.

The significance we assign to good parking in our personal lives is surpassed only by our ignorance of its systemic consequences. Parking is integral to the way things work and yet persistently overlooked. It determines the size, shape, and cost of new buildings, the fate of old ones, the patterns of traffic, the viability of mass transit, the life of public space, the character of neighborhoods, the state of the city budget: in short, every aspect of our spread-out environments in which it is virtually impossible to live without an automobile. In our quest to make it as easy as possible to park we've

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The need for a perfect parking space has shaped the country's physical landscape. It has become the organizing principle of American architecture, making our designs bigger, uglier, and farther apart, from the parking-first design of the strip mall, to office towers sitting atop their garage pedestals, to the house itself, in which the garage is often the largest room.

What's more, in many municipalities, there are laws requiring every building to include parking. These prevent us from creating more housing—especially affordable housing—because parking costs so much to construct and takes up so much space. If the Empire State Building had been built to the minimum parking requirements of a contemporary American city, the surface area of its parking lot would cover twelve blocks. In the Seattle area, parking makes up 10 to 20 percent of the cost of construction of multifamily buildings and drives up apartment rents by 15 percent.

Anybody who wants to build a small apartment building in the United States must first confront a multivariate financial geometry problem that begins with how many parking spaces can fit. The size, quantity, and shape of the housing follows from there. Sometimes, with just one parcel, it's hard to make anything work at all. Buy the lot next door and you could unlock some economies of scale—like a driveway with stalls on each side. Buy four and—well, most small-time developers couldn't afford four, even if they could find four adjacent properties. Parking is the immovable object at the heart of neighborhood architecture.

As a result, we have simply stopped building small buildings. Parking requirements have helped to trigger an extinction-level event for bite-size, infill apartment buildings like row houses, brownstones, and triple-deckers; the production of buildings with two to four units fell more than 90 percent between 1971 and 2021.

The apartments that do get built are clustered in megastructures whose designs are dictated by parking placement. One popular model is the "Texas donut," in which a ring of apartments encircles a five- or six-story parking garage (this is the type of building you see in the cool neighborhoods of growing cities). Another is the "parking podium," like Chicago's corn-cob Marina City, in which the housing sits atop the parking.

Requiring parking spaces is essentially levying a tax, one that drives up the cost of new homes and stops a countless number from being built at all—precisely in the neighborhoods where it is possible to live happily without a car. Parking requirements for new buildings function as a protection racket, forcing new residents to pay for something that old ones get for free on the street and do not want to share. More than half of baby boomers, a group that tends to dominate local politics, say that free parking is more important than affordable housing in their neighborhoods. This anxiety leads the way to Malthusian thinking about cities: when the impact of new neighbors is measured out in parking spaces, every place starts to look crowded.

While there are still some corners of this country where parking is worth fighting for, in most of the nation the fight was over decades ago. Parking is plentiful. The country builds more three-car garages than one-bedroom apartments. More square footage is dedicated to parking each car than to housing each person. By some estimates, there are as many as six parking spaces for every car. It is this sea of parking, in which destinations bob like distant buoys, that renders mass transit, biking, or walking difficult and dangerous.

The grayness of a city where it's easy to park is embedded in the word *parking* itself, which once referred to the patches of greenery, tiny parks, that sprang up curbside. Now it describes the opposite: the lifeless blacktop. Our cities are full of moonscapes used to store cars. In Los Angeles County, parking now occupies two hundred square miles of land. As a single parking lot it would form a square of asphalt stretching from LAX to Sherman Oaks to Pasadena to Downey. Or, for non-locals, a three-story garage the size of Washington, D.C. And this in a place where people routinely complain about how hard it is to find parking.

A world that wasn't organized around parking would allow us to find our feet. It seems clear that most people would like to be able to leave the car behind once in a while. One reason that Americans retain such nostalgia for college is that it was the only time in our lives when so much was within walking distance. We take our vacations to places where we can get out of the car—Charleston, Manhattan, Miami Beach, Rome. Housing prices reflect the desirability of such destinations, making anything but a brief stay off limits to all but a few.

Without parking baked into our streets and architecture, how many more people could live in walkable places like these? How many car-dependent places, freed from parking laws, could grow into neighborhoods where people could ride

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that world, it would be easier, not harder, to find a spot, and much easier to live in a place where you would not need to drive quite so often. Kids could walk to school and adults to the grocery store. In a world with better parking, there might be fewer places to park, but in place of those old parking spots would emerge a city so much richer and fuller and fairer that we would not think twice about the one we had lost.

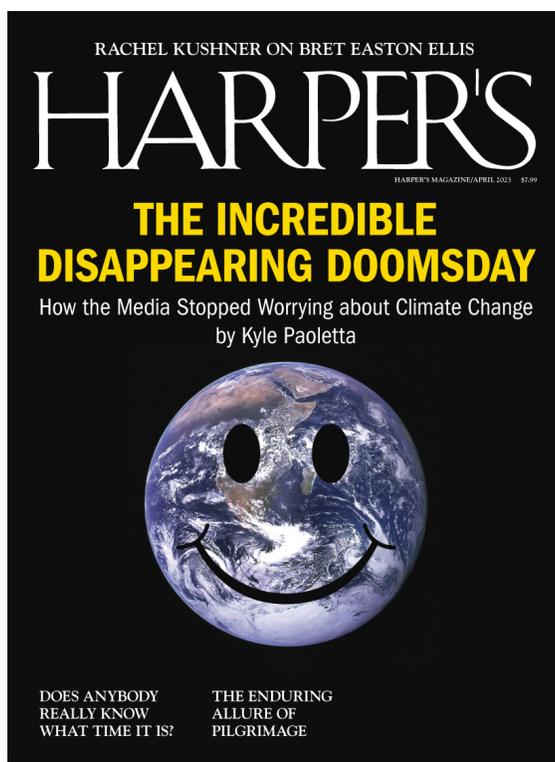
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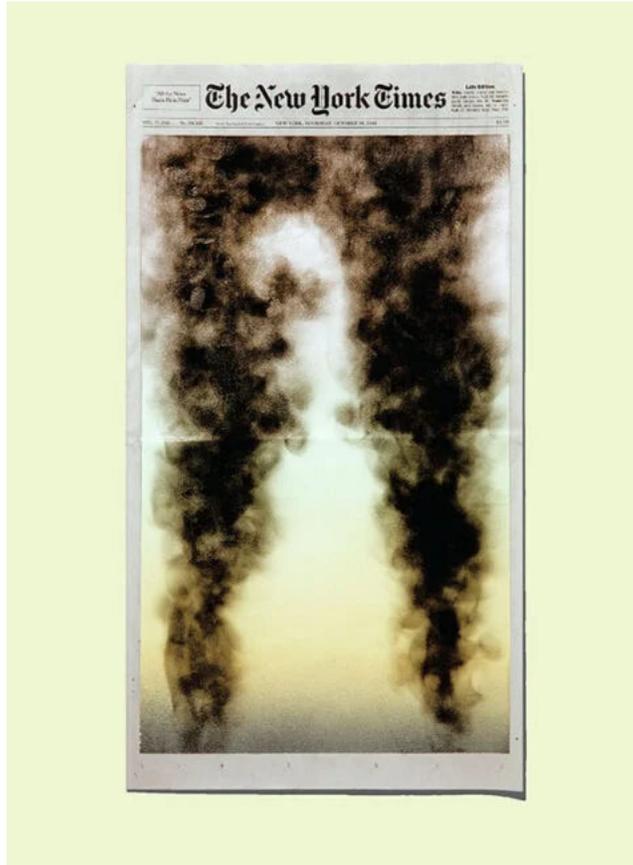
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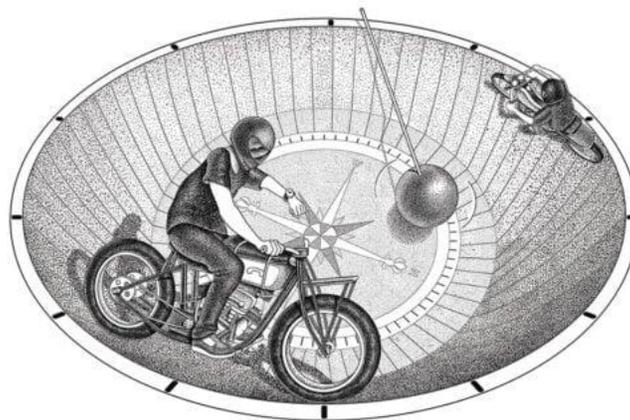


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From: [Karen Messmer](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: Comment on changes to parking requirements
Date: Monday, April 03, 2023 11:54:45 AM

Joyce - Here are my comments on the proposed parking code changes.

Karen Messmer

Members of the Planning Commission,

Changing minimum parking requirements may have merit in some locations. However, a city-wide approach could have negative consequences. A more carefully considered and targeted approach should be used. My concerns about the proposed changes to minimum parking requirements for new construction are as follows:

ADA Parking

Downtown ADA parking is already reportedly a problem. This could exacerbate the situation. Reducing or eliminating minimum parking requirements should not remove ADA parking requirements.

Safety problems with increased parking on sidewalks and in bike lanes

In neighborhoods where there is already tight street parking, I notice that people park on sidewalks and in bike lanes. You likely witness this periodically when a garage sale is being held and people park illegally along that street. This is a safety problem for people who walk and cycle. It forces them to move out onto the driving area of the street. Since the City does not enforce the regulations for parking on sidewalks and in bike lanes now, the problem could become worse.

On streets with no curbside parking, on-site parking should be available in garages and on driveways. When this does not offer enough parking, people park on sidewalks or in bike lanes. This is a safety problem and also an ADA access problem for those areas where this is common.

Specific streets where this could be made worse are those with segments without on-street parking. A few examples are Boulevard Road, 22nd Avenue SE, Division Street, Pacific Avenue, Martin Way and North Street. These happen to also be streets where there is bus service.

The Comprehensive Plan includes many goals and policies that support increased active transportation. Decreasing safety for people who walk or cycle is counter to these goals and policies.

EV Parking

EV parking is currently regulated as a percent of number of parking spaces. Reducing minimum parking requirements will fail to provide EV parking.

The state has adopted EV charging requirements and the City has adopted requirements as

well for Multifamily buildings. How will the parking regulations still require EV parking if the total requirement is reduced to zero? This situation should be addressed since the City may be in conflict with the State goals and requirements. Also, the City has adopted the Thurston Climate Action plan and eliminating EV parking is counter to the goals of that Plan.

Climate impacts are not all positive

In the analysis for this City action, there appears to be an assumption that reducing parking requirements positively supports walking, cycling and transit. If illegal parking makes walking and cycling less safe, this is not the whole story. If walking or cycling safety is made worse, this would not encourage more walking or cycling.

Also if EV charging is not provided at multifamily housing, those residents will be discouraged from purchasing or leasing an EV because of difficulty for charging. EV's can be a lower cost vehicle and this will likely be more true in the future. Relegating those who live in no-parking-provided housing to either no car or a gas car does not support affordability nor does it support climate goals.

From: [David Stowitts](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: In Support of Reducing Parking Minimums
Date: Monday, April 03, 2023 8:28:35 PM

To the Olympia Planning Commision,

Let me begin by thanking you and the entire city government for all your hard work. I know that public-facing work is often thankless, so I would like to be sure that I thank you.

I am in full support of the plan to reduce parking minimums.

Everyone has their own needs and not everyone needs a car or a parking space. Reducing parking minimums allows people who don't need parking to have a home and not have to pay for the extra space that parking would take up. Of course, people who do need a parking space will still be able to have parking. This would just take the form of them obtaining housing with included parking or them renting a space. Let people save money by only paying for what they want/need.

Thank you for your consideration. Olympia is a wonderful town and I look forward to seeing an even better Olympia tomorrow.

Regards,
David Stowitts
Olympia Resident

From: [Tom Dillon](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: Comment on Residential Parking Proposal
Date: Tuesday, April 04, 2023 8:50:47 PM

Good evening,

I apologize if this message is a duplicate. I had sent these comments previously using the email address listed on the email the city sent out on 3/23, but it appears that there was a typo (with your address listed as jphilip rather than jphillip). In any event, below are my comments about the residential parking proposal:

I am writing in support of the proposed plan to reduce minimum parking requirements. Although this proposal generally aligns with my understanding of what makes a city a great place, I wanted to share the ways that parking requirements have impacted me directly.

When my partner and I first moved here over a decade ago, our first thought was to find a condo downtown or in a walkable neighborhood. At the time we were unable to find any such units on the market that fit both our needs and our budget. So we looked to buy a house, again in a walkable neighborhood and were unable to find anything. This process continued until we eventually ended up building a house in unincorporated Thurston county. To my thinking, had the current proposal been in place prior to our search for housing, there would have been two major differences:

1. Once we realized that the best option for us was to build a house, our preference would have been to build a house within city limits. I'm not sure if reduced parking requirements would have made doing so feasible for us, but there was more than one vacant lot that we looked at and liked but couldn't quite fit the house that we wanted to build. Had the parking requirements been less restrictive it is entirely possible that we would have been able to make one of those lots work.
2. By making multi-unit housing more affordable to build, there would have been more of it, and so the chance that we would have been able to find a unit that would fit our needs would have been greater.

Either of these outcomes would have been beneficial to us, and I hope that this proposal is enacted so that people who are looking for housing in the future have better options than we had.

Finally, I have had many coworkers who do not drive and so are paying for parking spaces as part of their rent that they cannot use. This is not fair, and is especially problematic given that the people who are paying for this parking that they cannot use are often the same people who are least able to afford extra rent. If it ends up that parking minimums are not reduced, I would hope that the city would consider finding a way to compel or incentivize the unbundling of housing from parking for renters.

Thank you for your time. I appreciate that the city is working towards improving the lives of its residents (and people like me who live outside of city limits but would nonetheless benefit from increased density).

Sincerely,
Tom Dillon

From: [Roussa Cassel](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#); [CityCouncil](#)
Subject: Residential Parking Proposal
Date: Wednesday, April 05, 2023 6:52:25 PM

Dear Ms. Phillips,

I strongly support the staff recommendation on parking for multifamily housing. We need to reduce parking requirements to meet the goals of the housing action plan. As a local architect, I've seen first hand how the requirements for more parking can increase the cost of developments and doesn't improve the quality of living for anyone.

Thanks for your consideration,

Roussa

--

Roussa Cassel | T: +360.951.7903 | www.artisansgroup.com

From: [Justin Bodeutsch](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: Parking Requirements
Date: Thursday, April 06, 2023 12:58:37 AM

Hello Joyce,

I just wanted to write in to voice my support for the upcoming plans to reduce parking requirements. I expect Olympia will continue to grow and we can't afford to sprawl out more than we already are. Any short term issues caused can be solved with the other plans in the long term strategy and by increasing transit frequency. On the other hand, if we overbuild parking that is almost impossible to recover from in the future.

Thanks for your leadership on this issue.

From: janalynwiley@aol.com
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: Lack of required off street parking for
Date: Thursday, April 06, 2023 7:26:31 AM

I am writing to oppose the measure allowing new developments to not have designated parking. Many streets in Olympia will become crowded and narrowed, creating issues for first responders, People stepping out in the road to get in their cars, children who may cross the street between cars and not be seen, or pets that seek to cross the road. The lack of visibility in these situations will forever change these neighborhoods that are currently friendly to those who walk in them and live there.

I am reflecting on the 25 years that I lived in San Francisco. They too allowed for massive in fill, gentrification, without parking, straining the ability of City services such as Garbage, Medical and Fire. The City had to create parking districts with sticker systems for those who lived in them, in order to park near your apartment or home. If you moved, you needed to apply and pay for a new sticker, and wait for that to arrive in order to avoid ticketing. I suppose if a City was looking for a flow of cash then perhaps this is just another way. Just understand, as the unchecked growth in Olympia continues, Olympia will face this problem eventually. I remember walking 6-8 blocks in the last parking district that I lived in. It would take upwards of 15-20' circling around to just find a spot. I know that most do not envision this, but the current model of the Missing Middle moves Olympia away from single dwellings to higher density.

One last comment on the above paragraph. We currently do not have enough hospital capacity, ER capacity, Physicians, nurses, firemen, and schools for the ballooning population Olympia is building towards. The annual increases in property taxes, to support this growth, is levied on fixed income seniors living here, and new young home buyers, is untenable and regressive.

Jana Wiley
age 69

From: [Tim Koehler](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: Parking restrictions
Date: Thursday, April 06, 2023 7:54:04 AM

I want to go on record against any change in reducing the parking restrictions in neighborhoods especially in the NE neighborhood. We have been struggling with dozens of cars parking on streets where there physically is no Legal Parking. They block traffic, degrade right-away and block access to privately owned homes. This also affects the value of homes in a negative way.

Tim Koehler
Garrison St NE
Olympia, Wa

From: [jnewman](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: New Parking Rules for Multi-Family Housing
Date: Thursday, April 06, 2023 8:38:36 AM

The idea of eliminating a parking requirement for multi-family housing is a very bad idea. Families with children have a car and they need to park the car. Electric vehicles need a space to charge the electric car. Eliminating parking is a burden of low income people. Their jobs change and cannot use a consistent bus service. In a way, eliminating parking is a bit cruel for lower wage people. There must be a 1 car requirement for each apartment in multi-family housing. Olympia resident of 30 years.
John Newman. Olympia. WA. 360-956-0254

From: [Rae Eaton](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: Public comment on minimum parking
Date: Thursday, April 06, 2023 1:24:40 PM

Hello,

I'm writing in support of removing the minimum parking requirements for housing in Olympia.

I'm a relatively young homeowner in SE Olympia, and I'm very concerned that lack of housing (especially middle housing like triplexes and 4 plexus) is keeping people my age from owning homes and is pushing more and more of my neighbors out of their homes due to rising rents. I understand that many of my neighbors are nervous about how removing requirements may decrease parking available on streets, but I don't think we should let that worry stop us from removing barriers to building housing. Also, I hope the city will see this as an opportunity to increase public transit and biking and walking infrastructure.

Thank you for your time,
Rae Eaton

Voice Mail Message Regarding Proposed Parking Code Amendments

Received Thursday, April 6, 2023, at 4:18 p.m.

Hello, Joyce. My name is Bonnie Knutson. My phone number is 360.XXX.XX45. I'm calling to give comment before Friday at noon regarding parking in our neighborhood and how incredibly difficult it is to find parking with the zoning the way it is. So, again, I want to put my comments in, but I realize you probably have a lot of people calling you, so I don't, I want to make sure my voice is heard, so I'll just leave a brief message and then if you want to call, that's great.

But basically, it is incredibly impossible, on our street, to park. We have no sidewalks on Galloway Street SE and multiple people living in one home, to afford the rent. Therefore, multiple cars and work vehicles. It is very, very difficult for us to park. Even to pull out of our driveway, we have a hard time turning to get out of it because of the cars on either side and across from us as we back out. So, I'm calling to say that the zoning is already at its max for parking in our neighborhood and I hate to see more cars.

Our neighbors have three people living in the house with four cars and the people on the other side have three vehicles. Its very, very difficult to park. So, I'm not in favor of decreasing parking requirements because it's pretty difficult to find parking in our neighborhood as it is. We're in the Wildwood neighborhood and its very difficult to find parking or to back out of our driveway.

Thank you very much. Again, 360-XXX-XX45.

Thank you, Joyce.

Bye-bye.

Note: I reviewed the comments with Ms. Knutson over the phone on April 7, 2023. Minor modifications were made for clarification, so this is not an exact transcript of the voicemail message. Complete telephone number intentionally not included.

4/7/23 11:02 a.m., jmp

6 April 2023

Good afternoon, Planning Commission members –

I am writing in support of staff-recommended changes to Olympia’s parking standards for housing located close to high frequency transit corridors. Reducing the cost and space impacts of parking on housing is an important implementation component of Olympia’s Housing Action Plan and is consistent with Sustainable Thurston and the Climate Action Plan.

The staff recommendation is smart. It allows developers to reduce the amount of parking for housing served by excellent transit, it doesn’t require it. The flexibility provided in the staff recommendation enables developers to assess the urban context in site-specific locations along with the investment options available to them. In this way developers can build housing that maximizes residential opportunities for the city while best meeting the mobility needs of the residents they intend to serve with new housing.

Fears of single-family property owners that residential developers will simply not provide any parking if minimums are removed and thus impact their own property access do not align with investment realities. Parking is a factor in the marketability and financial feasibility of housing products and will be for the foreseeable future. Similarly, while the proposed changes allow flexibility to provide *more* parking than currently required, investors would be hard pressed to justify the added expense and opportunity cost of unnecessary parking in lieu of other revenue-generating uses on a site. The proposed changes support the flexibility to adapt parking supply as Olympia’s needs change in different places at different times while maintaining compatibility with surrounding areas.

For a small but growing number of areas and housing markets there are new opportunities to reduce the amount of parking needed to accommodate vehicle storage needs of some Olympia households. Proposed changes to the parking standards support that transition as urban corridor land uses continue to mature over time to be less suburban and auto dependent. The proposed changes will have no impact on most of Olympia’s residential areas, which are quite suburban in character and where the higher parking ratios may be warranted because of their auto-dependent land use patterns.

This region committed to directing infill and redevelopment along its key urban corridors, accompanied by high quality transit service offering convenient, cost-effective alternatives to driving. The supply and cost of parking is a factor in both the land use and mobility options these corridors can support.

Olympia residents want to see housing affordability in the city increase. Parking standards are a part of that solution. Allowing reductions in costly residential parking where it is not needed is a prudent way to slow the growth and over-supply of parking that undermines not just housing affordability but other objectives as well.

Please support the staff recommendation. Let’s ensure Olympia’s parking standards better support our Housing Action Plan objectives and align with the transit and non-motorized investments we’ve been making for years to support more car-lite lifestyle opportunities for those who want them.

Thank you for your hard work on this tough topic.

Sincerely,



Thera Black
1905 Conger Ave



816 Second Ave, Suite 200, Seattle, WA 98104
p. (206) 343-0681
futurewise.org

April 6, 2023

Joyce Phillips, Principal Planner
City of Olympia
Community Planning & Development Department
PO Box 1967
Olympia, Washington 98507-1967

Dear Ms. Phillips:

Subject: Comments on the Residential Parking Code Amendments.

Send via email to: jphillip@ci.olympia.wa.us

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Residential Parking Code Amendments. Futurewise supports the amendments and has a suggestion discussed below.

Futurewise works throughout Washington State to support land-use policies that encourage healthy, equitable and opportunity-rich communities, and that protect our most valuable farmlands, forests, and water resources. Futurewise has members and supporters throughout Washington State including Olympia.

We agree that reducing and eliminating parking minimums makes sense and we support the proposal. A study using American Housing Survey data found that “[m]inimum parking requirements in municipal zoning codes drive up the price of housing”¹ The study authors wrote:

We find that the cost of garage parking to renter households is approximately \$1,700 per year, or an additional 17% of a housing unit’s rent. In addition to the magnitude of this transport cost burden being effectively hidden in housing prices, the lack of rental housing without bundled parking imposes a steep cost on carless renters—commonly the lowest income households—who may be paying for

¹ C. J. Gabbe & Gregory Pierce, *Hidden Costs and Deadweight Losses: Bundled Parking and Residential Rents in the Metropolitan United States* 27 HOUSING POLICY DEBATE 217, 217 (2017) last accessed on April 6, 2023, at:

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10511482.2016.1205647?journalCode=rhpd20>.

Housing Policy Debate is peer reviewed. Housing Policy Debate Aims and scope webpage last accessed on April 6, 2023, at:

<https://www.tandfonline.com/action/journalInformation?show=aimsScope&journalCode=rhpd20>.

parking that they do not need or want. We estimate the direct deadweight loss for carless renters to be \$440 million annually. We conclude by suggesting cities reduce or eliminate minimum parking requirements, and allow and encourage landlords to unbundle parking costs from housing costs.²

Parking reforms work. A peer reviewed study of Seattle’s parking reforms showed “that (1) minimum parking requirements constrain developers, though not uniformly; and (2) reducing requirements leads to less parking provision, and presumably cost savings for developers and lower housing prices for consumers. These findings highlight the impact that policymakers can have by reducing or eliminating off-street parking requirements.”³ “Seattle developers built 40% less parking than would have been required prior to the reforms, resulting in 18,000 fewer parking spaces and saving an estimated \$537 million.”⁴

In addition to saving money, “parking reform can lower tax rates, revive business districts, decrease property vacancies, and allow development of fewer off-street parking spaces as property becomes available for other uses (Hess, 2017).”⁵

We also support adopting maximum parking ratios in the Residential Parking Amendments as simply deregulating parking may not be sufficient to encourage affordable housing and mixed-use development.⁶ The parking maximums should be improved by limiting the maximum number of parking spaces allowed to the number of automobile parking spaces currently required. The Seattle study documented that developers built 40 percent less parking than would have been required under the prior regulations.⁷ So the parking required by the current minimum parking requirements adopted as a maximum should be more than enough to meet actual parking demand. The lower parking cap will also help achieve the benefits of parking reform.

² *Id.*

³ C.J. Gabbe, Gregory Pierce, Gordon Clowers, *Parking policy: The effects of residential minimum parking requirements in Seattle* 91 *LAND USE POLICY* 104053, 104053 (Feb. 2020) last accessed on April 6, 2023, at: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0264837718312870>. *Land Use Policy* is peer reviewed. *Id.*

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ Daniel Baldwin Hess Jeffrey Rehler, *Minus Minimums: Development Response to the Removal of Minimum Parking Requirements in Buffalo (NY)* 87 *JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN PLANNING ASSOCIATION* 396, 397 (2021) last accessed on April 6, 2023, at: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/01944363.2020.1864225?needAccess=true&>. The *Journal of the American Planning Association* is peer reviewed.

⁶ *Id.* at p. 407.

⁷ C.J. Gabbe, Gregory Pierce, Gordon Clowers, *Parking policy: The effects of residential minimum parking requirements in Seattle* 91 *LAND USE POLICY* 104053 (Feb. 2020).

Subject: Comments on the Residential Parking Code Amendments

April 6, 2023

Page 3



Thank you for considering our comments. If you require additional information, please contact me at telephone 206-343-0681 Ext. 102 or email:

tim@futurewise.org.

Very Truly Yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized 'S' shape with a horizontal line through it, and a small dot below the line.

Tim Trohimovich
Director of Planning and Law



From: [Melissa Allen](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: Comments on Minimum Parking Requirements for new multi-family housing near City arterials/public transit
Date: Thursday, April 06, 2023 5:14:47 PM

To Olympia Planning Commission via Joyce Phillips, Senior Planner:

First, thank you for extending the deadline for comments on the above proposal. The issue deserves of as much public input as possible.

GENERAL COMMENT

In the past three years, the City Planning Department has proposed several reductions to parking requirements for new construction. The overarching goal is to encourage more housing by making it less expensive to build. These changes will have a big impact on older Olympia neighborhoods but that is not addressed in any of the proposals. For example, many streets are narrow (one open auto lane), have no sidewalks, or sidewalks in disrepair. There is room for compromise: parking only on one side of the street; clearing and graveling street right-of-ways; assisting home owners with costs/labor to repair sidewalks. Why are such mitigations never included? Polarization (frequent occurrence in Olympia government) happens when those affected by change do not see any of their tangible concerns addressed.

From the outside, it looks like those who benefit most are property developers (significant tax breaks, zoning changes, reduced building costs, etc.). They, in turn, create market rate housing and pass much of their costs on to renters. Leaving the City with less tax revenue so more budget woes, no change in affordable housing, and less good will from the residents most affected. You may meet the goal of more housing stock but at what price? Can we find a compromise.

MY COMMENT ABOUT THE PROPOSED ZERO PARKING SPACE REQUIREMENT FOR MULTIFAMILY HOUSING ON CITY ARTERIALS AND TRANSIT LINES

I live two blocks from State Street, on the Northeast side of Olympia. The proposed new multi-family housing with **no** required off-street parking will impact me and my neighbors directly. My street (Prospect Ave) is a favorite for dog walkers and other pedestrians on their way to Ralph's and other businesses along State and 4th. Since we have no sidewalks or shoulders along several blocks of Prospect, people must walk in the street. Most cars drive slowly, giving people time to step between cars parked on both sides. More cars will mean more street parking and less space for walkers and bikers.

For the 25 years I've live in Olympia, I've heard the City's often expressed hope that less available parking will encourage people to use public transportation. I doubt that work because our bus service is not robust (no 24hr service, etc.). For example, I considered it when moved here and worked in Tumwater. The bus connections was at least a 45 minute trip. Driving took 15 minutes.

Have you done any assessment to back up your belief that apartment dwellers will not need cars? For example, are parking spots in new apartments being utilized? What are the work hours of residents in the Olympia service industry? Can transit accommodate all schedules?

If multi-family housing is built near me, I expect most residents will have cars that must be parked elsewhere. Of course, they'll have to park in the nearby neighborhoods. We already have inadequate space for walking/biking. Street parking will increase as the "Missing Middle"(increased housing density/less required off street parking) zoning changes encourage new construction in all neighborhoods). Now, you want to add the street parking needs of large apartment building residents to the parking burden of existing neighborhoods.

Please reconsider the "zero" parking requirement for new multi-family buildings!

Thank you for the opportunity to speak about this important issue.

Melissa Allen
1702 Prospect Ave NE
Olympia, WA 98506

From: oly43515@gmail.com
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Cc: [CityCouncil](#)
Subject: Reducing parking requirements
Date: Thursday, April 06, 2023 5:20:20 PM

Hello,

I am writing in support of reducing the parking requirement for residential use. In fact, I support zero requirements. Developers should be able to tailor the amount of parking stalls to the location of the development. If a project on transit lines doesn't need the amount of parking currently required they shouldn't be required to provide it.

I read the recent Olympian article on this topic and was struck by the opposition's comments about this. Of course, every citizen is free to have an opinion on our city's planning and be free to express it. However, it is worth pointing out that the same people who aggressively opposed the Missing Middle also oppose this parking update, ostensibly because of the lack of transit is LESS dense areas of Olympia. Housing density will create a need for more transit options, but apparently that's beside the point to some. It seems to me that an effective Comp Plan makes these connections and creates a vision that is... comprehensive!

The opposition to these kind of updates isn't just about keeping things as they are, it's about moving us backward. I'm very encouraged by the direction you, our planning commissioners, the council and the city are taking with an eye to the future. Often you have to take verbal punches that aren't deserved, but sticking to what is shown to be best practices and is rooted in facts and data is the right thing to do.

Thank you for your work!

Best,
Darren Mills

From: [Beverly Taylor](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: proposal to reduce parking requirement
Date: Thursday, April 06, 2023 6:57:42 PM

Hello city housing planning committee,

Thank you for extending the public comment period regarding the zero requirement of parking spacing for new housing developments.

I don't agree it is a good idea outside of the hyper urban downtown community that is walkable for all residents needs.

Developers will limit parking and a few residents will be asked to pay a premium for the few existing spaces available. That price will increase as well as the rent increases over time.

If the housing planning committee does go forward with this idea of zero required parking spaces, Please consider a parking area necessary for delivery, maintenance, city services (trash, recycling, yard collection), and emergency vehicles to park while tending to the residence of an apartment building.

Car manufacturers are pivoting towards electric vehicles, are they going to be embraced by the city of Olympia?

When I lived downtown in Olympia, my next door neighbor parked on his front lawn when all the street parking was taken up. I used to be shocked by how that looked, his lawn was small and he drove a van.

Beverly Taylor
SWONA neighborhood

From: [Ben Wedeking](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: Support for Code Amendments re Parking Requirements
Date: Thursday, April 06, 2023 10:06:12 PM

Dear Joyce Phillips,

My name is Ben Wedeking and I am a resident of Olympia. I strongly support the proposed code amendments relating to parking requirements. The shortage of affordable housing in Olympia lowers quality of life for all residents, housed and unhoused. We need fewer parking spaces and many more housing units. The proposed code amendments are a step in the right direction for Olympia and, if adopted, will improve pedestrian safety, make housing more affordable, and enhance Olympia's social and commercial fabric.

Again, I strongly support the proposed code amendments. Thank you for considering my comment.

Sincerely,
Ben Wedeking
Olympia Resident
Jefferson Middle School Neighborhood

From: [Andy Carter](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: RE: Comment Period Extended - Olympia Proposed Parking Code Amendments
Date: Friday, April 07, 2023 6:04:12 AM

Thank you for the update. I have one proposed change.

Pursuant to 18.38.020 J, it appears that the primary purposes of the proposed amendments is “To promote the development of housing, including affordable housing, through residential parking standards.”

Pursuant to 18.38.080 2. e, Submittal Requirements, developers seeking an administrative modification to the Code’s parking requirements must “Demonstrate how the **reduction** will result in the construction of more housing units, **if applicable**...(emphasis added).

In order to be true to the purpose of the amendments, all requests for a modification of the parking standards **should** demonstrate “how the reduction will result in the construction of more housing units.”

Please delete the **if applicable** language.

Thank you for your consideration.

Anthony W. Carter
1114 Woodard Ave NW
Olympia 98502
360-561-2727

April 7, 2023

Dear Chairman Nejati and Members of the Planning Commission,

I am writing in support of the proposed changes to the parking requirements. I would also support establishing parking maximums in areas close to regularly scheduled transit. A proposal moving through the Legislature may establish parking maximums near transit.

I appreciate the City Council's, staff and your efforts to bring these proposals forward that will incrementally assist the City in implementing its housing strategy by helping make housing more affordable. It will also help reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Thank you for the engaging in this important work. I know changing the status quo is not easy and controversial when weighing it against long-term future benefit for the community. I believe that changing the parking requirements weighs in favor of long-term community benefit.

Best regards,
Holly Gadbow
1625 Sylvester Street SW
Olympia, WA 98501
(360)754-9401

Cc: Joyce Phillips
Leonard Bauer
Olympia City Council

From: [Esther Adams](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: Parking Proposal - Thumb Down
Date: Friday, April 07, 2023 9:16:37 AM

I have been a resident of the City of Olympia for over 25 years. While I understand the desire to allow more housing to be built, I believe the current proposal to loosen City Parking Requirements has not been sufficiently studied. There has been no proof that home prices will be reduced through these changes. However, one thing that is certain, is that current neighbors will experience increased frustration and unavailability to park near their residences.

Thank you for considering this matter,
Esther Adams

To: Olympia Planning Commission

Parking in Olympia

The issue of how many parking spots to allow or require in new residential projects is not simple. Having a pat answer betrays an over reliance on ideology and/or self-interest instead of an open-minded look at facts and analysis.

But without a shared foundation of facts and analysis, ideology and self-interest are all we have. That is precisely why this policy change should be preceded by real data, studies, and analysis. That is also what the Council of Neighborhoods asked for in its resolution along with the time for the public to look at it and share their conclusions.

Itchy Twitter fingers

In this age of itchy twitter fingers, it takes a lot of effort not to react reflexively to issues. Watching the Planning Commission meeting, where a bare quorum of the members made a sudden change without advance notice to go from a reduction to elimination off-street parking, is an example of shoot from the hip decision making. From experience, I know it takes willpower to refrain from the emotionally satisfying quick reaction and to think more fully about the issues. What passes for normal in a Twitter oriented world should not be applied to public and community issues like this. Issues of such wide sweep as parking deserve restraint from the personally emotionally satisfying reaction to a more community engaged dialog. The PC should be educating and informing the public about their reasoning and share it far enough in advance to hear concerns that they may not be thinking in their rush.

I find it most helpful to see where those whose opinions differ with mine regarding the desired outcome. Usually, I find that we all have good intentions and share laudable outcomes but disagree on the best way to get there. I care about housing affordability and personally supported a campaign to have Habitat lead the development of the city's Boulevard property rather than a market rate developer. I care about the environment, deeply. And I would support your proposal for zero parking if we had a NYC or SF level of transit alternatives – subways, buses 24/7 and light rail. But we don't and we won't until we reach those densities, which is unlikely to happen in 100 years.

It is important for you to acknowledge your obligation to current residents whose quality-of-life concerns need to be balanced with your plan for adding the 20,000 residents who you expect to live here in the next 10-20 years.

Often it is about different assumptions of the intended and unintended consequences, especially so when a policy issue like parking requires two or three or more leaps about anticipated human and corporate behavior before the presumed result happens.

Predicting the behavior of developers (who are not all alike) and individual choices on housing preferences (definitely not all alike) and the long-term future of transportation and development practices means that you have to understand these assumptions before you can understand why someone believes what they do about this issue. Sharing your assumptions and supporting them with facts is necessary in an informed democracy and a more cohesive community.

What you see depends on where you're standing

We also often have different lenses about the intensity of the impact, the time scale for the effect and its locus. When parking adversely affects the livability of a neighborhood of a small city it has an immediate and direct effect on those experiencing it – an effect that is readily observable and within the lived experience of many residents. But when you see the parking issue as a small stepping stone towards saving the planet from ruin, you might react as if it is an existential threat – while even, perhaps, recognizing the indirect, long-time frame, contingent and incremental nature of the effort.

Olympians have not had this kind of robust conversation as a community. I still hope that the Planning Commission will be the forum, especially given the contentious "Missing Middle" (the legal action is still being appealed) and the neighborhood character issue. If not, then at least the Commission would advocate for a forum for civil and constructive conversation.

Local issues still offer hope for compromise.

Most recognize that our ability to conduct a rational dialog on national issues has been rendered toxic. I hope that at the local level, where we share our day-to-day experiences and live side-by-side, we can figure out how to have the rational and civil discourse we need for a stronger, less divisive community. This parking discussion can make a good test case.

Specific policy recommendations

I believe the first-round staff recommendation for parking reduction tried to strike a balance. It included a condition of applicability to transit corridors with frequent service, and that makes sense. But the Planning Commission's version discarded the transit requirement and dropped the reduction from the current 1.5 spaces and the .75 spaces (proposed by staff) to zero. And it did so with the predictable effect it has had.

In addition to the process points above, here are my recommendations for making changes to the parking amendments.

1. Neighborhoods need the assurance of mechanisms that protect them from adverse results. Those protections need to be implemented before approving a project and with the data and analysis you would expect from professional transportation engineers. That is just like the Planning Commission is recommending for amendment when developers are seeking approval for **increasing** parking ("transportation engineer licensed in the state of Washington").
2. We need to know whether the neighborhood streets have the infrastructure to support additional parking from new development without undue harm. Some neighborhood streets are clearly inappropriate, such as those with narrow street widths, no sidewalks or off-road pathways and mailboxes where parking means not getting mail and where transit is not sufficient. Any parking reduction approach should include a process to reveal, analyze and remediate identified problems before being approved.

In addition, wide boulevards and streets also present a problem. On many of our streets such as Yelm Highway and Boulevard for example, where transit is more available than in most places in Olympia, there is no place to park on the road. By default, that means residents of large-scale developments without parking will be searching for parking in the closest neighborhoods. A similar dynamic is what has happened near the Starbucks on Yelm highway when the Starbucks parking lot is filled, the customers park on the residential street Palomino Drive.

3. The city should also not allow developers to maximize their profits by allowing them to treat available neighborhood **on-street parking as an under-exploited asset**. In exchange for allowing less parking they should be required to provide some social equity benefit in return.

We need to achieve some modicum of social justice from this risk-benefit tradeoff. If a 50-unit apartment house indeed saves between \$6,000 and \$50,000 per parking space not provided (source: Gary Cooper CNA presentation 9/12/22), it is reasonable to require the developer to share in the savings.

For example, with a savings in the range of \$300,000 to \$2,500,000 for a 50-unit market rate apartment you should only allow reduced parking minimums **if 15% to 30% of the units' rents** (depending upon amount of reduced parking permitted) are set for people earning 70% or less of the area median income. This should be a permanent feature of the project, especially within the frequent transit area. In addition, the permit should require an upfront remediation requirement addressing any adverse neighborhood impacts.

4. For similar reasons, there should be reduced parking minimums for the very low and extremely low income and for non-profits providing low-income housing -- that strikes a balance between housing affordability and the interests of existing residents.

Particular attention should be paid to the critical need for lower-income workers to have a vehicle in Olympia in order to travel to their jobs. Too often our lower-income working residents have multiple part-time jobs or supplement their low wage full-time job with a second or third part-time job. Transit as it stands today cannot meet their needs. Therefore, you need to assess the needs of those in the housing you are permitting regarding the need to have easy access to a vehicle in terms of social equity and income equality.

Finally, do not let the artificial and external timing of the Commerce grant cause the Commission to shortchange this opportunity to avoid a costly and rushed decision that loses all the opportunity to have a valuable community conversation.

Thank you for the opportunity to make comments.

Sincerely,

Larry Dzieza

From: [Leonard Bauer](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: FW: In support of reduced parking requirements (re: Housing Action Plan)
Date: Friday, April 07, 2023 11:53:11 AM

Public comment came in before noon deadline on parking ordinance

Leonard Bauer, FAICP
Community Planning & Development Director
City of Olympia
PO Box 1967
Olympia, WA 98501
(360) 753-8206
www.olympiawa.gov
Remember: City e-mails are public records.

Working Together To Make A Difference

-----Original Message-----

From: Andrew Sullivan <andrew@sllvn.me>
Sent: Friday, April 7, 2023 11:43 AM
To: Leonard Bauer <lbauer@ci.olympia.wa.us>
Subject: In support of reduced parking requirements (re: Housing Action Plan)

I live in downtown Olympia and am writing in support of reducing residential parking requirements.

The city is already full of parking: paid lots (mostly empty) and street parking (frequently empty). There simply is not a need for more parking, even with increased development. I'm disappointed when I read about projects like West Bay Yards adding 478 housing units and 833 (!!) parking spots. The extra cost must be enormous.

If we continue to require parking for new developments, we risk Olympia becoming "easy to get to but not worth arriving at".

Thank you,

Andrew Sullivan (98501)

From: [Sue Langhans](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: Apartments without a place to park
Date: Friday, April 07, 2023 11:53:24 AM

Not having a parking area is just wrong on many levels. People who need to get to work where the buses do not go, children who need to be picked up at school when sick, repair people, emergency vehicles, babysitters, health care providers, gardeners for the property. Too many issues to not have parking lots for tenants that rent in these multi-units.

Thank you for considering the outcomes of your vote.

Judith Langhans
2908 Country Club Rd. NW
Olympia WA 98502.

From: [Karen Sweeney](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: Parking for new development
Date: Friday, April 07, 2023 11:54:19 AM

Thank you to the Planning Commissioners who were willing to open up comments for a longer period of time. I did not like to see how some Commissioners seemed to “railroad” their ideas through. I know they have a vision that we should all be taking the bus, riding bikes or walking. That may be how things are in the future, but we sure don’t have the infrastructure to support that now. Plus there are some of us with mobility issues and building multi family housing without parking, means there will be overflow into the neighborhoods. This causes people to have to walk in the street because the Eastside, for example has few sidewalks.

I just think it’s a very flawed idea for this time period.

From: [Antonio M. Ginatta](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: comments in support of parking code amendments
Date: Friday, April 07, 2023 2:21:33 PM

Hi Joyce. I'm an Olympia resident and would like to express my support for the parking-related code amendments under consideration by the city. Olympia will thrive as it facilitates the building of more housing and as it encourages the strengthening of its public transportation infrastructure. These amendments help further us along on both counts. I hope the city accepts the proposed language. Thank you for considering these comments.

Best,

Antonio Ginatta
1617 Water St SW
Olympia, WA 98501
360-259-6600

--

Sent with [HEY](#)

From: [Nolan Hibbard-Pelly](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: No parking minimums
Date: Monday, April 10, 2023 3:43:17 PM

Hi I'm emailing in support of funding transit and workers past 8pm and dropping the parking minimum requirement for all new developments

From: [Keith Spencer](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: Parking
Date: Tuesday, April 11, 2023 7:00:23 PM

What are you thinking? Make the developers include parking.

From: [Leah Melvoin](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Cc: ["JUDITH BARDIN"](#)
Subject: RE: Reducing parking requirements
Date: Sunday, April 30, 2023 1:47:27 PM

Hi,

I'm circling back on my email below because I now understand the parking requirements will be 0 for new construction in Olympia.

It's mind blowing to think that the planning commission would abdicate their responsibility to future generations of Olympians by considering an extreme proposal because a parking space costs developers \$15k or \$30k or whatever. Bathrooms cost that much too, do we let them off the hook for those? What about sewer hookups, that's about \$25k in Olympia. Is that also not an option? It costs developers money which affects affordable housing, right?

Do you seriously think that developers will do the right thing? If so, why have a planning committee at all. Just get rid of all zoning requirements and rules and let everyone "do the right thing". That's how China and Texas are run.

Before you implement this ridiculous plan, I think you should all live without your cars for a month – IN THE WINTER. No car use at all. Only bike, bus, and walk for a month – when it is cold and rainy. You will quickly see that what you are doing is unacceptable.

You should not have the right to destroy the quality of life in such an impractical manner for people who are so desperate for housing. That is not progress.

Respectfully,

Leah Melvoin

From: Leah Melvoin <lmelvoin@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 14, 2023 9:34 AM
To: jphillip@ci.olympia.wa.us
Cc: 'JUDITH BARDIN' <judybardin@comcast.net>
Subject: Reducing parking requirements

Hi,

I understand you are the point person for the city's plan to reduce parking in Olympia. I feel strongly that the city is not considering the impacts to residents, neighborhoods, and the environment.

Specific concerns:

- The city says that reducing parking will increase housing and housing affordability but provides no guarantees that this will motivate developers to make new units more affordable. This was the case in Seattle and it has been disastrous for affordable housing there.
- This type of zoning is based on an assumption that in the future residents won't have cars. This has proven to be false in every city that has enacted the same zoning. In fact, the lack of parking hits dense neighborhoods the hardest and that in turn hurts families. When I lived in Seattle they reduced parking on Capitol Hill. The impact was felt by businesses and people

alike. Capitol Hill is denser, but the cost for rent and housing has skyrocketed. Because of crime, the grocery stores are closing. Many seniors I know who live there (with no car) have to walk miles to go to a grocery store. There's no bus that connects. It's awful.

- Residents in dense neighborhoods have guests. They take up parking and displace residents. This REALLY hurts families.
- Olympia's bus service is infrequent in the later evening, on weekends, and holidays. Last Thanksgiving there was no bus service at all. Many destinations require a bus transfer which can take a lot of time.
 - Many people, especially those of lower income have two jobs and need a car to get between jobs.
 - Most bus stops have no shelter. People have to stand in the rain to wait for a bus.
 - Many streets have no sidewalks to walk to a bus. Accessing bus service without sidewalks is very difficult for persons with disabilities.
- The United States Postal Service requires residents to provide 10 ft on either side of a mailbox to give mail trucks access. This takes up a parking space. If someone parks too near a mailbox, mail will often not be delivered.
- The city has not provided a study of residential parking capacity in the different neighborhoods. Many neighborhoods, especially older ones have limited street parking available. Houses may not have garages or driveways and parking may already be tight.
- There has been very limited public outreach to neighborhoods that will be adversely affected by changes to parking. That's unacceptable.

I will close by saying that no one moves to Olympia to live in a "dense" situation. They come here for our beautiful single-family neighborhoods. If the city proceeds with these policies, only developers benefit. These policies will destroy the quality of life for every future generation. We will be the last to enjoy a yard, parking, trees, homes where kids can play safely.

Rather than doing this, focus efforts on repurposing Capitol mall and or rezone all of the other crappy strip malls. You don't need to destroy our way of life this way. There are other options!

I'd appreciate being kept in the loop on this.

Thank you,

Leah Melvoin.

From: [CityCouncil](#)
To: [Carol Middleton](#)
Cc: [Councilmembers](#); [Jay Burney](#); [Rich Hoey](#); [Debbie Sullivan](#); [Kellie Braseth](#); [Leonard Bauer](#); [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: RE: Parking
Date: Monday, May 08, 2023 8:12:36 AM

Thank you for your comments. I will forward them on to all Councilmembers and appropriate staff.

Susan Grisham (she/her)
Assistant to the City Manager
Legislative Liaison
City of Olympia | P.O. Box 1967 | Olympia WA 98507
360-753-8244 | sgrisham@ci.olympia.wa.us

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Please note all correspondence is subject to public disclosure.

-----Original Message-----

From: Carol Middleton <cmiddle1@comcast.net>
Sent: Saturday, May 6, 2023 9:35 AM
To: CityCouncil <citycouncil@ci.olympia.wa.us>
Subject: Parking

Please please please provide on site parking in city neighborhoods. On Marion street the impact of street parking is creating a one lane road in sections.

Carol
Olympia resident

Sent from my iPad, Carol Middleton

From: [CityCouncil](#)
To: [Joy Griffin](#)
Cc: [Councilmembers](#); [Jay Burney](#); [Rich Hoey](#); [Debbie Sullivan](#); [Kellie Braseth](#); [Leonard Bauer](#); [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: RE: Please don't pass
Date: Monday, May 08, 2023 8:12:44 AM

Thank you for your comments. I will forward them on to all Councilmembers and appropriate staff.

Susan Grisham (*she/her*)
Assistant to the City Manager
Legislative Liaison
City of Olympia | P.O. Box 1967 | Olympia WA 98507
360-753-8244 | sgrisham@ci.olympia.wa.us

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From: Joy Griffin <Joy-Griffin@outlook.com>
Sent: Saturday, May 6, 2023 11:27 AM
To: CityCouncil <citycouncil@ci.olympia.wa.us>
Subject: Please don't pass

The no need to provide parking for new buildings. That is an insane idea. My neighbors already get agro if I their neighbor has to park there for to lack of parking. Gonna cause a lot of fights, please don't

Joy griffin
Westside olympia resident

Get [Outlook for Android](#)

From: [CityCouncil](#)
To: [Jim Lazar](#)
Cc: [Councilmembers](#); [Jay Burney](#); [Rich Hoey](#); [Debbie Sullivan](#); [Kellie Braseth](#); [Leonard Bauer](#); [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: RE: Parking reduction
Date: Monday, May 08, 2023 8:12:59 AM

Thank you for your comments. I will forward them on to all Councilmembers and appropriate staff.

Susan Grisham (*she/her*)
Assistant to the City Manager
Legislative Liaison
City of Olympia | P.O. Box 1967 | Olympia WA 98507
360-753-8244 | sgrisham@ci.olympia.wa.us

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Please note all correspondence is subject to public disclosure.

From: Jim Lazar <jlazar@jimlazar.com>
Sent: Saturday, May 6, 2023 5:24 PM
To: CityCouncil <citycouncil@ci.olympia.wa.us>
Subject: Parking reduction

The grant you received requires SOME action, but definitely NOT the "action" proposed by the Planning Commission.

Allowing new housing without parking provided would be no problem in my neighborhood: 30' wide streets, parking allowed both sides, and 100' lots, so a lot of parking between driveways.

It would also be no problem in the gridded streets of SW Olympia (5, 6th, etc), where there are sidewalks, curbs, and adequate width for on-street parking.

By comparison, on Melissa Allen's street in NE Olympia (Prospect), where the street is only 18' wide, there is no sidewalk, and the lots are 50' wide, so not a lot of parking between driveways, it would be a serious problem.

And, along many of our major collectors (such as North, Cain, Eskridge/O'farrell Capitol, Boulevard in my neighborhood), where there is

zero on-street parking allowed at all, it could be a complete disaster.

My suggestion for the short run is to allow zero parking ONLY on streets which are at least 30' wide and have existing (or will be provided with) sidewalks. That would satisfy the grant requirement in the short run, likely create no problem, and allow a block-by-block analysis by the BPAC of streets where walking would NOT be adversely impacted by additional on-street parking.

It is simply erroneous to assume that new housing will come with zero new cars. That may work OK in Boston and Vancouver BC, and even parts of Seattle, where there is excellent **5-minute headway** on transit routes. It will not work for much of Olympia, where it may be a 5 block walk without a sidewalk to the nearest transit stop with **30-minute headway**.

--

Jim Lazar, Olympia

From: [CityCouncil](#)
To: [Esther Grace Kronenberg](#)
Cc: [Councilmembers](#); [Jay Burney](#); [Rich Hoey](#); [Debbie Sullivan](#); [Kellie Braseth](#); [Leonard Bauer](#); [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: RE: Zero parking requirements?
Date: Monday, May 08, 2023 8:13:12 AM

Thank you for your comments. I will forward them on to all Councilmembers and appropriate staff.

Susan Grisham (she/her)
Assistant to the City Manager
Legislative Liaison
City of Olympia | P.O. Box 1967 | Olympia WA 98507
360-753-8244 | sgrisham@ci.olympia.wa.us

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-----Original Message-----

From: Esther Grace Kronenberg <wekrone@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, May 6, 2023 9:15 PM
To: CityCouncil <citycouncil@ci.olympia.wa.us>
Subject: Zero parking requirements?

Hello City Council,

I wonder what data the City is using to determine that no parking will be required for new housing.

Two obvious reasons this is a bad idea come to mind.

1. People with disabilities, older people who can't walk blocks carrying groceries and mothers with children need to be able to park near their houses. This policy is discriminatory.
2. Where will all the new electric vehicles that will be coming online within the next decade be charged if there are no EV parking spots? This policy does not support climate goals.

I suppose there are some neighborhoods where there may be enough street parking, but there are many more where lots are small and there are no sidewalks where the lack of parking would create a mess. Small lots in West Olympia that are more than a half mile from a transit stop are a perfect example.

Having lived in NYC which has excellent public transportation, and San Francisco, which has decent public transportation, it is clear that Olympia's public transit has nowhere near the reach or capacity to serve the needs of its residents. Not now, and not for many years.

It would be wonderful if we could magically get rid of cars and all use public transit. But you shouldn't run a city on magical thinking.

Figure out where this is feasible, but please do not apply this policy across the board where it will create hardships for our neighbors.

Esther Kronenberg
Olympia WA

Sent from cyberheaven

From: [CityCouncil](#)
To: [marti walker](#)
Cc: [Councilmembers](#); [Jay Burney](#); [Rich Hoey](#); [Debbie Sullivan](#); [Kellie Braseth](#); [Leonard Bauer](#); [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: RE: Proposed Parking Regulations
Date: Monday, May 08, 2023 4:17:38 PM

Thank you for your comments. I will forward them on to all Councilmembers and appropriate staff.

Susan Grisham (*she/her*)
Assistant to the City Manager
Legislative Liaison
City of Olympia | P.O. Box 1967 | Olympia WA 98507
360-753-8244 | sgrisham@ci.olympia.wa.us

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From: marti walker <mewalk22@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, May 8, 2023 3:18 PM
To: CityCouncil <citycouncil@ci.olympia.wa.us>
Subject: Proposed Parking Regulations

Dear City Council Members,

I am opposed to the latest proposed parking Regulations that would allow no required parking spaces for all new residential buildings. The following are reasons why I am opposed:

- Many residential areas of Olympia currently have over crowded street parking
- Mail trucks will not be able to access mailboxes
- Bike lanes will be blocked with parked cars
- There is no provision for handicapped parking
- There is no provision for EV parking
- It will create competition and conflict for parking spaces
- Residents will have to park far from their homes making it difficult or unmanageable to carry groceries and other items.
- The Olympia IT system is not frequent enough for most people to use because it takes too much time and it does not run at night
- Government not developers should be making decisions regarding parking regulations

Martha Walker
619 Central St SE

Olympia, WA 98501

From: [CityCouncil](#)
To: [Quentin Phillips](#)
Cc: [Councilmembers](#); [Jay Burney](#); [Rich Hoey](#); [Debbie Sullivan](#); [Kellie Braseth](#); [Leonard Bauer](#); [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: RE: Parking and New Housing/Development
Date: Tuesday, May 09, 2023 8:43:30 AM

Thank you for your comments. I will forward them on to all Councilmembers and appropriate staff.

Susan Grisham (she/her)
Assistant to the City Manager
Legislative Liaison
City of Olympia | P.O. Box 1967 | Olympia WA 98507
360-753-8244 | sgrisham@ci.olympia.wa.us

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-----Original Message-----

From: Quentin Phillips <qmp932@hotmail.com>
Sent: Monday, May 8, 2023 7:19 PM
To: CityCouncil <citycouncil@ci.olympia.wa.us>
Subject: Parking and New Housing/Development

Hello,

New development is important but without proper planning growth could create serious problems. Parking downtown and other locations in Olympia is already a problem. In permitting new development you have the leverage to address parking with developers. They do nothing for free. You are stewards of the community. Use your leverage to provide for rationale development and require developers to include parking in their proposals. Use your leverage. After the fact the problem becomes insurmountable.

Thank you

Quentin Phillips JD, FACHE
Medical Billing Advocacy, LLC
360-277-6110
Instagram address: [phillips.quentin](#)
Black Lives Matter

Please excuse any typos.

From: [CityCouncil](#)
To: [Andi Ripke](#)
Cc: [Councilmembers](#); [Jay Burney](#); [Rich Hoey](#); [Debbie Sullivan](#); [Kellie Braseth](#); [Leonard Bauer](#); [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: RE: Parking requirements
Date: Tuesday, May 09, 2023 8:43:43 AM

Thank you for your comments. I will forward them on to all Councilmembers and appropriate staff.

Susan Grisham (she/her)
Assistant to the City Manager
Legislative Liaison
City of Olympia | P.O. Box 1967 | Olympia WA 98507
360-753-8244 | sgrisham@ci.olympia.wa.us

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-----Original Message-----

From: Andi Ripke <tallsunflower33@icloud.com>
Sent: Monday, May 8, 2023 5:16 PM
To: CityCouncil <citycouncil@ci.olympia.wa.us>
Subject: Parking requirements

It is imperative that developers be required to provide parking for residential units because otherwise no one will be able to park at businesses downtown and it will hurt business owners.

Andi Ripke
(564) 200-2299

From: [CityCouncil](#)
To: [Rad Cunningham](#)
Cc: [Councilmembers](#); [Jay Burney](#); [Rich Hoey](#); [Debbie Sullivan](#); [Kellie Braseth](#); [Leonard Bauer](#); [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: RE: Parking Comments
Date: Tuesday, May 09, 2023 10:53:25 AM

Thank you for your comments. I will forward them on to all Councilmembers and appropriate staff.

Susan Grisham (*she/her*)
Assistant to the City Manager
Legislative Liaison
City of Olympia | P.O. Box 1967 | Olympia WA 98507
360-753-8244 | sgrisham@ci.olympia.wa.us

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Please note all correspondence is subject to public disclosure.

From: Rad Cunningham <1radnc@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, May 9, 2023 9:22 AM
To: CityCouncil <citycouncil@ci.olympia.wa.us>
Subject: Parking Comments

Hi City Council,

I would like to submit comments on the parking policy proposal that council will see tonight. Thank you!

My name is Rad Cunningham, I am a recently retired Planning Commissioner, parent of two, and Climate Change Epidemiologist.

Parking Minimums are a Tax on our Future. They tax our affordable housing future, a tax on our desired transportation future, and a tax on the equitable and livable world we want to leave to our children.

Kaylee Shen from OHS said in the Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan “It is no longer enough to change our lifestyles, we need to be changing our communities.”

Affordability: Peer reviewed studies on parking and housing affordability have found that parking accounts for 17% of housing cost, \$200 a month in additional rent or about \$40,000 in additional asking price. This price increase comes both from the increase in cost to build the parking and the decrease in space available for housing when you build it.

Transportation: If you live in a city where you are required to pay the additional costs

for car storage it reduces the budget you have available for other forms of transit.

Equity: Disability Rights WA says Black, Indigenous and people of color, immigrants, poor people, seniors and disabled people are much less likely to have a driver's license or access to a car and are more likely to be transit reliant. They also say that a quarter of Washingtonians don't drive. Add to that zero and one car families and you have a significant constituent overserved by our parking minimums.

Climate Change - We need to strive for a future where we meet the goals of the Paris Accord and avoid the worst impacts of climate change. We cannot do that if we continue to require infrastructure for a transit mode responsible for a third of emissions in Thurston County. Electric vehicles help but are still only 0.3% of the cars in the US and have life cycle emissions that are only 18% less than conventional vehicles. In addition to that, adding charging stations to parking infrastructure only increases the cost further. I think Olympians understood all this when they made walkability a major theme in the city's comprehensive plan.

Each additional parking spot we build, require, or preserve increases home prices, supports an ableist transportation system, contributes to the climate crisis, and costs us opportunities to walk, bike, and transit our way around our city.

The parking reforms in front of you are a modest step in the right direction and I urge you to pass them.

Thanks,

Rad

--

R. Norwood Cunningham, MPH, MPA

Cell: 206.898.7661

Linkedin: <http://www.linkedin.com/in/radcunningham>

From: [Aaron Smith](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: FW:
Date: Thursday, May 11, 2023 11:47:49 AM

Hi Joyce,

Please see below, thank you!

Aaron Smith
Program Assistant | Community Planning and Development
City of Olympia | olympiawa.gov
360.753-8017 | asmith@ci.olympia.wa.us

From: Rae Eaton <eatonrm@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 10, 2023 6:45 PM
To: cpdinfo <cpdinfo@ci.olympia.wa.us>
Subject:

Hello,

I'm writing in support of the decision to remove the minimum parking requirements for housing in Olympia.

I'm a relatively young homeowner in SE Olympia, and I'm very concerned that lack of housing (especially middle housing like triplexes and 4 plexus) is keeping people my age from owning homes and is pushing more and more of my neighbors out of their homes due to rising rents.

I understand that many of my neighbors are nervous about how removing requirements may decrease parking available on streets, but I don't think we should let that worry stop us from removing barriers to building housing. Also, I hope the city will see this as an opportunity to increase accessible public transit and biking and walking infrastructure.

Thank you for your time,
Rae Eaton

From: [CityCouncil](#)
To: wmoongos@aol.com
Cc: [Councilmembers](#); [Jay Burney](#); [Rich Hoey](#); [Debbie Sullivan](#); [Kellie Braseth](#); [Leonard Bauer](#); [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: RE: Parking spots for new construction
Date: Friday, May 12, 2023 8:10:23 AM

Thank you for your comments. I will forward them on to all Councilmembers and appropriate staff.

Susan Grisham (*she/her*)
Assistant to the City Manager
Legislative Liaison
City of Olympia | P.O. Box 1967 | Olympia WA 98507
360-753-8244 | sgrisham@ci.olympia.wa.us

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Please note all correspondence is subject to public disclosure.

From: wmoongos@aol.com <wmoongos@aol.com>
Sent: Tuesday, May 9, 2023 9:44 PM
To: CityCouncil <citycouncil@ci.olympia.wa.us>
Subject: Parking spots for new construction

To the Mayor and Council members,

I am highly concerned about the lack of required parking for new construction in our city. I live on the East side of Olympia. We have many older homes on medium to larger lots (1/4-1 acres lots). With the states new law allowing an apartment complex next to a bus stop we could get into some real problems.

Example: My elderly neighbor passes away. Her house is on a 1/2 acre. After probate it is sold. They decide to make more \$ so they take down her 1970's house. They build the max # of apartments. I have no idea how many. If 3 story's, 8 apartments deep and all studios/1 bedroom or small 2 bedrooms that is 24 "homes". The bus stop is right in front of the property.

That could put 12 to 48 or more cars parking on our residential block. That would put cars on both sides of these older roads with no shoulder to park on. There would be barely enough room for the bus to drive down much less a firetruck.

With the road narrowed by the cars we could not pull our trailer off out property.

The mail person would have problems driving up to each mailbox on the road. They require 30 open feet to get to your mail box or they can skip it.

It would be difficult to pull out onto the street in a car. Cars would have to park near the driveways to fit them all. That would make it too hard to see pulling out, without pulling out into a lane to see, therefore blocking a lane or causing an accident.

With the amount of car break-ins and theft it would be handing the cars over on a silver platter.

Then what happens when I die and someone does the same to my identical size lot. Now we have 24 to 96 cars trying to park on this block.

I know most of you would like us all to ride our bikes, take the bus or an Uber.

Bike theft is high, my employer has allowed employees to put their bikes in our store at night, but there is no room during the day. 3 employees have had their bikes taken, 1 even had 2 special "cut resistance" locks as it was their 2nd bike taken from our work.

The bus can not get a shift worker home who is on a swing shift, AKA restaurant's, grocery, movie theater, gas station, warehouse, security and many more employees. I personally have worked swing for most of my life in this county and know this as a fact.

Uber is just too expensive to take home from work every night.

Walking is out of the question for most of my co-workers do to the nighttime hours.

In conclusion, many of your "so called working stiffs" need a car or need a co-worker neighbor who has a car.

I honestly believe that LEAVING it up to the builder/developers to make good decisions of how many non-profitable parking stalls they need versus square footage of profit is not a wise idea.

Please vote no on this!! Us "working stiffs" need a place to put our cars while living in affordable housing. Everyone else needs room to drive theirs.

Thank You for taking time to read this!!!

Mona K Hughes
1817 Central St. N.E.
Olympia Wa
Wmoongos@aol.com

From: [Clark Gilman](#)
To: [CityCouncil](#)
Cc: [Joyce Phillips](#); [Leonard Bauer](#)
Subject: Thank you for writing to Olympia Council about Zero Parking
Date: Sunday, May 14, 2023 9:12:13 PM

I appreciate receiving so many emails about eliminating parking requirements for new development. I wanted to let you know what I'm thinking and our schedule for taking action.

This Tuesday will be a little different from the average Tuesday Olympia City Council meeting night. The city, alongside you as engaged community members, has been in a discussion about reducing residential parking requirements to further climate and affordable housing goals. A staff proposal was shaped through public comment and forums, research from comparable cities, and discussion in our Planning Commission.

The proposal took a turn when Planning Commission voted to dramatically alter the staff recommendation. The Planning Commission recommendation is to eliminate rather than reduce the amount of on-site parking required for new residential development. I believe the zero parking proposal was well-intentioned, but I believe there are consequences of the zero parking proposal that should be seriously considered.

So, on this slightly different Tuesday night, Olympia City Council will decide whether the advantages of the proposed zero parking legislation outweigh the risks of adopting a major policy change that has not been fully discussed and refined. Or, indeed, whether City Council might make our own modifications to the policy on the spot prior to voting.

I've heard both support and concerns for eliminating parking requirements. Many of the concerns are focused on impacts of new housing providing zero parking in existing low density residential neighborhoods.

Proponents have called this measure an opportunity to accelerate our climate goals by encouraging car-free households. Some have expressed hope that by creating more units on a lot that currently has a single family house new less expensive units will be created. Opponents have been concerned about creating bad neighbor relations and competition for on street parking, believing that tenants of the new units are likely to have cars whether or not on-site parking is provided. Some have questioned whether eliminating onsite parking requirements will actually provide the climate benefits of reducing the number of vehicles owned, parked, and driven by tenants of new housing.

If Council were to consider modifications to the zero parking ordinance on Tuesday what would those changes be? How might we make progress towards encouraging less expensive housing and more people living a car free life while respecting that existing neighborhoods anticipate conflict with new neighbors who park all of their vehicles on the street?

One suggestion from Planning Commission is to delay implementation of the new parking rules in neighborhoods. I wonder what else we might do.

Here is one solution I believe addresses both the hopes and concerns - designate the new units built with no parking as car-free residences. The units built with zero parking would not be eligible for residential parking passes. This would require expanding the residential parking permit system beyond downtown and the South Capitol neighborhood. This could reduce the impact of the new units on surrounding neighbors while furthering our climate and affordability goals. A Car-Free unit adds another walking, biking, and transit-riding household to the community. A unit without parking could rent for less than a comparable unit that allows parking- the going rate for apartment parking is what, \$150 to \$200 a month?

Thanks again for commenting on this issue. I welcome your suggestions as we move towards Tuesday's consideration of the zero parking ordinance.

Clark

Clark Gilman, Mayor Pro Tem
City of Olympia
[\(360\) 753-8447](tel:(360)753-8447)
cgilman@ci.olympia.wa.us

From: [Nicoli Bailey](#)
To: [Clark Gilman](#)
Cc: [CityCouncil](#); [Joyce Phillips](#); [Leonard Bauer](#)
Subject: Re: Thank you for writing to Olympia Council about Zero Parking
Date: Sunday, May 14, 2023 9:50:18 PM

You are welcome. Please know that ADA requirements will need to be put in place for those of us that are not able to walk or take buses. There must be disabled parking available. I use my sticker where ever I go and it makes all the difference!

All best,

Nicoli Bailey (she/her)
360-352-6263 (no texts please)
Olympia, Washington, USA

We think that the point is to pass the test or overcome the problem, but the truth is that things don't really get solved. They come together and they fall apart. Then they come together again and fall apart again. It's just like that. The healing comes from letting there be room for all of this to happen: room for grief, for relief, for misery, for joy.

- Pema Chodron

On Sun, May 14, 2023 at 9:12 PM Clark Gilman <cgilman@ci.olympia.wa.us> wrote:

I appreciate receiving so many emails about eliminating parking requirements for new development. I wanted to let you know what I'm thinking and our schedule for taking action.

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Some have questioned whether eliminating onsite parking requirements will actually provide the climate benefits of reducing the number of vehicles owned, parked, and driven by tenants of new housing.

If Council were to consider modifications to the zero parking ordinance on Tuesday what would those changes be? How might we make progress towards encouraging less expensive housing and more people living a car free life while respecting that existing neighborhoods anticipate conflict with new neighbors who park all of their vehicles on the street?

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Thanks again for commenting on this issue. I welcome your suggestions as we move towards Tuesday's consideration of the zero parking ordinance.

Clark

Clark Gilman, Mayor Pro Tem
City of Olympia
[\(360\) 753-8447](tel:(360)753-8447)
cgilman@ci.olympia.wa.us

From: [Joyce Mercuri](#)
To: [Clark Gilman](#); [CityCouncil](#)
Cc: [Joyce Phillips](#); [Leonard Bauer](#)
Subject: RE: Thank you for writing to Olympia Council about Zero Parking
Date: Sunday, May 14, 2023 10:25:02 PM

Hi Clark and thanks for writing.

- First think this kind of information should be provided to the GENERAL COMMUNITY and not just those who have written in about the proposal.

- Second, regarding your statement from below: **“So, on this slightly different Tuesday night, Olympia City Council will decide whether the advantages of the proposed zero parking legislation outweigh the risks of adopting a major policy change that has not been fully discussed and refined. Or, indeed, whether City Council might make our own modifications to the policy on the spot prior to voting”**
 - The answer to this is simple: NO! NO! NO! The random decision by the planning commission to radically change the proposal should be simply thrown out. Any “new” proposals should go back to square one and follow the same process as the original proposal. The planning commission should not have that much power to make stuff up at the spur of the moment which might then affect our community forever, NOR should the city council. The full process needs to be followed. How many times has the city of Olympia gotten into hot water for not following its own processes in terms of reviewing development proposals? If you ever read comments on Nextdoor or Facebook, you will already know how little many people around here believe in or trust the city government. This will be a real bruise for you all if you run with the last-minute modifications.

- The reduced/zero parking proposal does not achieve the goals you say it will.
 - Not having parking DOES NOT achieve climate goals. We are a mobile society and the best bet we have to achieve climate goals is to change how we fuel our economy. Having a small percentage of people not driving will do nothing to help CO2 emissions. Also, have you noticed it RAINS here a lot?
 - Not providing parking will NOT make housing less expensive. The market determines the price of housing. A recent article on KUOW discussed how townhomes cost \$200,000 less to build, yet are sold at the same price as single family homes in the same neighborhood. The new apartments will undoubtedly be high priced and people are just going to have to get used to paying 50% or more of their income for rent until we can increase publically funded housing.

- The idea of not allowing people from the new apartments to have parking passes may do a small amount to reduce the crowding of cars in adjacent neighborhoods. But where will visitors and friends of the people in the apartments park? Unlikely any developer would want to build something without parking unless in certain key locations, if the prospective tenants would be PROHIBITED from parking. Also, it seems that disallowing only “some” of the people in the neighborhood from having parking would be challenged in court.

- Not having parking is simply unworkable for many working people, especially people with

kids. That will not change given how our town has been designed and developed from the beginning. So those people who most need lower cost housing won't be able to live in these no-parking units anyway.

- I agree that in some key areas no parking might work. For example, all that empty land in close-in west Olympia along Harrison Avenue might work for people without kids because at least there are jobs and bus lines and grocery stores nearby.
- What CAN the city do to reduce parking? I think the council should look very closely at REDUCING the massive amount of parking at commercial developments, especially Capital Mall and Target but also some of the underused parking lots on Cooper Point road e.g. at Goodwill, and the Homegoods store. Some of those lots should be repurposed/rezoned to allow ONLY residential and mixed use development. That huge lot in front of Macy's furniture would be a fabulous location for a huge apartment/retail complex. Harrison Avenue could become a thriving walkable neighborhood if more apartments were built along it. Let's focus on the busiest, most urban areas first before the City requires zero parking everywhere.
- On another note – WHY does the city keep eliminating parking spots in downtown Olympia? Do you want only those who live there to be able to use and enjoy downtown, especially at night?

Thanks

Joyce Mercuri

From: Clark Gilman [mailto:cgilman@ci.olympia.wa.us]
Sent: Sunday, May 14, 2023 9:12 PM
To: CityCouncil
Cc: Joyce Phillips; Leonard Bauer
Subject: Thank you for writing to Olympia Council about Zero Parking

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Thanks again for commenting on this issue. I welcome your suggestions as we move towards Tuesday's consideration of the zero parking ordinance.

Clark

Clark Gilman, Mayor Pro Tem
City of Olympia
[\(360\) 753-8447](tel:(360)753-8447)
cgilman@ci.olympia.wa.us

From: [ComcastIMAP](#)
To: [CityCouncil](#)
Cc: [Joyce Phillips](#); [Leonard Bauer](#)
Subject: Proposed Changes to Olympia's Parking Requirements.
Date: Monday, May 15, 2023 8:09:45 AM

I am writing in support of the proposed changes to the city's parking requirements.

No single action is going to solve our housing affordability crisis; nor meet our sustainability goals or fully address our climate challenges. The proposed changes will contribute to our overall progress in these issues. And these changes are relatively small—not withstanding the loud cries from our usual critics to change.

I do want to speak to the opposition we are seeing to these proposed changes. These folks are well organized and engaged. They sound passionate in their opposition. They are familiar voices against other recent changes to our plans and regulations. They fear how their neighborhoods will evolve—preferring no change. But our challenges do require change. Finding ones that make everyone comfortable won't get us where we need to be. We all need to embrace some discomfort and lengthen our reach. The Planning Commission did this. And the Land Use Committee is supporting their boldness. I encourage you to be bold too.

As someone who has lived in Olympia for five decades (and practiced planning for four of them), I believe the results of the proposed changes will be very incremental and accrue over a relatively long time. Surely we can monitor what happens. If the fears of those opposing the changes do materialize in any meaningful way, we have the ability to make appropriate adjustments. I don't believe this will be necessary.

Now is the time for some boldness. Embrace the challenge. Adopt the proposed recommendations.

Mike McCormick
360.754.2916

From: [Kathy McCormick](#)
To: [CityCouncil](#)
Cc: [Joyce Phillips](#); [Leonard Bauer](#)
Subject: Approve Proposed Parking Requirements
Date: Monday, May 15, 2023 9:12:10 AM

Parking requirements have been acknowledged to be a deterrent to housing supply for 29 years (since adoption of the Olympia Comprehensive Plan under the Growth Management Act). I encourage you to approve the Olympia Planning Commission and Olympia City Council recommended changes.

Don't delay this opportunity to make meaningful changes any longer. The city can't continue to require more impervious surface for the storage of cars if environmental, social, and economic City and Regional Sustainability goals are to be met. This is Olympian's chance to be a leader. It's time to demonstrate real commitment to achieving City and Regional goals.

Kathy McCormick
Sent from my iPhone

From: [Emily Iles](#)
To: [Clark Gilman](#)
Cc: [CityCouncil](#); [Joyce Phillips](#); [Leonard Bauer](#)
Subject: Re: Thank you for writing to Olympia Council about Zero Parking
Date: Monday, May 15, 2023 9:38:14 AM
Attachments: [Parking policy - The effects of residential minimum parking requirements in Seattle.pdf](#)

I can tell that a lot of thought is going into balancing different concerns. The task of the Council is to weigh the validity, likelihood, and the relative costs associated with those concerns.

On the one hand, there is concern about parking becoming more difficult, and that other bad things will happen if parking becomes more difficult, or if there are more cars on the street vs in a driveway. This is an imagined concern. It is not happening. I can't say it won't happen (in fact, I think parking should become less available, because of some benefits of moving away from free, easily available parking that I'll link to below), but there is no realistic idea of new development that would turn Olympia "into a Clockwork Orange-style hellscape", as one particularly hyperbolic opponent put it. Most neighborhoods in the city I've visited could easily accommodate 20 new cars without difficulty; I doubt most people would even notice it on my street (I'd prefer it, because I want people to drive more slowly on my through-street). The neighborhoods where parking is slightly more packed I'd argue are already more dense, those that are already making a more maximal use of land for housing people, like my friends on Cushing Street. I do have to work a bit more to find parking when I visit them, but on the upside they have a place to live.

On the other hand, you have concerns about providing housing: where the city has identified a vital need for 15-16k new units over the next 20 years, and, despite allowing more multiplex building several years ago, it doesn't appear that much if any new multiplex developments within existing neighborhoods are underway in the city. I can verify that the material costs, opportunity costs, and uncertainty around the impact of parking mandates is the reason why I'm not proceeding in developing a multiplex property right now (plus not being a multi-millionaire). And I'm not seeking to be a developer because I want to make a buck. I'm trying to get creative about how I can provide stable housing for my family when, despite making twice the median income for my area, I cannot get a loan that even approaches the price of houses in my area. Much has changed since most of Olympia housing was built: the people who will live here for the next several decades have smaller families, commute less/work from home more, have different financial realities, and have different environmental and community concerns. We deserve to be able to build and adapt neighborhoods to meet those changing needs, and there is no reason to prioritize the landed class over the renting class when the concerns are as stratified as "I hope to find a stable place to live" and "there may be more parking on my street".

As for the idea that new building that doesn't achieve 1:1 parking be designated as non-car units, that seems great on its face. Sure, that relieves the cost pressure for new building, which is huge. But it also shifts the uncertainty and creates a new regulatory regime, just in a different place, where that burden would be felt by renters. It also poses a new round of questions for developers, homeowners, and the city:

Can the non-car unit be transferred among units if you build 2:3 parking places? What if you remove a parking space from your property? I argue that we don't need a new regulatory regime to replace the old one in the absence of any actual issues. Developments happen at a slow enough pace that the Council will have the opportunity to see if such an action is warranted, or if patterns and behaviors shift to accommodate a few more cars here and there, as they have in neighborhoods that already have higher density. If it is included, I would suggest adding a trigger mechanism for a maximum capacity of street parking.

The environmental, creative, cultural and economic advantages of building more density in urban areas are hard to understate. With the amount of units we need to add, I'd suggest we can have a very minimal environmental impact by densifying neighborhoods and finding more units in currently- single-family houses, or we can have a tremendous environmental cost of pushing new building into previously undeveloped land. We can find the efficiencies of higher density, or we can build more and more "non-places" to connect our homes, work, and social lives. We can make policy as if we will be a far less car-dependent city soon, or we can build in costly, car-centered assumptions that entrench car ownership. We can open the door for smaller developers who are trying to make meaningful, creative, sustainable and safe housing in the community in which they live, or we can price development so that only large developers can play here.

This issue of parking seems minor, but the more I look at it, the more it indicates a stark turn for Olympia, either toward protectionism, or toward creative, sustainable, and achievable solutions to the economic and environmental challenges of housing. Change will continue to happen, but this is a moment where we can direct how that change shapes the region. What good is parking on or off a street that most people cannot afford to live on?

I moved from a denser city to Olympia, and have been mystified by the often-repeated concern of not enough parking. So I've looked in to it a lot, from a public policy standpoint, and here are some resource I've found, some of which you also may have come across, but just in case:

"At Strong Towns, we've described a parking lot as virtually the worst use to which you can put a piece of urban land. We've published dozens of articles on the [high costs](#) of our cities' addiction to free parking. We've [urged that every city eliminate its parking minimums](#), and start [pricing parking at a fair market rate](#), so that parking can be adequately weighed against other, potentially more productive uses of land. Our oversupply of free parking [is financially ruinous](#)—it results in cities that [have been eaten alive by parking lots](#) at the expense of value-generating land. It cannot be sustained."

<https://www.strongtowns.org/journal/2020/6/9/but-where-will-i-park>

"The second piece—locally earmarking the revenue from parking meters—is something Shoup argues is crucial to building public support for parking reforms. Otherwise, residents accustomed to "free" parking in their neighborhoods tend to get

up in arms about pricing, because their perception is that something is being taken away from them. Of course, "free" parking is not really free at all—*someone* is paying the cost of paving and maintaining that space, and all of us are paying the opportunity cost of the other things it isn't being used for. But nonetheless, it's helpful to offer something tangible in return to those who will bear the immediate burden of a new parking fee."

<https://www.strongtowns.org/journal/2018/8/20/getting-parking-right-in-portland>

"This research bolsters the case for reducing or eliminating minimum parking requirements. If cities seek to break the cycle of automobile-oriented planning, eliminating residential parking requirements is an important step forward. By eliminating parking requirements, cities can enable more space for new housing and allow that housing to be built more economically with greater opportunities for affordable housing. The Seattle analysis shows that many or most developers will respond to parking reforms, particularly if they are focused in neighborhoods with good walkability and transit options. As envisioned by [Barter \(2014\)](#), developers can be expected to provide less parking, and at a level that probably better matches market demand than the higher off-street parking requirements adopted decades ago. Policymakers from other cities should focus their reforms, like Seattle, on reducing or eliminating parking minimums."

Attached Study of Seattle development post parking reforms

Thank you for bearing with me this far, and I truly appreciate the time and thought that's gone into this proposal so far.

Emily Noelle

On Sun, May 14, 2023 at 9:12 PM Clark Gilman <cgilman@ci.olympia.wa.us> wrote:

I appreciate receiving so many emails about eliminating parking requirements for new development. I wanted to let you know what I'm thinking and our schedule for taking action.

This Tuesday will be a little different from the average Tuesday Olympia City Council meeting night. The city, alongside you as engaged community members, has been in a discussion about reducing residential parking requirements to further climate and affordable housing goals. A staff proposal was shaped through public comment and forums, research from comparable cities, and discussion in our Planning Commission.

The proposal took a turn when Planning Commission voted to dramatically alter the staff recommendation. The Planning Commission recommendation is to eliminate rather than reduce the amount of on-site parking required for new residential development. I believe the zero parking proposal was well-intentioned, but I believe there are consequences of the zero parking proposal that should be seriously considered.

So, on this slightly different Tuesday night, Olympia City Council will decide whether the advantages of the proposed zero parking legislation outweigh the risks of adopting a major policy change that has not been fully discussed and refined. Or, indeed, whether City Council might make our own modifications to the policy on the spot prior to voting.

I've heard both support and concerns for eliminating parking requirements. Many of the concerns are focused on impacts of new housing providing zero parking in existing low density residential neighborhoods.

Proponents have called this measure an opportunity to accelerate our climate goals by encouraging car-free households. Some have expressed hope that by creating more units on a lot that currently has a single family house new less expensive units will be created. Opponents have been concerned about creating bad neighbor relations and competition for on street parking, believing that tenants of the new units are likely to have cars whether or not on-site parking is provided. Some have questioned whether eliminating onsite parking requirements will actually provide the climate benefits of reducing the number of vehicles owned, parked, and driven by tenants of new housing.

If Council were to consider modifications to the zero parking ordinance on Tuesday what would those changes be? How might we make progress towards encouraging less expensive housing and more people living a car free life while respecting that existing neighborhoods anticipate conflict with new neighbors who park all of their vehicles on the street?

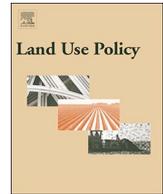
One suggestion from Planning Commission is to delay implementation of the new parking rules in neighborhoods. I wonder what else we might do.

Here is one solution I believe addresses both the hopes and concerns - designate the new units built with no parking as car-free residences. The units built with zero parking would not be eligible for residential parking passes. This would require expanding the residential parking permit system beyond downtown and the South Capitol neighborhood. This could reduce the impact of the new units on surrounding neighbors while furthering our climate and affordability goals. A Car-Free unit adds another walking, biking, and transit-riding household to the community. A unit without parking could rent for less than a comparable unit that allows parking- the going rate for apartment parking is what, \$150 to \$200 a month?

Thanks again for commenting on this issue. I welcome your suggestions as we move towards Tuesday's consideration of the zero parking ordinance.

Clark

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Parking policy: The effects of residential minimum parking requirements in Seattle



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ABSTRACT

Parking regulations are a central part of American zoning. There is mounting evidence about the negative effects of parking requirements on the environment and housing affordability. Given this evidence, some cities have reduced or eliminated parking requirements in certain areas. Our research examines how real estate developers respond to municipal parking reforms. We answer two questions. First, how do parking requirements affect the amount of parking provided in new residential developments? Second, how do developers' responses vary by building and neighborhood characteristics?

This research analyzes Seattle, Washington (USA), the site of 2012 policy reforms that reduced or eliminated parking requirements in most central and transit-oriented neighborhoods. Our dataset consists of 868 developments with 60,361 housing units approved between 2012 and 2017. We use descriptive statistics, build a counterfactual scenario, and specify ordinary least squares (OLS) regression models to identify relationships between parking requirements and actual parking provision.

We find that parking provision is closely, though not completely, tied to parking requirements. More than one-third of developments in the sample included the exact amount of required parking, including about two-thirds of developments subject to a minimum of one parking space per housing unit. About 70% of developments with no parking requirements did include some parking. Parking requirements were the most important predictor of the actual quantity of parking provision in the regression results using the full sample. There was more parking provision in less dense and mixed-use developments, and in neighborhoods with higher employment densities. Seattle developers built 40% less parking than would have been required prior to the reforms, resulting in 18,000 fewer parking spaces and saving an estimated \$537 million.

1. Introduction

In most U.S. cities today, residential developers must build one or more parking spaces along with each new housing unit. These minimum parking standards – developed decades ago – have caused problems for environmental sustainability, housing affordability, and equity outcomes. Minimum parking standards lead to inefficient land use, an automobile-dominated environment and path-dependent cycle of planning and development, and higher housing costs. Minimum parking standards also restrict choice for housing renters and buyers. Most importantly, they hinder households' ability to choose their level of parking consumption. For example, a carless household may be compelled to rent an apartment with two parking spaces because few or no other options with less bundled parking were permitted by local

regulations. Realizing these downsides of supply minimums, a growing number of U.S. cities are undertaking parking policy reforms. We answer two questions that examine developers' responses to parking regulatory changes. First, how do parking requirements affect the amount of parking provided in new residential developments? Second, how does the response to requirements vary by building and neighborhood characteristics?

The literature suggests that regulations are one of the key factors that influence residential development decisions. For a building to be built, it must be both permissible and feasible (Boarnet and Crane, 2001; Levine, 2006). Permissibility pertains to regulations, while feasibility refers to market conditions. Minimum parking standards serve as a residential development constraint, including to the adaptive reuse of commercial buildings to residential uses in downtown Los Angeles

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(Manville, 2013), and new housing development in Queens, New York (McDonnell et al., 2011), London (Li and Guo, 2014), and Los Angeles rail station areas (Gabbe, 2018).

We extend the findings of these studies by analyzing the required and constructed parking associated with new residential development in Seattle, Washington. We use Seattle multifamily planning entitlement data from June 2012 to October 2017, which includes 868 unique developments comprised of 60,361 housing units. For each multifamily development, we collect attributes related to the minimum parking required when the building was approved, and the quantity of parking that the developer actually included in the building. Since we seek to understand how developers respond to minimum parking requirements, we specify multivariate regression models that explain parking counts in new developments as a function of regulatory and non-regulatory factors. Beyond regulations, we analyze building characteristics (e.g., building density, residential-only versus mixed-use residential) and neighborhood characteristics (e.g., density, employment accessibility, land use mix, land values).

2. Parking as a binding constraint on development

The supply of parking is a central component of American land use planning and regulation (Shoup, 2005). Large swaths of many U.S. cities are devoted to parking; for example, about 14% of Los Angeles County's incorporated land is occupied by above-ground parking (Chester et al., 2015). While neglected as a scholarly topic for most of their existence, on-street parking requirements and their effects have emerged as the focus of a sizeable literature over the last decade. On the other hand, we still know relatively little about off-street parking requirements (Mukhija and Shoup, 2006; Pierce et al., 2015), much less how they influence new residential development. This is an important issue because off-street parking requirements lead to higher housing prices based on analyses of urban rents nationally (Gabbe and Pierce, 2017), downtown Los Angeles rents and sales prices (Manville, 2013), and San Francisco sales prices (Jia and Wachs, 1999). Nationally, one or more garage parking spaces is associated with \$141 per month in additional rent (Gabbe and Pierce, 2017). Minimum parking requirements have also been associated with increased vehicle ownership and use (Chatman, 2013; Manville, 2017; Weinberger, 2012).

Regulatory provisions may represent upper or lower limits imposed by government (Bertaud and Brueckner, 2005), but how do regulations matter for real estate development? Said another way, do regulations lead to development outcomes that are different from what the market would otherwise produce? McDonnell et al. (2011) suggest that "if developers respond to parking requirements by building the absolute minimum necessary to comply, we can infer that that requirements are likely effective in producing more spaces than the market alone would" (p. 53). Developments may sometimes deviate from baseline regulations through incentives, variances, and zoning code amendments (Hoch et al., 2000), which may be fairly common in practice (Gabbe, 2018; McDonnell et al., 2011). The very existence of allowances for developers to build less parking than the generally required minimum also suggests that existing supply floors are too high.

Recent scholarship has taken several approaches to examining whether parking requirements are a binding constraint on development, some of which are described in more detail below. These studies provide evidence that minimum parking standards are a development constraint in New York City (McDonnell et al., 2011), London (Guo and Ren, 2013; Li and Guo, 2014), and Los Angeles (Gabbe, 2018; Manville, 2013).

Several studies have compared actual and required parking spaces in a set of developments. McDonnell et al. (2011) examined how much parking developers actually provide relative to parking requirements. The authors studied 38 multifamily developments, each with at least 20 housing units, in Queens that were completed between 2000 and 2008. For each development, the authors compared how many parking spaces

were required to the number that developers actually provided. Each of the 38 buildings was assigned to one of four categories: it provided less parking than required through a variance, waiver, or special building type designation undetected by the authors (11%); it provided the exact amount of required parking (47% of buildings); it provided less than 25% above required parking (29%); or it provided more than 25% above required parking (13%). The close conformance of supply to parking requirements led the authors to conclude that "requirements are either exactly what the market would have provided independently or, perhaps more likely, that these developers would provide less parking if given the choice" (McDonnell et al., 2011, p. 64).

Gabbe (2018) compared baseline minimum parking requirements with the actual amount of parking in 32 multifamily and mixed-use buildings in Los Angeles's Vermont/Western and Koreatown areas. The average new building in Vermont/Western had 94% of the baseline required parking, while those in Koreatown averaged 88% of baseline required parking. Developers commonly used density bonus incentives, which provide additional allowances for developers in exchange for building a specified share of affordable housing, to provide less parking than the baseline requirements. Developers' responses to parking regulations depended somewhat on project characteristics; market-rate housing tended to have more parking than affordable housing, and condominiums more parking than apartments.

Another set of studies used parking policy changes as natural experiments. Manville (2013) used Los Angeles's adaptive reuse ordinance (ARO) to examine if parking requirements were a barrier to housing development, and how parking requirements shape housing development. The author surveyed 56 buildings with 6700 units, and used these data to set up a series of regression models to test whether adaptive reuse buildings were less likely to have bundled parking, explain the number of bundled parking spaces in a building, and explain variation in rents and sales prices. Manville found that a number of developers provided less on-site parking in the presence of an adaptive reuse ordinance, and other developers provided parking on a different, less expensive piece of land (e.g., off-site rather than on-site). A unit in an ARO building had about 0.8 fewer parking spaces per unit than a non-ARO unit, all else equal. But, there was variation evident by housing type; developers of upscale housing were more likely to provide on-site parking because of demand from buyers and large institutional lenders.

Finally, Guo and Ren (2013) and Li and Guo (2014) studied changes in parking supply following London's parking reforms that began in 2000 and 2001, in which the Greater London Authority shifted from minimum to maximum parking standards. In particular, Li and Guo (2014) focused on how minimum and maximum parking requirements affected parking supply in 12 of 33 boroughs in greater London. The authors used nearest neighbor and caliper techniques to match pairs of pre- and post-reform buildings. They specified regression models to estimate the average effects in the combined sample and individual effects within matched pairs. London's parking reforms led to an average reduction of 0.76 spaces/unit or 49%, and almost 60% of post-reform developments in London have no parking. The parking reforms also had a larger effect on denser Inner London than in the city's suburbs.

Though much of the research on this topic is quantitative, several authors have also interviewed developers and planners to better understand how minimum parking requirements shape developments; the role of lender requirements in parking provided; and alternative strategies for parking provision, including shared parking and off-site parking. Manville (2013) interviewed nine developers, one planning consultant, one municipal planner, and one architect. He found that the "importance of the parking exemption declined with the standard of housing being constructed" (p. 8). Additionally, in high-end buildings, large institutional lenders wanted parking to be on-site. Guo and Ren (2013) and Li and Guo (2014) surveyed and interviewed London-area planners to inform their understanding of the policy changes across

boroughs and their research design, although they did not directly report the results of the interviews. Developers and planning consultants often find that a combination of regulations, including parking requirements, constrain their ability to maximize housing construction on a site (Gabbe, 2018).

Our study addresses several gaps in the literature. First and most broadly, as noted above, our study provides additional evidence regarding the decision-making of developers regarding off-street parking supply in the United States (Manville, 2013). Second, we respond to McDonnell et al.'s call for detailed analyses to better understand developers' responses to minimum parking requirements (McDonnell et al., 2011). Third, Li and Guo (2014) identify a lack of empirical evidence related to "the consequences of parking standards, or the effects of initiatives that relax or eliminate minimum parking standards" (p. 353). Our study, through a new data collection effort and case study approach following Seattle's parking requirements reform, helps to fill these research gaps.

3. Parking policy reforms in Seattle, Washington

Seattle, Washington is a large city (population 668,000) that anchors a metropolitan area of nearly 3.7 million people in the U.S. Pacific Northwest region (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016). The Seattle metropolitan area is growing, adding about 105,000 people between 2000 and 2016 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000), and as many as 62,000 more people between 2016 and 2018 (City of Seattle, 2018). The city has updated and adopted new plans and policies to accommodate this growth, including related to parking (City of Seattle, 2005).

The city's 1994–2014 comprehensive plan – which aligns with the beginning of our study period – aimed to focus residential growth in designated "urban centers" and "urban villages" (City of Seattle, 2005). At both the regional and municipal levels, these growth planning objectives underscore the need for concentrated growth centers in places that are or will be served by rail transit or superior bus service. These themes were further emphasized in the city's current comprehensive plan, *Seattle 2035* (City of Seattle, 2017b).

Urban centers are the highest density areas of housing and employment, including downtown Seattle, Capitol Hill, First Hill, South Lake Union, Uptown, Northgate, and the neighborhoods around the University of Washington. Urban villages are medium-density neighborhood centers, typically with good public transit service. Urban villages are further divided into two categories: hub urban villages and residential urban villages. Hub urban villages have a mix of uses, but at lower densities than urban centers, and they have employment growth goals. Most residential urban villages have predominantly residential uses, along with some commercial services, and range in size from smaller crossroads neighborhood districts to broader areas along commercial corridors (City of Seattle, 2005, 2017b). In all of these centers and villages, the city desires a mixed-use urban setting with services and amenities for local residents, increased economic vitality, and improved walkability (City of Seattle, 2017b).

Seattle adopted a major reform to off-street minimum parking requirements for residential developments in 2006 and 2012. Prior to 2006, residential developments across Seattle – except in downtown and for some special housing types – were subject to minimum requirements of providing one or more parking spaces per housing unit. As part of the 2012 parking reforms, Seattle eliminated off-street parking requirements in multifamily zones in urban centers, after previously granting this flexibility only in commercial zones in 2006 (City of Seattle, 2012). Also in 2012, Seattle eliminated off-street parking requirements for residential and non-residential uses in urban villages when they were near "frequent transit service," meaning a location within one-quarter mile of public transit that runs at least every 15 min for most of the day (City of Seattle, 2012). This full relaxation of parking requirements for most development in urban centers and urban villages was accompanied by a 50% reduction in parking minimums for

corridors outside those growth centers but near frequent transit service stops.

Special housing types were also subject to lower requirements. Assisted living developments were only required to provide one parking space for every 4 rooms, small efficiency apartments (sometimes known as "micro-apartments") to provide one space for every two housing units, and congregate housing to provide one space for every 4 rooms (City of Seattle, 2017a). Additionally, affordable housing units were subject to similar reduced minimum parking levels depending on the housing unit mix (City of Seattle, 2017a). While the city adopted further parking reductions in 2018 (Johnson, 2018), these are outside the time period of our analysis.

Seattle's off-street parking reforms were adopted following public outreach in the process of broader planning efforts. The city held more than 40 outreach meetings to receive feedback on comprehensive plan updates and citywide rezoning efforts between 2014 and 2017, during which planners sought input on the city's updated parking policies (City of Seattle, 2016). City staff also attended ten meetings with the most interested neighborhood groups specifically about their parking concerns. Other than a few vocal neighborhood groups, there was relatively little expressed public opposition to the new parking policies. One of this paper's authors (Clowers) was deeply involved in this process and attributes relatively limited community opposition to a variety of factors. These include (1) the city's attention to neighborhood stakeholders and decision-makers' keen interest in supporting larger housing affordability initiatives that listed parking reform as a priority; (2) support from elected officials for parking reforms; (3) wide acceptance of the city's urban centers-based growth strategy; (4) growth in population, especially younger households, seeking a more urban and transit-oriented lifestyle; and (5) the effectiveness of the city's approach to managing on-street parking that has controlled spillover parking in several areas.

4. Data

We use City of Seattle land use entitlement data for new housing developments in urban centers, urban villages, and frequent transit areas. The data were collected by one of the authors from the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections' permitting database. The data include all projects requiring master use permits (MUPs) submitted to the department between June 2012 and October 2017. Master use permits are needed when developments are subject to at least one discretionary decision to obtain a land use permit; nearly all multifamily and mixed-use residential developments require a MUP. We focus on attached (two or more unit) residential development projects. Our data include 868 residential and mixed-use residential developments totaling 60,361 housing units with 39,350 associated parking spaces. The data also include locational identifiers, numbers of housing units, numbers of parking spaces for residential uses, commercial square footage (if applicable), zoning designations, and the urban center or village names for each residential development. For residential mixed-use developments, Seattle planning staff reviewed project applications and plan drawings to allocate parking between residential and commercial uses (Fig. 1).

We incorporate spatial data from the city to match each development project with its applicable minimum parking requirements. We use a city spatial layer showing the areas in which a developer is allowed to provide no parking or 0.5 spaces per housing unit, rather than the standard 1 space per housing unit (Seattle Dept. of Construction and Inspections, 2016). We use R software and the *sf* package to spatially join the building locations with the frequent transit area dataset (Pebesma, 2018; R Core Team, 2013). Land values are based on 2012 assessed values from the county assessor (King County, 2018).

We obtain additional data about accessibility and neighborhood characteristics – some of which we include in our final model specifications, described below – from the EPA Smart Location Database and

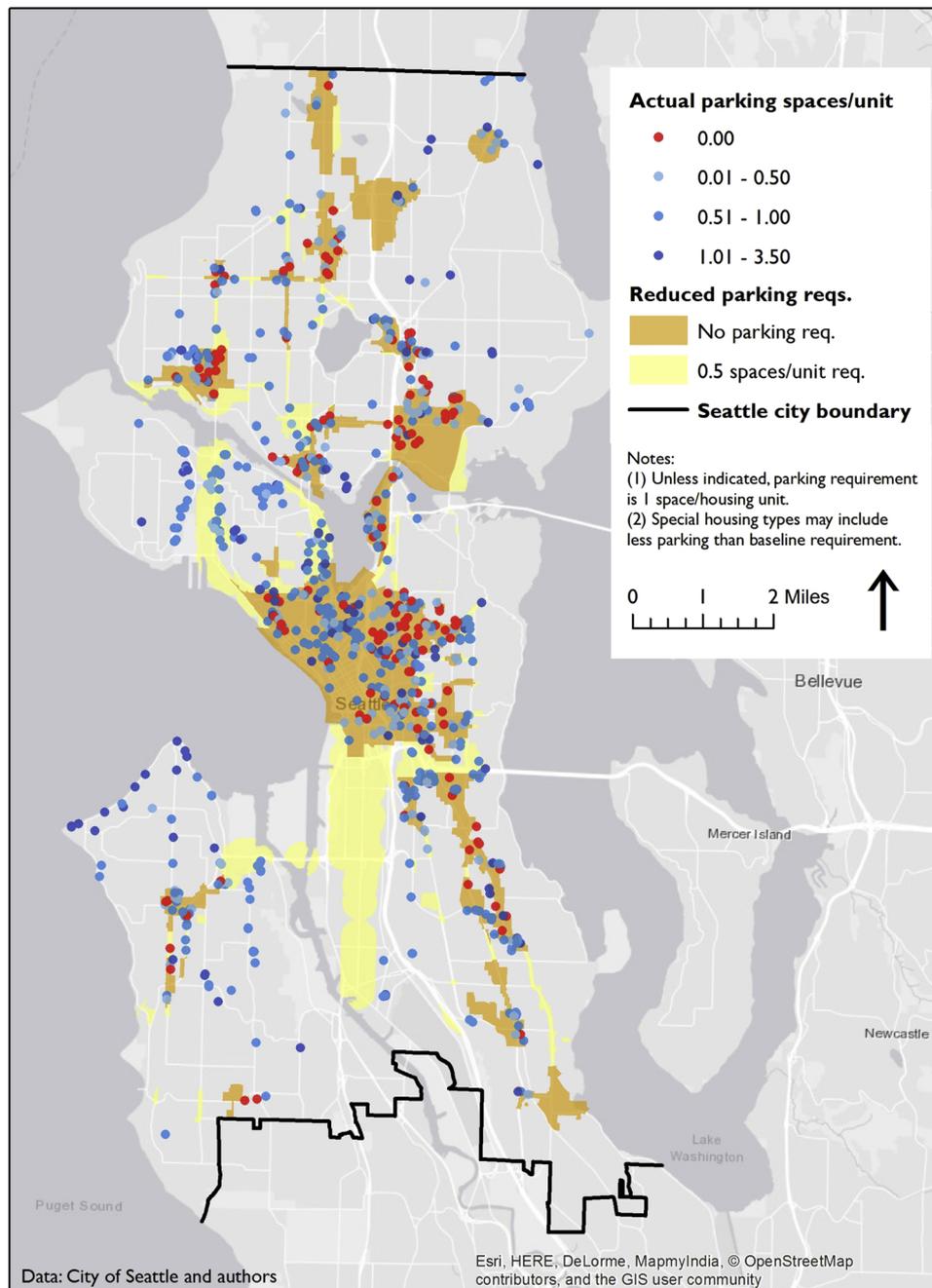


Fig. 1. Seattle residential developments in study (2012–2017), with actual and baseline required parking spaces per unit.

Table 1
Descriptive statistics.

Variable	Observations	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Actual parking spaces provided per housing unit (by development)	868	0.68	0.49	0.00	3.50
Required parking ratio provided per housing unit (by development)	868	0.26	0.39	0.00	1.00
Residential density of the development (housing units/acre)	868	178.52	206.66	3.83	1555.71
Mixed-use development indicator	868	0.21	0.41	0.00	1.00
Neighborhood employment density (employees/acre)	868	22.33	54.03	0.11	1155.18
Jobs accessible within 45 min. by transit (in thousands)	868	40.29	21.75	7.88	115.52
Neighborhood land use mix (EPA SLD employment/household entropy)	868	0.57	0.21	0.03	0.97
Land value per acre in 2012 (in thousands of USD)	868	6329.25	7652.13	38.22	66,400.00

the American Community Survey (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016; U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 2013). Census block group measures from the EPA Smart Location Database include jobs accessible by

automobile within 45 min, jobs accessible by public transit within 45 min, gross housing density, gross employment density, a land use mix measure based on housing and five categories of employment, and

share of households without a car (Ramsey and Bell, 2014). Census tract measures include median household income, share of owner-occupied housing, and share of workers who drive alone to work (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016) (Table 1).

5. Methods

We employ a conceptual model that explains the amount of parking provided with a residential building as a function of planning and zoning requirements, developer and project characteristics, and neighborhood characteristics. We expect developers to provide fewer parking spaces per housing unit in areas where the city requires less parking; in denser mixed-use neighborhoods with better transit service; and in affordable and moderate market-rate residential developments.

We build a counterfactual scenario to compare Seattle's new development characteristics (under the parking reforms) with a reasonable assumption of what might have occurred had the city's parking reforms not been adopted. If a completed development included less parking than the pre-reform minimum requirement, our counterfactual is that the developer would have included the pre-reform minimum. For example, if a developer (post-reform) included 0.4 parking spaces per unit – but would have been previously subject to a one parking space/unit minimum – the counterfactual scenario is that the developer would have built one parking space per unit. For post-reform developments that included more parking than the pre-reform minimums, parking regulation was seemingly not a binding constraint and we assume that the development to be unchanged in the counterfactual scenario. For example, if a developer built 1.25 spaces per unit – and would have been previously subject to a one space per unit requirement – the counterfactual scenario is that the developer would have built 1.25 spaces per unit.

We use multivariate regression models to further examine the relationship between parking regulations and parking provided for residential developments, while holding constant other factors likely associated with the level of parking provided. We specify ordinary least squares (OLS) models taking the form of Eq. (1) below.¹ Our unit of analysis is the parcel.

Our primary model specification (Model 1) includes all developments, but since we do not have a full sample of developments with parking minimums of 1 space per unit or above, we include a secondary model (Model 2) limited to developments in areas with parking requirements below 1 space per unit. We report coefficients, standard errors and beta weights for each independent variable.

Actual parking = $a + b_1$ Parking requirements_{si} + b_2 Building characteristics_{si} + b_3 Neighborhood characteristics_{si} + ϵ_i (1)

While we initially considered numerous neighborhood and accessibility factors as described in the methods section above, many of these factors were highly correlated and added little explanatory value to the model. Thus, our final specifications are fairly parsimonious. As a result, the primary and secondary model specifications present little cause for concern regarding collinearity between independent variables, suggesting they are well specified. Variance inflation factors for all independent variables in the primary model were in the range of 1.07–1.68, with an average variance inflation factor of 1.33.

6. Results

Most buildings in our sample provide less than one parking space

¹ We also considered multinomial logistic regression models with an outcome variable showing categories of adherence to the minimum parking standards (i.e. provided exact parking requirement, provided up to 25% above minimum, etc.). We ultimately opted for the OLS models so as not to lose information about the developments, and for ease of interpretation.

per unit, and a sizable share provide no parking. Table 2 shows the distribution of actual parking provided per housing unit in the new Seattle developments studied. Nearly 20% of new residential buildings in our dataset include no parking, and about 88% of buildings contain less than one parking space per unit. The average building has 0.68 spaces per unit, while the average building in areas with reduced or no parking requirements has 0.57 spaces per unit. Lastly, all but one development had less than two parking spaces per unit, a level of provision that is common (and sometimes required) in other cities.

Most developers closely adhered to the minimum parking requirements. In Table 3 we illustrate the relationship between three minimum standard thresholds (0, 0.5, and 1 space per housing unit) and the parking spaces per housing unit that were actually built. About 34% of the developments in the sample included the exact amount of parking required in the code, including nearly 30% of the buildings in areas where no parking was required. In areas where one parking space per unit was required, more than two-thirds of developments included exactly one space per unit. If developers provided more than the exact amount, they most commonly built no more than one-half space per unit above the requirement. This was particularly true in areas where the city required 0.5 parking spaces per unit; here more than three-quarters of developers built between 0.5 and one parking spaces per unit. While nearly 30% of buildings with no required parking added no supply, 70% did include some parking.

The city's policy reforms led to a considerable decrease in parking production and an associated savings of more than \$500 million in direct construction costs. Table 4 summarizes the comparison between what was built in Seattle between 2012 and 2017, and what might have happened without the policy changes (the counterfactual scenario). In the Downtown Urban Center, where parking requirements had been eliminated many years prior to 2012, there would not have been any change. Likewise, in the neighborhoods in which the city did not change its parking requirements, there would be no difference between the two scenarios. But, in the other urban centers, urban villages, and transit-oriented locations, developers built 40% less parking than would otherwise have been required. This equates to 17,886 fewer parking spaces. If we conservatively estimate that each parking space would have cost \$30,000 to build,² this would represent a direct cost savings of about \$537 million. This figure does not include the opportunity costs associated with building parking in spaces that could be used for housing, as we discuss below.

The regression results indicate that required parking is a central predictor of how much parking a developer will actually build. Model 1 illustrates that parking requirements are the most important factor explaining higher levels of actual parking provided. The level of parking requirements provides nearly double the explanatory power of the next most important factor in the model (the residential density of the development). Model 2 shows the same sign and statistical significance cutoffs between independent variables and the level of parking provided. The relative weight of factors is changed, however, with parking requirements being slightly less influential in explaining variation in parking provided than the density of the development project itself.

Model 1 better explains developers' parking provision decisions than Model 2. Model 1 explains 37% of variation in the amount of parking provided, while Model 2 explains 24% of the variation. Parking may be a more influential factor in Model 1 than Model 2 because Model 1 also includes developments with parking requirements of one space per unit. Higher parking requirements are more likely to be a binding constraint from a developer's perspective than lower requirements.

² In 2012, it cost the average American developer \$34,000 to build one underground parking space, and \$24,000 to build one above-ground parking space (Shoup, 2014).

Table 2
Distribution of actual parking spaces per housing unit in the sample.

Parking spaces per housing unit	Percent of units in sample
No parking	19.5%
0.01 – 0.50	18.7%
0.51 – 1.00	49.9%
1.01 – 2.00	11.9%
2.01 or more	0.1%
Total	100%

Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Table 3
Relationship between minimum parking required and parking provided.

Minimum parking requirement (spaces/unit)	Buildings in sample	Average parking ratio	% of buildings that exactly met requirement	Provided < 0.5 spaces/unit above requirement	Provided 0.5 - 1.0 spaces/unit above requirement	Provided > 1.0 space/unit above requirement
0	570	0.49	29.5%	24.2%	39.0%	7.4%
0.5	130	0.91	11.5%	76.2%	6.9%	5.4%
1	168	1.12	67.9%	20.2%	11.9%	0.0%
All	868	0.68	34.2%	31.2%	28.9%	5.7%

Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Table 4
Estimated reduction in parking construction stemming from 2012 policy reforms (2012–2017).

	Actual parking spaces built	Parking spaces built in counterfactual scenario	Parking savings from policy reforms	% reduction in new parking from policy reforms
Downtown Urban Center (area had no residential parking requirements prior to 2012)	9,995	9,995	–	0%
Buildings subject to reduced requirements	26,348	44,234	17,886	40%
Buildings not subject to reduced requirements	2,870	2,870	–	0%
Total	39,213	57,099	17,886	31%

The relationship between project characteristics and parking supply runs both ways; development characteristics shape parking provisions, while parking requirements shape what a developer can feasibly build. The negative association between the density of housing units and the density of parking units suggests a direct tradeoff in space available, the preferences of tenants of smaller units for less parking, or a combination of these phenomena. Mixed-use development was also associated with more parking provision. The most likely explanation is that mixed-use development is more common in higher density neighborhoods – often with more regulated on-street parking – and developers opt to provide more parking on-site. Alternatively, some retail parking spaces may have been mistakenly included in the residential parking counts. Lastly, in Model 1, land value is not associated with parking provision, but in Model 2, developments with higher land values are associated with more parking provision. This trend is consistent with the explanation of why mixed-use development might be associated with more parking per housing unit.

Neighborhood factors make much less of a difference in how much parking is provided. We note, however, that neighborhood factors were also included in the city's 2012 decision about where to alter parking requirements. The only significant association between a neighborhood factor and parking provision is employment density. In neighborhoods with higher employment densities, developers included more parking in their residential developments. This may be a function of the limited parking supply in major employment centers like downtown Seattle, South Lake Union (home to the Amazon.com headquarters), and the neighborhoods around the University of Washington (Table 5).

7. Discussion

Our results show that (1) minimum parking requirements constrain developers, though not uniformly; and (2) reducing requirements leads

to less parking provision, and presumably cost savings for developers and lower housing prices for consumers. These findings highlight the impact that policymakers can have by reducing or eliminating off-street parking requirements.

More than one-third of developers built the exact amount of parking required, including more than two-thirds of developers subject to a one parking space per unit requirement. In many areas with higher parking requirements, the requirements were more likely to be a constraint on developers. In response to the suggestion of McDonnell et al. (2011), our multivariate results provide an empirical estimate of the tradeoffs,

after controlling for parking requirements, between the number of parking spaces provided and the number of housing units provided.

Developers do not react uniformly in response to parking requirements. Like Manville (2013), we find that, controlling for parking requirements, developments in areas with higher land values have more parking per unit than others, likely to satisfy tenant demand. Moreover, similar to Gabbe (2018), we find that developers respond to policy changes with some variation, including by type of development. For instance, mixed-use developments include more parking than multi-family developments. In line with the conclusions of McDonnell et al. (2011), we also find that developers largely adhere to the minimum requirements, highlighting the meaningful impact of these policies. There are opportunities for future mixed-methods research to further explain the decision-making processes of developers, and the non-regulatory factors (e.g., lender requirements, developers' perceptions of risk) that also shape parking decisions. One unexplained trend in parking supply (in Seattle and elsewhere) is why – in addition to regulations – developments are often clustered at zero or one space per unit; this might indicate that round numbers are more intuitive and easier to administer than fractional parking requirements.

Parking reforms in Seattle led to an estimated construction cost savings of more than \$537 million over the first five years, which likely benefited both housing developers and consumers. Reducing parking requirements allowed developers to forego some construction costs, along with the opportunity cost of using valuable urban land for parking, rather than housing or commercial uses. In the absence of the parking reforms – based on our counterfactual scenario – developers would have been forced to build nearly 18,000 new spaces, at a construction cost averaging at least \$30,000 per space.

There is good evidence from past scholarship that housing with less parking also costs less for buyers and renters. Many of these new Seattle housing units would have been more expensive had they included more

Table 5
OLS model results with outcome of parking spaces per housing unit.

	Model 1		Model 2	
	All Developments		Developments with Reduced Requirements	
	Coefficient (standard error)	Beta coefficient	Coefficient (standard error)	Beta coefficient
Required parking ratio provided per housing unit (by development)	1.919*** (0.179)	(0.525)	2.265*** (0.320)	(0.335)
Residential density of the development (housing units/acre)	0.999* (0.000275)	(-0.311)	0.999* (0.000261)	(-0.348)
Mixed-use development indicator	1.079* (0.0303)	(0.0631)	1.084* (0.0367)	(0.0746)
Neighborhood employment density (employees/acre)	1.001* (0.000370)	(0.121)	1.001* (0.000375)	(0.132)
Jobs accessible within 45 min. by transit (in thousands)	1.002 (0.00204)	(0.105)	1.002 (0.00194)	(0.104)
Neighborhood land use mix (EPA SLD employment/household entropy)	1.149 (0.121)	(0.0609)	1.200 (0.144)	(0.0817)
Land value per acre in 2012 (log)	1.026 (0.0255)	(0.0463)	1.072* (0.0330)	(0.121)
Observations	868		707	
R-squared	0.368		0.239	

Robust standard errors in parentheses. ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$, * $p < 0.05$.

parking. Additionally, if less parking led to more housing production, the additional housing supply may have helped to temper rising prices.

The experience in Seattle also provides several lessons for other cities about the politics of parking reforms. First, the city's overall vision of urban villages has strong support, and off-street parking reductions are framed as important for achieving this vision (City of Seattle, 2016; Gutman, 2018). Second, the city's lowered parking standards across transit-oriented neighborhoods means that parking policy is predictable and uniform, reducing project-by-project debates about parking. Lastly, the city's elected officials have successfully used a combination of economic, environmental, and equity arguments in response to local concerns about new development with limited off-street parking (Gutman, 2018).

Several limitations to our analysis provide additional opportunities for future research. First, our dataset lacks detailed building attributes, including tenure of residents (owner vs. renter),³ parking type (surface, structured or underground), or costs of units (rents and sales prices). Second, future analyses should incorporate measures of local municipal and commercial parking supply so we can better understand the interaction between residential parking supply and other nearby parking. Third, our sample does not include all new buildings in areas requiring one space per unit, and our sample in these areas may not be representative of all new buildings in these areas. Additionally, we do not have data about how much parking developers included in the new buildings prior to the 2006 and 2012 reforms, though we assume that it was at least one space per unit, except in the downtown area.

Future research that analyzes changes in local parking supply will need to account for exogenous changes in parking demand due to shifts in travel modes. Demand for parking could decrease due to the increasing adoption of travel demand policies (mainly, congestion and road use pricing) as well as the further penetration of new mobility services (mainly, ridesharing and autonomous vehicles) as travel modes in the future. Although it is uncertain how commonly these will be adopted, travel demand policies that raise the cost of vehicle travel will both reduce the use of vehicles as a travel mode intensively and extensively, which in turn will lessen the demand for parking as well as reduce congestion (Hensher and Puckett, 2007). The rapidly growth of new mobility services will likely further lead to modest reductions in parking demand, especially for certain trip types. While evidence regarding the effects of ridesharing adoption on traffic congestion is

mixed at best, early evidence suggests parking demand has dropped as a result of increased adoption (Henao and Marshall, 2019). Further out in the future, simulations suggest that, in the absence of policy reform, autonomous vehicle deployment could increase congestion, in part due to these vehicles cruising to avoid paying for parking. While this is ambiguous result from a social welfare perspective, the rise of autonomous vehicles will more likely lessen parking demand in cities than ridesharing (Zhang and Guhathakurta, 2017; Millard-Ball, 2019). Future studies can assess how these factors interact bidirectionally with local parking supply policy-making.

8. Conclusions

This paper explains how developers respond to minimum parking requirements. We explain how parking requirements affect the amount of parking provided in new residential developments, and whether developers' responses differ by building and neighborhood characteristics. We focus on Seattle following the city's large-scale 2012 reductions or elimination of parking requirements in many central and transit-oriented neighborhoods.

Developers' actions are related to, and commonly constrained by, applicable minimum parking requirements. Some developers would presumably provide less parking given the opportunity. The developments in our dataset averaged 0.68 parking spaces/unit, and about 20% included no parking. We estimated a counterfactual scenario of what might have happened in the absence of the 2012 reforms; in this scenario developers would have built nearly 18,000 more parking spaces at more than \$500 million in construction costs. These costs would have been passed along to renters and buyers, whether they wanted the parking or not.

The regression results further explain how parking requirements matter. Required parking is a central predictor of parking production in both models. Project characteristics like mixed-use development and higher land values led to more parking production. Neighborhood characteristics seemed to matter less, but we may already be capturing the important neighborhood characteristics when we factor in where the city decided to alter requirements in 2012.

This research bolsters the case for reducing or eliminating minimum parking requirements. If cities seek to break the cycle of automobile-oriented planning, eliminating residential parking requirements is an important step forward. By eliminating parking requirements, cities can enable more space for new housing and allow that housing to be built more economically with greater opportunities for affordable housing.

³ Although, the overwhelming majority of Seattle's multifamily evaluated here was apartments and not condominiums.

The Seattle analysis shows that many or most developers will respond to parking reforms, particularly if they are focused in neighborhoods with good walkability and transit options. As envisioned by Barter (2014), developers can be expected to provide less parking, and at a level that probably better matches market demand than the higher off-street parking requirements adopted decades ago. Policymakers from other cities should focus their reforms, like Seattle, on reducing or eliminating parking minimums.

Acknowledgements

We are grateful to two anonymous referees for their thoughtful and detailed feedback. All errors or omissions are our own.

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From: [Holly Gadbow](#)
To: [ComcastIMAP](#)
Cc: [CityCouncil](#); [Joyce Phillips](#); [Leonard Bauer](#)
Subject: Re: Proposed Changes to Olympia's Parking Requirements.
Date: Monday, May 15, 2023 11:35:17 AM

Great letter, Mike. Points I planned to make too, hopefully differently.

Sent from my iPhone

> On May 15, 2023, at 8:09 AM, ComcastIMAP <mike.mccormick@comcast.net> wrote:

>

> I am writing in support of the proposed changes to the city's parking requirements.

>

> No single action is going to solve our housing affordability crisis; nor meet our sustainability goals or fully address our climate challenges. The proposed changes will contribute to our overall progress in these issues. And these changes are relatively small—not withstanding the loud cries from our usual critics to change.

>

> I do want to speak to the opposition we are seeing to these proposed changes. These folks are well organized and engaged. They sound passionate in their opposition. They are familiar voices against other recent changes to our plans and regulations. They fear how their neighborhoods will evolve—preferring no change. But our challenges do require change. Finding ones that make everyone comfortable won't get us where we need to be. We all need to embrace some discomfort and lengthen our reach. The Planning Commission did this. And the Land Use Committee is supporting their boldness. I encourage you to be bold too.

>

> As someone who has lived in Olympia for five decades (and practiced planning for four of them), I believe the results of the proposed changes will be very incremental and accrue over a relatively long time. Surely we can monitor what happens. If the fears of those opposing the changes do materialize in any meaningful way, we have the ability to make appropriate adjustments. I don't believe this will be necessary.

>

>

> Now is the time for some boldness. Embrace the challenge. Adopt the proposed recommendations.

>

>

> Mike McCormick

> 360.754.2916

From: [CityCouncil](#)
To: [Janae Huber](#)
Cc: [Councilmembers](#); [Jay Burney](#); [Rich Hoey](#); [Debbie Sullivan](#); [Kellie Braseth](#); [Leonard Bauer](#); [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: RE: Residential parking proposal
Date: Monday, May 15, 2023 1:18:31 PM

Thank you for your comments. I will forward them on to all Councilmembers and appropriate staff.

Susan Grisham (*she/her*)
Assistant to the City Manager
Legislative Liaison
City of Olympia | P.O. Box 1967 | Olympia WA 98507
360-753-8244 | sgrisham@ci.olympia.wa.us

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From: Janae Huber <janae.huber@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, May 12, 2023 9:39 PM
To: CityCouncil <citycouncil@ci.olympia.wa.us>
Subject: Residential parking proposal

Dear Mayor Selby and Members of Council -

I am writing with strong support for removing parking minimums and setting a maximum. This effort is inextricably linked to Olympia's efforts to address our intersecting housing and climate crises.

When we require specific amounts of off-street parking for every residential unit:

- We add thousands of dollars to the cost of housing, which creates more cost-burdened households.
- We produce fewer housing units.
- We create more impervious surfaces that heat our planet and send pollution into the Puget Sound.
- We have a less compact city, which in turn, makes it harder for people to get where they need to go without a car.
- We make it harder for our transit system to offer robust and frequent service, which in turn puts more people in cars.
- We saddle future generations with the burden and effects of sprawl.

In fact, our most walkable and well-served by transit neighborhoods are those that were built before the mid-century when these harmful parking requirements were put into place.

While taking lessons from the past, the policy change you are considering embraces the future we need. Like the adoption of middle housing, this is a policy that will have positive, incremental ripple effects over a long period of time. Without this change, even in this moment when the climate crisis is on our doorstep, you will be locking in a commitment to grow our City with undo deference to cars.

This policy encourages the kind of compact development that will help Olympia welcome our (anticipated) new neighbors with needed housing units, a robust multimodal transportation system, and walkable/bike-able/rollable neighborhoods.

The Council has committed to our Housing Action plan. This is one small step toward achieving its goals. I urge you to vote in favor.

Janae Huber

From: [CityCouncil](#)
To: [Jo-Anne Smith-Huber](#)
Cc: [Councilmembers](#); [Jay Burney](#); [Rich Hoey](#); [Debbie Sullivan](#); [Kellie Braseth](#); [Leonard Bauer](#); [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: RE: Regarding parking
Date: Monday, May 15, 2023 1:19:52 PM

Thank you for your comments. I will forward them on to all Councilmembers and appropriate staff.

Susan Grisham (*she/her*)
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Please note all correspondence is subject to public disclosure.

From: Jo-Anne Smith-Huber <gmomsews2@msn.com>
Sent: Saturday, May 13, 2023 8:11 PM
To: CityCouncil <citycouncil@ci.olympia.wa.us>
Subject: Regarding parking

We strongly support the elimination of parking minimums for all residential development. Our housing and climate crises demand that we stop placing cars at the center of our planning efforts.

Jack & Jo-Anne Huber
gmomsews2@msn.com

From: [CityCouncil](#)
To: [Tom Dillon](#)
Cc: [Councilmembers](#); [Jay Burney](#); [Rich Hoey](#); [Debbie Sullivan](#); [Kellie Braseth](#); [Leonard Bauer](#); [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: RE: Comments on the Planning Commission's residential parking recommendaiton
Date: Monday, May 15, 2023 1:20:11 PM

Thank you for your comments. I will forward them on to all Councilmembers and appropriate staff.

Susan Grisham (*she/her*)
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Please note all correspondence is subject to public disclosure.

From: Tom Dillon <tom.d.sf@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, May 13, 2023 11:05 PM
To: CityCouncil <citycouncil@ci.olympia.wa.us>
Subject: Comments on the Planning Commission's residential parking recommendaiton

Good evening,

I had previously sent comments to the Planning Commission in favor of their recommendation to reduce the residential parking requirements. This is something that I feel very strongly about, and so am sending them again to you for your consideration since I believe that you will be discussing it at the next meeting, which I will not be able to attend. I have included my comments with a few minor changes and a short addition about transit at the end.

I am writing in support of the proposed plan to reduce minimum parking requirements. Although this proposal generally aligns with my understanding of what makes a city a great place, I wanted to share the ways that parking requirements have impacted me directly.

When my partner and I first moved here over a decade ago, our first thought was to find a condo downtown or in a walkable neighborhood. At the time we were unable to find any such units on the market that fit both our needs and our budget. So we looked to buy a house, again in a walkable neighborhood and were unable to find anything. This process continued until we eventually ended up building a house in unincorporated Thurston county. To my thinking, had the current proposal been in place prior to our search for housing, there would have been two major differences:

1. Once we realized that the best option for us was to build a house, our preference would

have been to build a house within city limits. I'm not sure if reduced parking requirements would have made doing so feasible for us, but there was more than one vacant lot that we looked at and liked but couldn't quite fit the house that we wanted to build. Had the parking requirements been less restrictive it is entirely possible that we would have been able to make one of those lots work.

2. By making multi-unit housing more affordable to build, there would have been more of it, and so the chance that we would have been able to find a unit that would fit our needs would have been greater.

Either of these outcomes would have been beneficial to us (and resulted in increased tax revenue for the city), and I hope that this proposal is enacted so that people who are looking for housing in the future have better options than we had.

Finally, I have had many coworkers who do not drive and so are paying for parking spaces as part of their rent that they cannot use. This is not fair, and is especially problematic given that the people who are paying for this parking that they cannot use are often the same people who are least able to afford extra rent. If it ends up that parking minimums are not reduced, I would hope that the city would consider finding a way to compel or incentivize the unbundling of housing from parking for renters, or to allow by right the use of bundled parking for things like sheds for secure bicycle storage (or general storage).

From watching the discussion in the community around the recommendation, I'd also like to weigh in about the concerns about inadequate transit to support the proposed reduction in parking minimums. I do not think that the present state of transit is a good basis to be making decisions about land use for the simple reason that buildings last decades and are much more difficult to change than transit. If housing gets built with reduced parking and as a result density increases to the point that more transit service is needed, all that is required to increase it is to add staff and vehicles to the transit service (the cost of which would be partially offset by increased tax receipts resulting from increased density). On the other hand, if excess parking is built for a building, it is very difficult to convert it to productive use, and it might not be possible until the building is replaced decades down the road.

I appreciate that the city is working proactively on these and other issues that will shape our community for decades to come, and thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Tom Dillon

From: [CityCouncil](#)
To: [Larry of Nottingham](#)
Cc: [Councilmembers](#); [Jay Burney](#); [Rich Hoey](#); [Debbie Sullivan](#); [Kellie Braseth](#); [Leonard Bauer](#); [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: RE: Comments on Approval of an Ordinance Amending Residential Parking Requirements
Date: Monday, May 15, 2023 1:21:32 PM

Thank you for your comments. I will forward them on to all Councilmembers and appropriate staff.

Susan Grisham (*she/her*)
Assistant to the City Manager
Legislative Liaison
City of Olympia | P.O. Box 1967 | Olympia WA 98507
360-753-8244 | sgrisham@ci.olympia.wa.us

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Please note all correspondence is subject to public disclosure.

From: Larry of Nottingham <larryofnottingham@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, May 14, 2023 5:19 PM
To: CityCouncil <citycouncil@ci.olympia.wa.us>
Subject: Comments on Approval of an Ordinance Amending Residential Parking Requirements

I am writing to urge the city council not to adopt the divisive and rushed zero-minimum off-street parking change. Being true to your word should matter. If the city takes this abrupt and poorly examined change it will appear the city failed to be true to its word.

In the Commerce Department grant, the City wrote that it anticipated that a difficult issue like parking would require extraordinary outreach. The city grant application reads,

"We anticipate conducting an especially high level of public outreach around the reduction of parking requirements (Objective One) so that we can build stronger understanding of why this is an important step for meeting housing, land use, transportation and climate adaption goals along with address concerns about parking impacts to surrounding neighborhoods." – City of Olympia HAPI Grant application

Instead of a “stronger understanding” and a “high level of public outreach” the Planning Commission and then followed by the Land Use Committee, severely changed the proposal on the fly and without advance notice to the community.

It was so poorly constructed and hurried I was the one who discovered and alerted staff that the change would result in zero accessible parking when zero-parking is allowed.

That was hurriedly fixed in a subsequent meeting but not adequately addressing the problem, especially for larger developments. Again, without adequate public input not only does the city fail in its commitment to build a strong consensus for reducing parking, it also results in unforced errors.

Action that respects the grant commitment and the community calls for delaying the zero parking changes while the city does the right thing – the thing that you said you would do in the first place – and build a “stronger understanding” and “address the concerns about parking impacts to surrounding neighborhoods”.

Much has been made of the deadline for the Commerce grant, lest grant funding be lost. The reality is there is no requirement for zero minimum parking in the Commerce grant. In fact, the Olympia Planning staff proposed reductions, not eliminations of parking minimums and that would meet the grant requirements. And even then, the entire grant has never been at risk, only \$16,000 of the final ordinance deliverable.

The City Council could meet the deadline by adopting changes that are reasonable reductions, receive the full grant amount and continue to have a dialogue with the community about any further reductions, including zero minimum options that could be applicable where the conditions in the neighborhoods warrant.

If you did what you said you would do in the grant, you would take this opportunity to do it right. Do a complete and open analysis of the issue and its impact on neighborhoods before acting on a poorly considered measure. It is harmful and unnecessary in terms of community cohesion to rush through a divisive action.

Sincerely,

Larry Dzieza

From: [CityCouncil](#)
To: [Justin Bodeutsch](#)
Cc: [Councilmembers](#); [Jay Burney](#); [Rich Hoey](#); [Debbie Sullivan](#); [Kellie Braseth](#); [Leonard Bauer](#); [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: RE: Parking Minimums
Date: Monday, May 15, 2023 1:23:07 PM

Thank you for your comments. I will forward them on to all Councilmembers and appropriate staff.

Susan Grisham (she/her)
Assistant to the City Manager
Legislative Liaison
City of Olympia | P.O. Box 1967 | Olympia WA 98507
360-753-8244 | sgrisham@ci.olympia.wa.us

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-----Original Message-----

From: Justin Bodeutsch <lefthand@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, May 14, 2023 11:43 PM
To: CityCouncil <citycouncil@ci.olympia.wa.us>
Subject: Parking Minimums

I just wanted to write in to voice my strong support for the plans to reduce parking requirements.

Olympia will continue to grow and we can't afford more sprawl. If we overbuild parking it is almost impossible to recover. If new developments underbuild parking, there are many solutions to alleviate those issues. My kids are graduating high school soon and they won't be able to afford housing and cars. They are already looking at ways to live without a car. We need to accommodate the car free lifestyle that is growing more popular with younger generations.

Thanks for your considerations

From: [CityCouncil](#)
To: [Margaret McPhee](#)
Cc: [Councilmembers](#); [Jay Burney](#); [Rich Hoey](#); [Debbie Sullivan](#); [Kellie Braseth](#); [Leonard Bauer](#); [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: RE: Parking
Date: Monday, May 15, 2023 1:23:47 PM

Thank you for your comments. I will forward them on to all Councilmembers and appropriate staff.

Susan Grisham (she/her)
Assistant to the City Manager
Legislative Liaison
City of Olympia | P.O. Box 1967 | Olympia WA 98507
360-753-8244 | sgrisham@ci.olympia.wa.us

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Please note all correspondence is subject to public disclosure.

-----Original Message-----

From: Margaret McPhee <msquare18@mac.com>
Sent: Monday, May 15, 2023 10:53 AM
To: CityCouncil <citycouncil@ci.olympia.wa.us>
Subject: Parking

To Olympia City Council Members:

Parking in downtown Olympia has been a problem for way too many years so I urge you to think carefully about any decision that will limit parking. When I joined the Council 30 years ago, we were debating a parking garage. While there still really isn't a parking garage downtown, thirty years ago it simply didn't pencil out in cost per parking space vs income.

As I understand the issue (and I could be wrong), you are voting to eliminate the need for developers of multi-family housing from providing parking as part of the development. OMG, I hope I'm wrong.

I drove downtown to the fish market yesterday (warm Sunday afternoon). There was an event occurring that was a surprise to me. There were families crowding the sidewalks and cars driving around and around most likely looking for parking. This is not an anomaly. I see this year round. In fact, I love to see all these people downtown, but they're not going to come if they can't get out of their cars. If parking in residential buildings isn't available, those who own cars will park them on the street taking spaces that could be used by those who want to shop downtown but don't even live near a bus line.

We had a condo in for Seattle 25 years, and in our last condo in Belltown, we parked our car in the garage on arrival and then walked, took the bus or Uber. Out of the 150+ units in the building, only one owner chose not to buy the parking space assigned to a unit. Having residential parking in a garage leaves on street parking for those not chain parking.

I hope I'm wrong about this. I really hate to see impervious surface parking lots taking up too much space in the city...any city. Build up, not out.

Respectfully,

Margaret McPhee
Sent from my iPhone
3512 Country Club Dr NW
Olympia 98502
360-866-2153 home
360-791-7597 cell

From: [CityCouncil](#)
To: [John Saunders](#)
Cc: [Councilmembers](#); [Jay Burney](#); [Rich Hoey](#); [Debbie Sullivan](#); [Kellie Braseth](#); [Leonard Bauer](#); [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: RE: Proposed amendments reducing parking minimum requirements
Date: Monday, May 15, 2023 4:48:25 PM

Thank you for your comments. I will forward them on to all Councilmembers and appropriate staff.

Susan Grisham (she/her)
Assistant to the City Manager
Legislative Liaison
City of Olympia | P.O. Box 1967 | Olympia WA 98507
360-753-8244 | sgrisham@ci.olympia.wa.us

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Please note all correspondence is subject to public disclosure.

-----Original Message-----

From: John Saunders <johnosaunders@me.com>
Sent: Monday, May 15, 2023 3:49 PM
To: CityCouncil <citycouncil@ci.olympia.wa.us>
Subject: Proposed amendments reducing parking minimum requirements

Dear City Council:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed amendments to the residential parking requirements of the City of Olympia.

I am strongly in favor of the proposed amendments. I believe that Olympia needs to eliminate barriers to the construction of new housing for all levels of income and that reducing the burden of parking is one way to accomplish that goal. I appreciate that the proposed parking requirements are flexible depending on needs of specific residential projects and that they reflect the availability of frequent transit where possible.

Best of luck to you and the City in implementing these needed changes.

Sincerely,

John O. Saunders
301 18th Ave SE
Olympia, WA 98501
johnosaunders@me.com
M 360-259-0288

John O. Saunders
m: 360 259-0288

From: [CityCouncil](#)
To: tony@parkingreform.org
Cc: [Councilmembers](#); [Jay Burney](#); [Rich Hoey](#); [Debbie Sullivan](#); [Kellie Braseth](#); [Leonard Bauer](#); [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: FW: Comment on Ordinance to Repeal Costly Parking Mandates for Residential Uses
Date: Monday, May 15, 2023 4:48:58 PM
Attachments: [PRN Olympia Parking Mandates.pdf](#)

Thank you for your comments. I will forward them on to all Councilmembers and appropriate staff.

Susan Grisham (*she/her*)
Assistant to the City Manager
Legislative Liaison
City of Olympia | P.O. Box 1967 | Olympia WA 98507
360-753-8244 | sgrisham@ci.olympia.wa.us

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Please note all correspondence is subject to public disclosure.

From: Tony Jordan <tony@parkingreform.org>
Sent: Monday, May 15, 2023 4:33 PM
To: CityCouncil <citycouncil@ci.olympia.wa.us>
Subject: Comment on Ordinance to Repeal Costly Parking Mandates for Residential Uses

To Whom it May Concern,

Please accept and distribute the following letter in support of the item 6.B 23-0421 on tomorrow's City Council Agenda: "Approval of an Ordinance Amending Residential Parking Requirements."

--

Tony Jordan - he/him
Co-Founder, Parking Reform Network
<https://parkingreform.org/>



May 15, 2023

Honorable Olympia City Council Members,

I am Tony Jordan, the president and co-founder of the Parking Reform Network (<https://parkingreform.org>), a non-profit organization which educates the public about the impact of parking policy on climate change, equity, housing, and traffic. I am writing to support the efforts to reduce costly parking mandates for new homes in Olympia, WA.

I have reviewed some of the public testimony you have received, and I echo the many thoughtful comments in favor of this ordinance. Parking ratios, including those you are leaving on the books, are pseudoscience and are impossible to justify. One needs only look at the various parking requirements in Washington cities to see just how arbitrary these mandates are:

Select parking mandates for bowling alleys in Washington cities	
Mt. Vernon & Olympia	5 spaces per bowling alley
Ferndale	3 spaces per lane
Port Angeles	2.5 spaces per lane
Port Townsend	1 space per 400 square feet of floor area
Lynden	5 parking spaces per lane
Burlington	10 parking spaces per lane (1:100 sq/ft)

Is there something different about the habits of bowlers in these cities? Do some cities want to promote bowling and others want to discourage it? What could possibly justify such a wide range of requirements? Mt. Vernon and Burlington are separated by the Skagit River, but someone wanting to open a 10-lane bowling alley north of the river would need a parcel with room for at least 50 parking spaces (at 400 sq/ft each) while the same business south of the river would only need room for five.

These mandates are ridiculous, but they are no laughing matter. They do real harm to our communities and environment by driving up the cost of housing, encouraging more dangerous traffic, and thwarting efforts to reduce pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.

To date, at least 47 cities in the United States have no car parking mandates for any land use, citywide. What we have seen in those cities is that builders and entrepreneurs will still build parking for their clients and residents if it is necessary. The initial impacts of your reforms will be marginal, but important. Olympia, like many other cities in the region, cannot afford to lose new housing for people in favor of car storage.



The opposition to this ordinance is grasping at straws. They claim that it is a giveaway to developers and will make housing costs go up, but also that it will reduce property values. They say that transit is not good enough, while ignoring the impact that more cars and traffic will have on the existing transit service. They say that more parked cars will make the streets more dangerous, as if requiring more curb cuts and inviting more cars to Olympia will make it better. They say that it is a burden on low-income people to reduce parking requirements, implying the solution to the housing crisis is to require a \$300 per month mandatory parking space be included in every household's rent. To the extent that there is any sincerity and validity to these claims, there is a ready solution.

Olympia should mind its own business when it comes to parking. The curb lane is likely the city's most valuable asset. By managing this resource to maximize efficient and equitable access to neighborhoods and commercial areas, Olympia can prevent spillover and congestion. Builders and business owners will have the information they need to decide how much parking to provide their tenants and customers, residents and visitors will be able to decide for themselves what mode of transportation to take, and everyone will have more flexibility and freedom. As a bonus, the city will have a revenue source it can use to install lighting, fix sidewalks, and provide transportation subsidies to low-income residents and workers.

The ordinance before you is a first step. You still have a raft of arbitrary commercial mandates to repeal, but given the housing and climate crisis we are in, the reforms you can choose to enact are the most critical. As the state capital, Olympia has a tremendous opportunity to lead the way for Washington's cities. Congratulations on taking this courageous and important action.

All the best,
Tony Jordan
President - Parking Reform Network
Portland, OR

From: [Clark Gilman](#)
To: [Nicoli Bailey](#)
Cc: [CityCouncil](#); [Joyce Phillips](#); [Leonard Bauer](#)
Subject: Re: Thank you for writing to Olympia Council about Zero Parking
Date: Monday, May 15, 2023 8:23:59 PM

Yes Joyce. ADA parking is receiving special attention as we refine this proposal. Thank you for writing.

Clark

Clark Gilman, Mayor Pro Tem
City of Olympia
[\(360\) 753-8447](tel:(360)753-8447)
cgilman@ci.olympia.wa.us

From: Nicoli Bailey <nicoli.bailey@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, May 14, 2023 9:49 PM
To: Clark Gilman <cgilman@ci.olympia.wa.us>
Cc: CityCouncil <citycouncil@ci.olympia.wa.us>; Joyce Phillips <jphillip@ci.olympia.wa.us>; Leonard Bauer <lbauer@ci.olympia.wa.us>
Subject: Re: Thank you for writing to Olympia Council about Zero Parking

You are welcome. Please know that ADA requirements will need to be put in place for those of us that are not able to walk or take buses. There must be disabled parking available. I use my sticker where ever I go and it makes all the difference!

All best,

Nicoli Bailey (she/her)
360-352-6263 (no texts please)
Olympia, Washington, USA

We think that the point is to pass the test or overcome the problem, but the truth is that things don't really get solved. They come together and they fall apart. Then they come together again and fall apart again. It's just like that. The healing comes from letting there be room for all of this to happen: room for grief, for relief, for misery, for joy.

- Pema Chodron

On Sun, May 14, 2023 at 9:12 PM Clark Gilman <cgilman@ci.olympia.wa.us> wrote:

I appreciate receiving so many emails about eliminating parking requirements for new development. I wanted to let you know what I'm thinking and our schedule for taking action.

This Tuesday will be a little different from the average Tuesday Olympia City Council meeting night. The city, alongside you as engaged community members, has been in a discussion about reducing residential parking requirements to further climate and affordable housing goals. A staff proposal was shaped through public comment and forums, research from comparable cities, and discussion in our Planning Commission.

The proposal took a turn when Planning Commission voted to dramatically alter the staff

recommendation. The Planning Commission recommendation is to eliminate rather than reduce the amount of on-site parking required for new residential development. I believe the zero parking proposal was well-intentioned, but I believe there are consequences of the zero parking proposal that should be seriously considered.

So, on this slightly different Tuesday night, Olympia City Council will decide whether the advantages of the proposed zero parking legislation outweigh the risks of adopting a major policy change that has not been fully discussed and refined. Or, indeed, whether City Council might make our own modifications to the policy on the spot prior to voting.

I've heard both support and concerns for eliminating parking requirements. Many of the concerns are focused on impacts of new housing providing zero parking in existing low density residential neighborhoods.

Proponents have called this measure an opportunity to accelerate our climate goals by encouraging car-free households. Some have expressed hope that by creating more units on a lot that currently has a single family house new less expensive units will be created. Opponents have been concerned about creating bad neighbor relations and competition for on street parking, believing that tenants of the new units are likely to have cars whether or not on-site parking is provided. Some have questioned whether eliminating onsite parking requirements will actually provide the climate benefits of reducing the number of vehicles owned, parked, and driven by tenants of new housing.

If Council were to consider modifications to the zero parking ordinance on Tuesday what would those changes be? How might we make progress towards encouraging less expensive housing and more people living a car free life while respecting that existing neighborhoods anticipate conflict with new neighbors who park all of their vehicles on the street?

One suggestion from Planning Commission is to delay implementation of the new parking rules in neighborhoods. I wonder what else we might do.

Here is one solution I believe addresses both the hopes and concerns - designate the new units built with no parking as car-free residences. The units built with zero parking would not be eligible for residential parking passes. This would require expanding the residential parking permit system beyond downtown and the South Capitol neighborhood. This could reduce the impact of the new units on surrounding neighbors while furthering our climate and affordability goals. A Car-Free unit adds another walking, biking, and transit-riding household to the community. A unit without parking could rent for less than a comparable unit that allows parking- the going rate for apartment parking is what, \$150 to \$200 a month?

Thanks again for commenting on this issue. I welcome your suggestions as we move towards Tuesday's consideration of the zero parking ordinance.

Clark

Clark Gilman, Mayor Pro Tem
City of Olympia
[\(360\) 753-8447](tel:3607538447)
cgilman@ci.olympia.wa.us

From: [Clark Gilman](#)
To: [Joyce Mercuri](#); [CityCouncil](#)
Cc: [Joyce Phillips](#); [Leonard Bauer](#)
Subject: Re: Thank you for writing to Olympia Council about Zero Parking
Date: Monday, May 15, 2023 8:27:03 PM

Good thoughts Joyce.

These are, I think, the growing pains of a town becoming a city.

I hope that we can steer this change in ways that are fair to the people of our town.

Clark Gilman, Mayor Pro Tem
City of Olympia
[\(360\) 753-8447](tel:(360)753-8447)
cgilman@ci.olympia.wa.us

From: Joyce Mercuri <Chela2@Q.com>
Sent: Sunday, May 14, 2023 10:24 PM
To: Clark Gilman <cgilman@ci.olympia.wa.us>; CityCouncil <citycouncil@ci.olympia.wa.us>
Cc: Joyce Phillips <jphillip@ci.olympia.wa.us>; Leonard Bauer <lbauer@ci.olympia.wa.us>
Subject: RE: Thank you for writing to Olympia Council about Zero Parking

Hi Clark and thanks for writing.

- First think this kind of information should be provided to the GENERAL COMMUNITY and not just those who have written in about the proposal.
- Second, regarding your statement from below: **“So, on this slightly different Tuesday night, Olympia City Council will decide whether the advantages of the proposed zero parking legislation outweigh the risks of adopting a major policy change that has not been fully discussed and refined. Or, indeed, whether City Council might make our own modifications to the policy on the spot prior to voting”**
 - The answer to this is simple: NO! NO! NO! The random decision by the planning commission to radically change the proposal should be simply thrown out. Any “new” proposals should go back to square one and follow the same process as the original proposal. The planning commission should not have that much power to make stuff up at the spur of the moment which might then affect our community forever, NOR should the city council. The full process needs to be followed. How many times has the city of Olympia gotten into hot water for not following its own processes in terms of reviewing development proposals? If you ever read comments on Nextdoor or Facebook, you will already know how little many people around here believe in or trust the city government. This will be a real bruise for you all if you run with the last-minute modifications.
- The reduced/zero parking proposal does not achieve the goals you say it will.
 - Not having parking DOES NOT achieve climate goals. We are a mobile society and the best bet we have to achieve climate goals is to change how we fuel our economy. Having a small percentage of people not driving will do nothing to help CO2 emissions. Also, have you noticed it RAINS here a lot?
 - Not providing parking will NOT make housing less expensive. The market determines

the price of housing. A recent article on KUOW discussed how townhomes cost \$200,000 less to build, yet are sold at the same price as single family homes in the same neighborhood. The new apartments will undoubtedly be high priced and people are just going to have to get used to paying 50% or more of their income for rent until we can increase publically funded housing.

- The idea of not allowing people from the new apartments to have parking passes may do a small amount to reduce the crowding of cars in adjacent neighborhoods. But where will visitors and friends of the people in the apartments park? Unlikely any developer would want to build something without parking unless in certain key locations, if the prospective tenants would be PROHIBITED from parking. Also, it seems that disallowing only “some” of the people in the neighborhood from having parking would be challenged in court.
- Not having parking is simply unworkable for many working people, especially people with kids. That will not change given how our town has been designed and developed from the beginning. So those people who most need lower cost housing won't be able to live in these no-parking units anyway.
- I agree that in some key areas no parking might work. For example, all that empty land in close-in west Olympia along Harrison Avenue might work for people without kids because at least there are jobs and bus lines and grocery stores nearby.
- What CAN the city do to reduce parking? I think the council should look very closely at REDUCING the massive amount of parking at commercial developments, especially Capital Mall and Target but also some of the underused parking lots on Cooper Point road e.g. at Goodwill, and the Homegoods store. Some of those lots should be repurposed/rezoned to allow ONLY residential and mixed use development. That huge lot in front of Macy's furniture would be a fabulous location for a huge apartment/retail complex. Harrison Avenue could become a thriving walkable neighborhood if more apartments were built along it. Let's focus on the busiest, most urban areas first before the City requires zero parking everywhere.
- On another note – WHY does the city keep eliminating parking spots in downtown Olympia? Do you want only those who live there to be able to use and enjoy downtown, especially at night?

Thanks

Joyce Mercuri

From: Clark Gilman [mailto:cgilman@ci.olympia.wa.us]
Sent: Sunday, May 14, 2023 9:12 PM
To: CityCouncil

Cc: Joyce Phillips; Leonard Bauer

Subject: Thank you for writing to Olympia Council about Zero Parking

I appreciate receiving so many emails about eliminating parking requirements for new development. I wanted to let you know what I'm thinking and our schedule for taking action.

This Tuesday will be a little different from the average Tuesday Olympia City Council meeting night. The city, alongside you as engaged community members, has been in a discussion about reducing residential parking requirements to further climate and affordable housing goals. A staff proposal was shaped through public comment and forums, research from comparable cities, and discussion in our Planning Commission.

The proposal took a turn when Planning Commission voted to dramatically alter the staff recommendation. The Planning Commission recommendation is to eliminate rather than reduce the amount of on-site parking required for new residential development. I believe the zero parking proposal was well-intentioned, but I believe there are consequences of the zero parking proposal that should be seriously considered.

So, on this slightly different Tuesday night, Olympia City Council will decide whether the advantages of the proposed zero parking legislation outweigh the risks of adopting a major policy change that has not been fully discussed and refined. Or, indeed, whether City Council might make our own modifications to the policy on the spot prior to voting.

I've heard both support and concerns for eliminating parking requirements. Many of the concerns are focused on impacts of new housing providing zero parking in existing low density residential neighborhoods.

Proponents have called this measure an opportunity to accelerate our climate goals by encouraging car-free households. Some have expressed hope that by creating more units on a lot that currently has a single family house new less expensive units will be created. Opponents have been concerned about creating bad neighbor relations and competition for on street parking, believing that tenants of the new units are likely to have cars whether or not on-site parking is provided. Some have questioned whether eliminating onsite parking requirements will actually provide the climate benefits of reducing the number of vehicles owned, parked, and driven by tenants of new housing.

If Council were to consider modifications to the zero parking ordinance on Tuesday what would those changes be? How might we make progress towards encouraging less expensive housing and more people living a car free life while respecting that existing neighborhoods anticipate conflict with new neighbors who park all of their vehicles on the street?

One suggestion from Planning Commission is to delay implementation of the new parking rules in neighborhoods. I wonder what else we might do.

Here is one solution I believe addresses both the hopes and concerns - designate the new units built with no parking as car-free residences. The units built with zero parking would not be eligible for residential parking passes. This would require expanding the residential parking permit system beyond downtown and the South Capitol neighborhood. This could reduce the impact of the new units on surrounding neighbors while furthering our climate and affordability goals. A Car-Free unit adds another walking, biking, and transit-riding household to the community. A unit without parking could rent for less than a comparable unit that allows parking- the going rate for apartment parking is what, \$150 to \$200 a month?

Thanks again for commenting on this issue. I welcome your suggestions as we move towards

Tuesday's consideration of the zero parking ordinance.

Clark

Clark Gilman, Mayor Pro Tem
City of Olympia
[\(360\) 753-8447](tel:3607538447)
cgilman@ci.olympia.wa.us

From: [Clark Gilman](#)
To: [Emily Iles](#)
Cc: [CityCouncil](#); [Joyce Phillips](#); [Leonard Bauer](#)
Subject: Re: Thank you for writing to Olympia Council about Zero Parking
Date: Monday, May 15, 2023 8:39:26 PM

Emily,

Thank you for your thoughtful analysis.

I hope that we can do better than Portland or Seattle where the walkable neighborhoods are for those who can buy their way in. I don't want the neighborhoods with fancy coffee and pastries to become inaccessible for people who have lived their lives here.

Half of a percent of those in last years TRPC transportation study rode transit during the study week. 1.5% of our cars are electric. 90% of our residents have cars.

That's the real balance for me. It's not about fighting against change, it's fighting against displacement. Fighting for the opportunity for people who grow up in Olympia to stay in Olympia.

I think we can be bold about climate and affordability while respecting the majority of people who live here today.

Clark

Clark Gilman, Mayor Pro Tem
City of Olympia
[\(360\) 753-8447](tel:(360)753-8447)
cgilman@ci.olympia.wa.us

From: Emily Iles <mleno.make@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, May 15, 2023 9:37 AM
To: Clark Gilman <cgilman@ci.olympia.wa.us>
Cc: CityCouncil <citycouncil@ci.olympia.wa.us>; Joyce Phillips <jphillip@ci.olympia.wa.us>; Leonard Bauer <lbauer@ci.olympia.wa.us>
Subject: Re: Thank you for writing to Olympia Council about Zero Parking

I can tell that a lot of thought is going into balancing different concerns. The task of the Council is to weigh the validity, likelihood, and the relative costs associated with those concerns.

On the one hand, there is concern about parking becoming more difficult, and that other bad things will happen if parking becomes more difficult, or if there are more cars on the street vs in a driveway. This is an imagined concern. It is not happening. I can't say it won't happen (in fact, I think parking should become less available, because of some benefits of moving away from free, easily available parking that I'll link to below), but there is no realistic idea of new development that would turn Olympia "into a Clockwork Orange-style hellscape", as one particularly hyperbolic opponent put it. Most neighborhoods in the city I've visited could easily accommodate 20 new cars without difficulty; I doubt most people would even notice it on my street (I'd prefer it, because I want people to drive more slowly on my through-

street). The neighborhoods where parking is slightly more packed I'd argue are already more dense, those that are already making a more maximal use of land for housing people, like my friends on Cushing Street. I do have to work a bit more to find parking when I visit them, but on the upside they have a place to live.

On the other hand, you have concerns about providing housing: where the city has identified a vital need for 15-16k new units over the next 20 years, and, despite allowing more multiplex building several years ago, it doesn't appear that much if any new multiplex developments within existing neighborhoods are underway in the city. I can verify that the material costs, opportunity costs, and uncertainty around the impact of parking mandates is the reason why I'm not proceeding in developing a multiplex property right now (plus not being a multi-millionaire). And I'm not seeking to be a developer because I want to make a buck. I'm trying to get creative about how I can provide stable housing for my family when, despite making twice the median income for my area, I cannot get a loan that even approaches the price of houses in my area. Much has changed since most of Olympia housing was built: the people who will live here for the next several decades have smaller families, commute less/work from home more, have different financial realities, and have different environmental and community concerns. We deserve to be able to build and adapt neighborhoods to meet those changing needs, and there is no reason to prioritize the landed class over the renting class when the concerns are as stratified as "I hope to find a stable place to live" and "there may be more parking on my street".

As for the idea that new building that doesn't achieve 1:1 parking be designated as non-car units, that seems great on its face. Sure, that relieves the cost pressure for new building, which is huge. But it also shifts the uncertainty and creates a new regulatory regime, just in a different place, where that burden would be felt by renters. It also poses a new round of questions for developers, homeowners, and the city: Can the non-car unit be transferred among units if you build 2:3 parking places? What if you remove a parking space from your property? I argue that we don't need a new regulatory regime to replace the old one in the absence of any actual issues. Developments happen at a slow enough pace that the Council will have the opportunity to see if such an action is warranted, or if patterns and behaviors shift to accommodate a few more cars here and there, as they have in neighborhoods that already have higher density. If it is included, I would suggest adding a trigger mechanism for a maximum capacity of street parking.

The environmental, creative, cultural and economic advantages of building more density in urban areas are hard to understate. With the amount of units we need to add, I'd suggest we can have a very minimal environmental impact by densifying neighborhoods and finding more units in currently- single-family houses, or we can have a tremendous environmental cost of pushing new building into previously undeveloped land. We can find the efficiencies of higher density, or we can build more and more "non-places" to connect our homes, work, and social lives. We can make policy as if we will be a far less car-dependent city soon, or we can build in costly, car-centered assumptions that entrench car ownership. We can open the door for smaller developers who are trying to make meaningful, creative, sustainable and safe housing in the community in which they live, or we can price development so that

only large developers can play here.

This issue of parking seems minor, but the more I look at it, the more it indicates a stark turn for Olympia, either toward protectionism, or toward creative, sustainable, and achievable solutions to the economic and environmental challenges of housing. Change will continue to happen, but this is a moment where we can direct how that change shapes the region. What good is parking on or off a street that most people cannot afford to live on?

I moved from a denser city to Olympia, and have been mystified by the often-repeated concern of not enough parking. So I've looked in to it a lot, from a public policy standpoint, and here are some resource I've found, some of which you also may have come across, but just in case:

"At Strong Towns, we've described a parking lot as virtually the worst use to which you can put a piece of urban land. We've published dozens of articles on the [high costs](#) of our cities' addiction to free parking. We've [urged that every city eliminate its parking minimums](#), and start [pricing parking at a fair market rate](#), so that parking can be adequately weighed against other, potentially more productive uses of land. Our oversupply of free parking [is financially ruinous](#)—it results in cities that [have been eaten alive by parking lots](#) at the expense of value-generating land. It cannot be sustained."

<https://www.strongtowns.org/journal/2020/6/9/but-where-will-i-park>

"The second piece—locally earmarking the revenue from parking meters—is something Shoup argues is crucial to building public support for parking reforms. Otherwise, residents accustomed to "free" parking in their neighborhoods tend to get up in arms about pricing, because their perception is that something is being taken away from them. Of course, "free" parking is not really free at all—*someone* is paying the cost of paving and maintaining that space, and all of us are paying the opportunity cost of the other things it isn't being used for. But nonetheless, it's helpful to offer something tangible in return to those who will bear the immediate burden of a new parking fee."

<https://www.strongtowns.org/journal/2018/8/20/getting-parking-right-in-portland>

"This research bolsters the case for reducing or eliminating minimum parking requirements. If cities seek to break the cycle of automobile-oriented planning, eliminating residential parking requirements is an important step forward. By eliminating parking requirements, cities can enable more space for new housing and allow that housing to be built more economically with greater opportunities for affordable housing. The Seattle analysis shows that many or most developers will respond to parking reforms, particularly if they are focused in neighborhoods with good walkability and transit options. As envisioned by [Barter \(2014\)](#), developers can be expected to provide less parking, and at a level that probably better matches market demand than the higher off-street parking requirements adopted decades ago. Policymakers from other cities should focus their reforms, like Seattle, on reducing or

eliminating parking minimums."

Attached Study of Seattle development post parking reforms

Thank you for bearing with me this far, and I truly appreciate the time and thought that's gone into this proposal so far.

Emily Noelle

On Sun, May 14, 2023 at 9:12 PM Clark Gilman <cgilman@ci.olympia.wa.us> wrote:

I appreciate receiving so many emails about eliminating parking requirements for new development. I wanted to let you know what I'm thinking and our schedule for taking action.

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The proposal took a turn when Planning Commission voted to dramatically alter the staff recommendation. The Planning Commission recommendation is to eliminate rather than reduce the amount of on-site parking required for new residential development. I believe the zero parking proposal was well-intentioned, but I believe there are consequences of the zero parking proposal that should be seriously considered.

So, on this slightly different Tuesday night, Olympia City Council will decide whether the advantages of the proposed zero parking legislation outweigh the risks of adopting a major policy change that has not been fully discussed and refined. Or, indeed, whether City Council might make our own modifications to the policy on the spot prior to voting.

I've heard both support and concerns for eliminating parking requirements. Many of the concerns are focused on impacts of new housing providing zero parking in existing low density residential neighborhoods.

Proponents have called this measure an opportunity to accelerate our climate goals by encouraging car-free households. Some have expressed hope that by creating more units on a lot that currently has a single family house new less expensive units will be created. Opponents have been concerned about creating bad neighbor relations and competition for on street parking, believing that tenants of the new units are likely to have cars whether or not on-site parking is provided. Some have questioned whether eliminating onsite parking requirements will actually provide the climate benefits of reducing the number of vehicles owned, parked, and driven by tenants of new housing.

If Council were to consider modifications to the zero parking ordinance on Tuesday what would those changes be? How might we make progress towards encouraging less expensive housing and more people living a car free life while respecting that existing neighborhoods anticipate conflict with new neighbors who park all of their vehicles on the street?

One suggestion from Planning Commission is to delay implementation of the new parking rules in neighborhoods. I wonder what else we might do.

Here is one solution I believe addresses both the hopes and concerns - designate the new units built with no parking as car-free residences. The units built with zero parking would not be eligible for residential parking passes. This would require expanding the residential parking permit system beyond downtown and the South Capitol neighborhood. This could reduce the impact of the new units on surrounding neighbors while furthering our climate and affordability goals. A Car-Free unit adds another walking, biking, and transit-riding household to the community. A unit without parking could rent for less than a comparable unit that allows parking- the going rate for apartment parking is what, \$150 to \$200 a month?

Thanks again for commenting on this issue. I welcome your suggestions as we move towards Tuesday's consideration of the zero parking ordinance.

Clark

Clark Gilman, Mayor Pro Tem
City of Olympia
[\(360\) 753-8447](tel:(360)753-8447)
cgilman@ci.olympia.wa.us

From: [Thera Black](#)
To: [Clark Gilman](#); [CityCouncil](#)
Cc: [Joyce Phillips](#); [Leonard Bauer](#)
Subject: RE: Thank you for writing to Olympia Council about Zero Parking
Date: Tuesday, May 16, 2023 8:43:03 AM

Clark, thank you for this thoughtful overview of the issues. I appreciate the tensions and tradeoffs you're weighing.

A brief thought to share and a question in follow-up.

First, in car-oriented parts of the city like southeast Olympia that have no nearby uses other than housing, new housing will continue to be built with parking, even with no parking minimums. Developers need to build products that they can sell or rent, and if they're financing the development, they need to demonstrate to lenders that they have a marketable project. Residential in those areas built without parking will be difficult if not impossible to rent or sell.

Single-family property owners fear that suddenly homes or even apartment complexes will be built without parking in their neighborhoods all across the city the day this is passed. That's just not consistent with actual market mechanisms that result in new homes. Where we might see future development without parking is close-in, on our arterials and in our close-in neighborhoods where a diverse range of destinations are available within walking distance of where people live, but even then I cannot foresee a big rush. Developers know the vast majority of people looking for a home need and value their car(s) and they are marketing their products to those people. Residential with no parking will not be a hot commodity anytime soon, but it will be an option that doesn't exist today. This is something that will happen over time as our efforts at urbanization slowly change the fabric of the city to a more walkable, urban kind of place. This will take decades.

Which leads me to the second thought, or more accurately a question.

Why would people who move into a residence with no parking not be entitled to the same use of public streets as their neighbors who do have onsite parking? They pay the same taxes and fees as people who have parking. Why should they not be allowed to use on-street parking like their neighbors? I couldn't follow the logic on that recommendation. It seems an unusual way of rewarding those who already have off-site parking spaces, offering them a permit for the free use of public streets for their overflow parking needs when they own too many vehicles to conveniently fit in their driveway. Public streets are just that – public. They belong to us all.

The proposal raises some interesting conundrums, too. I live in a neighborhood where people are converting their driveways to other uses, like raised bed gardens or outdoor living space, and parking their cars on the street. How will this apply to them, or to whoever buys their properties some day in the future? In a permitted parking system, will they be denied a permit to park on-street until digging up their veggie bed and restoring it to a driveway?

And then there's the issue of citywide parking enforcement.

While envisioned as a way to make this more palatable to established homeowners in single-family neighborhoods, I worry the permit concept will have unforeseen implications while at the same time effectively penalizing those trying to reduce their vehicle dependence along with the direct and indirect costs that dependence has on their household expenses and the environment.

Again, I thank you for sharing your thoughts as you work through this contentious topic. I do not envy any of you facing this difficult decision. Parking is historically a ridiculously emotional issue across the board in any community. Olympia is no exception here.

Thanks to all for the time and effort you're putting into this issue.

Thera

Thera Black
1905 Conger Ave NW

From: Clark Gilman <cgilman@ci.olympia.wa.us>

Sent: Sunday, May 14, 2023 21:12

To: CityCouncil <citycouncil@ci.olympia.wa.us>

Cc: Joyce Phillips <jphillip@ci.olympia.wa.us>; Leonard Bauer <lbauer@ci.olympia.wa.us>

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about creating bad neighbor relations and competition for on street parking, believing that tenants of the new units are likely to have cars whether or not on-site parking is provided. Some have questioned whether eliminating onsite parking requirements will actually provide the climate benefits of reducing the number of vehicles owned, parked, and driven by tenants of new housing.

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Thanks again for commenting on this issue. I welcome your suggestions as we move towards Tuesday's consideration of the zero parking ordinance.

Clark

Clark Gilman, Mayor Pro Tem
City of Olympia
[\(360\) 753-8447](tel:(360)753-8447)
cgilman@ci.olympia.wa.us

From: [Clark Gilman](#)
To: [Thera Black](#); [CityCouncil](#)
Cc: [Joyce Phillips](#); [Leonard Bauer](#)
Subject: Re: Thank you for writing to Olympia Council about Zero Parking
Date: Tuesday, May 16, 2023 9:13:17 AM

Thera,

Thank you for your thoughts.

I appreciate that parking is an emotional and controversial issue.

Oh, our love affair with cars and personal freedom!

And, I do share your hopes for a more walkable, affordable and equitable community.

Fundamentally, my concern about exempting missing middle type infill projects from providing onsite parking is that I don't agree that the market will wisely decide to voluntarily provide parking. I've lived in crazily converted rentals with unsafe electrical, watched duplexes go up on our street that filled the lot right up to the setbacks, watched apartments poorly built with unskilled and barely paid immigrant labor under the eyes of prominent local builders, watched Quadrant build houses with purposeless 6' and 8' wide hallways - I've seen too many examples of irrational behavior by developers (or behavior narrowly driven by maximizing the return on investment).

I believe this parking issue also requires greater equity consideration for both race and class impacts. The unintended consequences I fear the most from these "new urbanist" strategies would be an accelerated stratification of wealthier and whiter people in walkable neighborhoods and single family homes and poorer and racially diverse people in apartments located away from the center - even more reliant on a car they can't afford.

My point with the car-free residential unit idea was that, without regulation, zero parking policies have a possibility of shifting the burden of parking impacts and costs on the broader community of tax payers and having little impact on the number of cars in our community. And like any idea created unilaterally without community consultation, my proposal is flawed.

This week I've been reading papers from MIT, book reviews on Parking, Strong Cities blogs and generally nerding out on parking and housing while ill with COVID. Glad for the gift of time to dig deeper.

Clark

Clark Gilman, Mayor Pro Tem
City of Olympia
[\(360\) 753-8447](tel:3607538447)
cgilman@ci.olympia.wa.us

From: Thera Black <thera@3ptransport.com>

Sent: Tuesday, May 16, 2023 8:42 AM

To: Clark Gilman <cgilman@ci.olympia.wa.us>; CityCouncil <citycouncil@ci.olympia.wa.us>

Cc: Joyce Phillips <jphillip@ci.olympia.wa.us>; Leonard Bauer <lbauer@ci.olympia.wa.us>

Subject: RE: Thank you for writing to Olympia Council about Zero Parking

Clark, thank you for this thoughtful overview of the issues. I appreciate the tensions and tradeoffs you're weighing.

A brief thought to share and a question in follow-up.

First, in car-oriented parts of the city like southeast Olympia that have no nearby uses other than housing, new housing will continue to be built with parking, even with no parking minimums. Developers need to build products that they can sell or rent, and if they're financing the development, they need to demonstrate to lenders that they have a marketable project. Residential in those areas built without parking will be difficult if not impossible to rent or sell.

Single-family property owners fear that suddenly homes or even apartment complexes will be built without parking in their neighborhoods all across the city the day this is passed. That's just not consistent with actual market mechanisms that result in new homes. Where we might see future development without parking is close-in, on our arterials and in our close-in neighborhoods where a diverse range of destinations are available within walking distance of where people live, but even then I cannot foresee a big rush. Developers know the vast majority of people looking for a home need and value their car(s) and they are marketing their products to those people. Residential with no parking will not be a hot commodity anytime soon, but it will be an option that doesn't exist today. This is something that will happen over time as our efforts at urbanization slowly change the fabric of the city to a more walkable, urban kind of place. This will take decades.

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Thera

Thera Black
1905 Conger Ave NW

From: Clark Gilman <cgilman@ci.olympia.wa.us>
Sent: Sunday, May 14, 2023 21:12
To: CityCouncil <citycouncil@ci.olympia.wa.us>
Cc: Joyce Phillips <jphillip@ci.olympia.wa.us>; Leonard Bauer <lbauer@ci.olympia.wa.us>
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Clark

Clark Gilman, Mayor Pro Tem
City of Olympia
[\(360\) 753-8447](tel:(360)753-8447)
cgilman@ci.olympia.wa.us

From: [Holly Gadbow](#)
To: [Cheryl Selby](#); [Dani Madrone](#); [Lisa Parshley](#); [Jim Cooper](#); [Yến Huỳnh](#); [Dontae Payne](#); [Clark Gilman](#)
Cc: [Leonard Bauer](#); [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: Support for Planning Commission's recommendation of parking regulation amendments
Date: Tuesday, May 16, 2023 4:40:45 PM
Attachments: [May 15 letter parking regulaion amendments.docx](#)

Dear Mayor Selby and Council Members,
Attached is my letter in support of the planning commission's recommendations.

I hope you will consider my comments.

Best regards,
Holly Gadbow

May 15, 2023

Re: Parking Regulation Amendments

Dear Mayor Selby and Council Members Madrone, Parshley, Cooper, Payne, Huynh, and Gilman:

I am writing to support the Planning Commission's recommendation for amendments to the parking regulations. I commend the council for pursuing the recommendations on the City's Housing Strategy to look at reducing parking requirements to make housing more affordable and the staff and planning commission's hard work in developing these regulations.

There are many good reasons to adopt these regulations. Hopefully, they will encourage the kind of compact development to help Olympia provide the needed housing units to meet its projected population increase, the development of a more extensive and frequent transit system and walkable, bikeable neighborhoods. Further, HB 1181, recently passed by the Legislature and signed by the Governor to address climate change, requires the City to include in its upcoming comprehensive plan update an implementable strategy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. These regulations can be an important part of this required strategy.

I have followed the process the City has conducted to develop these regulations and heard the objections and fears raised by citizens and existing neighborhoods. As a former council member and mayor, I know how hard it is for elected officials to consider controversial issues. I believe the opponents to eliminating parking requirements have overstated and overlooked past history of what happens when parking requirements have been eliminated. For instance, in Olympia's Downtown, parking has not been required for years. Even so, developers have provided .75 parking places per residential unit. Much of it is expensive structured parking. Based on this past history, it is safe to assume developers will continue to provide parking while transit service becomes more robust, and more residents feel comfortable living without a car. For the near future, residents will most likely not recognize there has been a change in parking requirements. Nevertheless, I hope the reduction in parking requirements will help the development of more affordable housing units, particularly for very low income and formerly homeless individuals and families.

This controversy reminds me of the one surrounding the adoption of missing middle regulations. Then residents and leaders of single-family zoned neighborhoods worried these regulations would change the character of their neighborhoods. According to the City's planning department, since the missing middle regulations became effective, 48 permits for accessory dwelling units and townhouses have been issued as compared to 123 for single-family residences. These smaller living units certainly have not changed the character of neighborhoods.

To gauge the impacts of these changes, the City could monitor the implementation of these amendments and report to citizens on how many permits have been issued without parking, the impact of providing no parking on affordability and any negative effects on neighborhoods.

While these amendments and the missing middle regulations, are not huge steps in providing for more affordable, climate friendly, and sprawl reducing housing, they are important tools in the City's toolbox for achieving these goals.

For these reasons, I urge you to adopt the planning commission's recommendations. Thank you for considering my comments.

Respectfully,
Holly Gadbow
1625 Sylvester St. SW
Olympia, WA 98501
(360)789-3616
hollygadbow@comcast.net

From: [Emily Iles](#)
To: [Clark Gilman](#)
Cc: [CityCouncil](#); [Joyce Phillips](#); [Leonard Bauer](#)
Subject: Re: Thank you for writing to Olympia Council about Zero Parking
Date: Tuesday, May 16, 2023 9:38:39 PM

I hope for all of that as well.

I really do find value in the proposal you shared for designating non-car units. It does an elegant job of balancing concerns.

On Mon, May 15, 2023 at 8:39 PM Clark Gilman <cgilman@ci.olympia.wa.us> wrote:

Emily,

Thank you for your thoughtful analysis.

I hope that we can do better than Portland or Seattle where the walkable neighborhoods are for those who can buy their way in. I don't want the neighborhoods with fancy coffee and pastries to become inaccessible for people who have lived their lives here.

Half of a percent of those in last years TRPC transportation study rode transit during the study week. 1.5% of our cars are electric. 90% of our residents have cars.

That's the real balance for me. It's not about fighting against change, it's fighting against displacement. Fighting for the opportunity for people who grow up in Olympia to stay in Olympia.

I think we can be bold about climate and affordability while respecting the majority of people who live here today.

Clark

Clark Gilman, Mayor Pro Tem
City of Olympia
[\(360\) 753-8447](tel:(360)753-8447)
cgilman@ci.olympia.wa.us

From: Emily Iles <[mleno.make@gmail.com](mailto:mлено.make@gmail.com)>

Sent: Monday, May 15, 2023 9:37 AM

To: Clark Gilman <cgilman@ci.olympia.wa.us>

Cc: CityCouncil <citycouncil@ci.olympia.wa.us>; Joyce Phillips <jphillip@ci.olympia.wa.us>; Leonard Bauer <lbauer@ci.olympia.wa.us>

Subject: Re: Thank you for writing to Olympia Council about Zero Parking

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On the one hand, there is concern about parking becoming more difficult, and that other bad things will happen if parking becomes more difficult, or if there are more cars on the street vs in a driveway. This is an imagined concern. It is not happening. I can't say it won't happen (in fact, I think parking should become less available,

because of some benefits of moving away from free, easily available parking that I'll link to below), but there is no realistic idea of new development that would turn Olympia "into a Clockwork Orange-style hellscape", as one particularly hyperbolic opponent put it. Most neighborhoods in the city I've visited could easily accommodate 20 new cars without difficulty; I doubt most people would even notice it on my street (I'd prefer it, because I want people to drive more slowly on my through-street). The neighborhoods where parking is slightly more packed I'd argue are already more dense, those that are already making a more maximal use of land for housing people, like my friends on Cushing Street. I do have to work a bit more to find parking when I visit them, but on the upside they have a place to live.

On the other hand, you have concerns about providing housing: where the city has identified a vital need for 15-16k new units over the next 20 years, and, despite allowing more multiplex building several years ago, it doesn't appear that much if any new multiplex developments within existing neighborhoods are underway in the city. I can verify that the material costs, opportunity costs, and uncertainty around the impact of parking mandates is the reason why I'm not proceeding in developing a multiplex property right now (plus not being a multi-millionaire). And I'm not seeking to be a developer because I want to make a buck. I'm trying to get creative about how I can provide stable housing for my family when, despite making twice the median income for my area, I cannot get a loan that even approaches the price of houses in my area. Much has changed since most of Olympia housing was built: the people who will live here for the next several decades have smaller families, commute less/work from home more, have different financial realities, and have different environmental and community concerns. We deserve to be able to build and adapt neighborhoods to meet those changing needs, and there is no reason to prioritize the landed class over the renting class when the concerns are as stratified as "I hope to find a stable place to live" and "there may be more parking on my street".

As for the idea that new building that doesn't achieve 1:1 parking be designated as non-car units, that seems great on its face. Sure, that relieves the cost pressure for new building, which is huge. But it also shifts the uncertainty and creates a new regulatory regime, just in a different place, where that burden would be felt by renters. It also poses a new round of questions for developers, homeowners, and the city: Can the non-car unit be transferred among units if you build 2:3 parking places? What if you remove a parking space from your property? I argue that we don't need a new regulatory regime to replace the old one in the absence of any actual issues. Developments happen at a slow enough pace that the Council will have the opportunity to see if such an action is warranted, or if patterns and behaviors shift to accommodate a few more cars here and there, as they have in neighborhoods that already have higher density. If it is included, I would suggest adding a trigger mechanism for a maximum capacity of street parking.

The environmental, creative, cultural and economic advantages of building more density in urban areas are hard to understate. With the amount of units we need to add, I'd suggest we can have a very minimal environmental impact by densifying neighborhoods and finding more units in currently- single-family houses, or we can

have a tremendous environmental cost of pushing new building into previously undeveloped land. We can find the efficiencies of higher density, or we can build more and more "non-places" to connect our homes, work, and social lives. We can make policy as if we will be a far less car-dependent city soon, or we can build in costly, car-centered assumptions that entrench car ownership. We can open the door for smaller developers who are trying to make meaningful, creative, sustainable and safe housing in the community in which they live, or we can price development so that only large developers can play here.

This issue of parking seems minor, but the more I look at it, the more it indicates a stark turn for Olympia, either toward protectionism, or toward creative, sustainable, and achievable solutions to the economic and environmental challenges of housing. Change will continue to happen, but this is a moment where we can direct how that change shapes the region. What good is parking on or off a street that most people cannot afford to live on?

I moved from a denser city to Olympia, and have been mystified by the often-repeated concern of not enough parking. So I've looked in to it a lot, from a public policy standpoint, and here are some resource I've found, some of which you also may have come across, but just in case:

"At Strong Towns, we've described a parking lot as virtually the worst use to which you can put a piece of urban land. We've published dozens of articles on the [high costs](#) of our cities' addiction to free parking. We've [urged that every city eliminate its parking minimums](#), and start [pricing parking at a fair market rate](#), so that parking can be adequately weighed against other, potentially more productive uses of land. Our oversupply of free parking [is financially ruinous](#)—it results in cities that [have been eaten alive by parking lots](#) at the expense of value-generating land. It cannot be sustained."

<https://www.strongtowns.org/journal/2020/6/9/but-where-will-i-park>

"The second piece—locally earmarking the revenue from parking meters—is something Shoup argues is crucial to building public support for parking reforms. Otherwise, residents accustomed to "free" parking in their neighborhoods tend to get up in arms about pricing, because their perception is that something is being taken away from them. Of course, "free" parking is not really free at all—*someone* is paying the cost of paving and maintaining that space, and all of us are paying the opportunity cost of the other things it isn't being used for. But nonetheless, it's helpful to offer something tangible in return to those who will bear the immediate burden of a new parking fee."

<https://www.strongtowns.org/journal/2018/8/20/getting-parking-right-in-portland>

"This research bolsters the case for reducing or eliminating minimum parking requirements. If cities seek to break the cycle of automobile-oriented planning, eliminating residential parking requirements is an important step forward. By eliminating parking requirements, cities can enable more space for new housing

and allow that housing to be built more economically with greater opportunities for affordable housing. The Seattle analysis shows that many or most developers will respond to parking reforms, particularly if they are focused in neighborhoods with good walkability and transit options. As envisioned by [Barter \(2014\)](#), developers can be expected to provide less parking, and at a level that probably better matches market demand than the higher off-street parking requirements adopted decades ago. Policymakers from other cities should focus their reforms, like Seattle, on reducing or eliminating parking minimums."

Attached Study of Seattle development post parking reforms

Thank you for bearing with me this far, and I truly appreciate the time and thought that's gone into this proposal so far.

Emily Noelle

On Sun, May 14, 2023 at 9:12 PM Clark Gilman <cgilman@ci.olympia.wa.us> wrote:

I appreciate receiving so many emails about eliminating parking requirements for new development. I wanted to let you know what I'm thinking and our schedule for taking action.

This Tuesday will be a little different from the average Tuesday Olympia City Council meeting night. The city, alongside you as engaged community members, has been in a discussion about reducing residential parking requirements to further climate and affordable housing goals. A staff proposal was shaped through public comment and forums, research from comparable cities, and discussion in our Planning Commission.

The proposal took a turn when Planning Commission voted to dramatically alter the staff recommendation. The Planning Commission recommendation is to eliminate rather than reduce the amount of on-site parking required for new residential development. I believe the zero parking proposal was well-intentioned, but I believe there are consequences of the zero parking proposal that should be seriously considered.

So, on this slightly different Tuesday night, Olympia City Council will decide whether the advantages of the proposed zero parking legislation outweigh the risks of adopting a major policy change that has not been fully discussed and refined. Or, indeed, whether City Council might make our own modifications to the policy on the spot prior to voting.

I've heard both support and concerns for eliminating parking requirements. Many of the concerns are focused on impacts of new housing providing zero parking in existing low density residential neighborhoods.

Proponents have called this measure an opportunity to accelerate our climate goals by encouraging car-free households. Some have expressed hope that by creating more units on a lot that currently has a single family house new less expensive units will be created. Opponents have been concerned about creating bad neighbor relations and competition for on street parking, believing that tenants of the new units are likely to have cars whether or not on-site parking is provided. Some have questioned whether eliminating onsite parking requirements will actually provide the climate benefits of reducing the number of vehicles owned, parked, and driven by tenants of new housing.

If Council were to consider modifications to the zero parking ordinance on Tuesday what would those changes be? How might we make progress towards encouraging less expensive housing and more people living a car free life while respecting that existing neighborhoods anticipate conflict with new neighbors who park all of their vehicles on the street?

One suggestion from Planning Commission is to delay implementation of the new parking rules in neighborhoods. I wonder what else we might do.

Here is one solution I believe addresses both the hopes and concerns - designate the new units built with no parking as car-free residences. The units built with zero parking would not be eligible for residential parking passes. This would require expanding the residential parking permit system beyond downtown and the South Capitol neighborhood. This could reduce the impact of the new units on surrounding neighbors while furthering our climate and affordability goals. A Car-Free unit adds another walking, biking, and transit-riding household to the community. A unit without parking could rent for less than a comparable unit that allows parking- the going rate for apartment parking is what, \$150 to \$200 a month?

Thanks again for commenting on this issue. I welcome your suggestions as we move towards Tuesday's consideration of the zero parking ordinance.

Clark

Clark Gilman, Mayor Pro Tem
City of Olympia
[\(360\) 753-8447](tel:(360)753-8447)
cgilman@ci.olympia.wa.us

From: [Leah Melvoin](#)
To: [Clark Gilman](#); [CityCouncil](#)
Cc: [Joyce Phillips](#); [Leonard Bauer](#)
Subject: RE: Thank you for writing to Olympia Council about Zero Parking
Date: Wednesday, May 17, 2023 8:46:00 AM

Hi Clark,

If the city could have some method for ensuring residents would comply with the limitation, your idea could work. The issue I see is somewhat similar to who gets affordable housing. Folks initially meet the income criteria, however when they make more money no one evaluates their situation and tells them to find new housing (which means they take up the affordable housing when they shouldn't anymore). If the city were to provide oversight, then that would solve that problem.

It's really about idealism vs. reality though.

Idealism says: "People won't drive in the future" or "Everyone drive an EV". To make these ideals work in reality requires significant investments in infrastructure by municipalities. These costs fall to the cities and citizens, not developers, who must provide **safe**, accessible transit in all corridors that is continually running. Without that infrastructure, the ideal is impossible. Especially in a city like ours that is one of the darkest in the US and rains all the time.

The wrinkles are:

- People have children and that makes living via public transit super challenging.
- People need jobs and those jobs maybe farther away. Olympia will have to really invest in transportation to those locations if you make it impossible for them to have cars.
- People get disabled, old, or have to care for folks who are disabled and old. That requires a car and accessible parking. With the massive increase in the elderly population occurring over the next 2 decades and the increase in disabled caused by COVID one accessible space isn't going to cut it.
- People have visitors who drive over and absorb any available parking in the neighborhood.
- Neighborhoods can be destinations and those visitors absorb even more parking in a neighborhood.
- EVs need to be charged (and don't get me started on the environmental impacts of EV construction which as of now are worse than cars that use fossil fuels)
- Olympia would have to invest heavily in better policing, more streetlights, better sidewalks, bike paths, more frequent public transportation, and oversight – all because of limited parking. So...you save developers money but you create a scenario that requires a massive tax increase or bond offerings which harms everyone who lives here. Essentially Olympia becomes unaffordable for other reasons.

Simple ideas often cause the greatest complexity in implementation. The goal should be to make sure residents have a parking space, because most will drive...but limit additional parking. Developers and landlords charge for parking spaces in multiple units, so the reduced parking requirements idea .75 per unit was the best option really. IMHO.

I really appreciate your reaching out. You are the only council member who has ever responded to an email I've sent. I also have been worried that the council is not listening to citizens and doing what it wants to do. Which isn't the job. So thank you for restoring my faith in your leadership.

Leah Melvoin

From: Clark Gilman <cgilman@ci.olympia.wa.us>

Sent: Sunday, May 14, 2023 9:12 PM

To: CityCouncil <citycouncil@ci.olympia.wa.us>

Cc: Joyce Phillips <jphillip@ci.olympia.wa.us>; Leonard Bauer <lbauer@ci.olympia.wa.us>

Subject: Thank you for writing to Olympia Council about Zero Parking

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parking permit system beyond downtown and the South Capitol neighborhood. This could reduce the impact of the new units on surrounding neighbors while furthering our climate and affordability goals. A Car-Free unit adds another walking, biking, and transit-riding household to the community. A unit without parking could rent for less than a comparable unit that allows parking- the going rate for apartment parking is what, \$150 to \$200 a month?

Thanks again for commenting on this issue. I welcome your suggestions as we move towards Tuesday's consideration of the zero parking ordinance.

Clark

Clark Gilman, Mayor Pro Tem
City of Olympia
[\(360\) 753-8447](tel:3607538447)
cgilman@ci.olympia.wa.us

From: [Kathy McCormick](#)
To: [CityCouncil](#)
Cc: [Leonard Bauer](#); [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: This little-known rule shapes parking in America. Cities are reversing it | CNN Business
Date: Saturday, May 20, 2023 8:14:46 AM

In case you missed this! Nice summary of history and the road forward.

<https://www.cnn.com/2023/05/20/business/parking-minimums-cars-transportation-urban-planning/index.html>

Kathy McCormick
Sent from my iPhone



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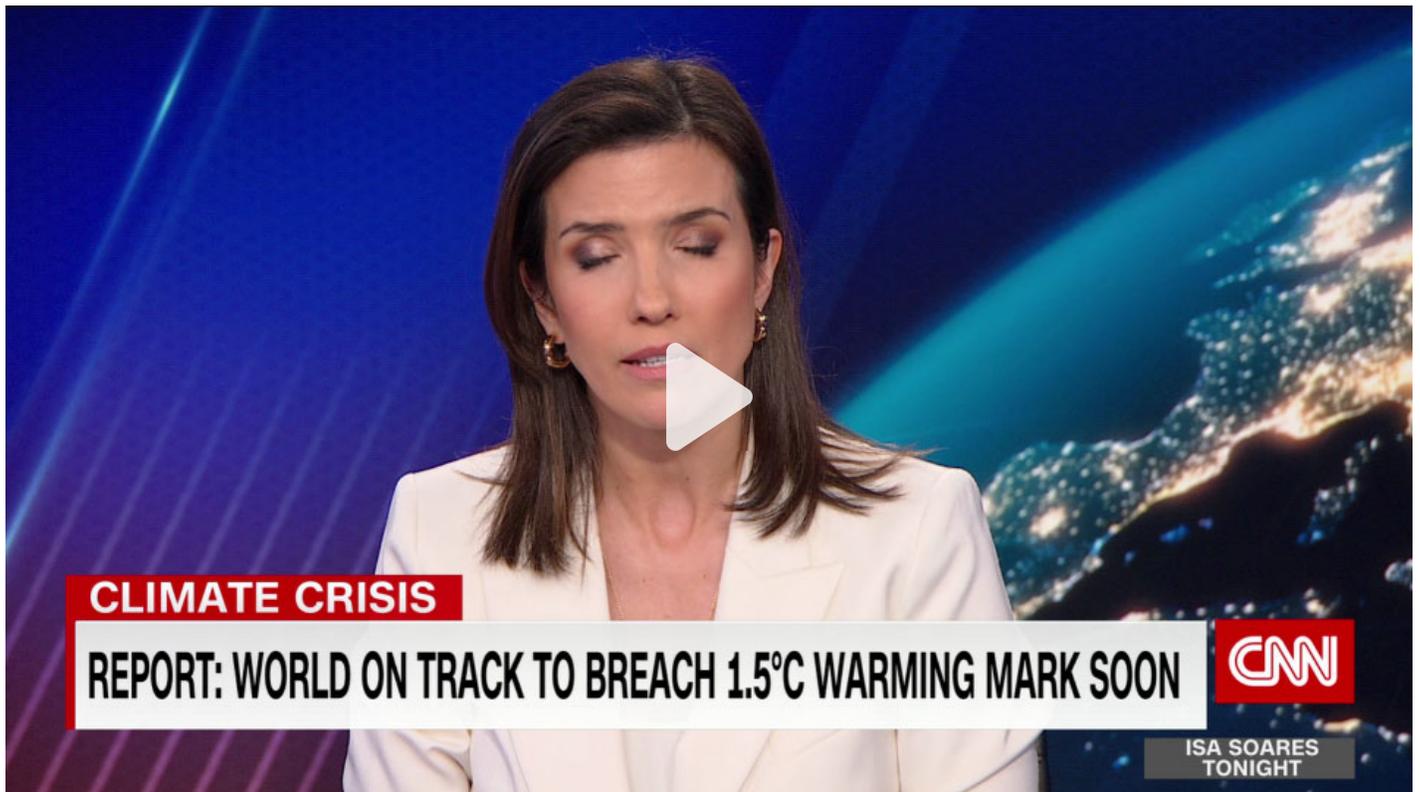
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This little-known rule shapes parking in America. Cities are reversing it

By [Nathaniel Meyersohn](#), CNN

Updated 9:00 AM EDT, Sun May 21, 2023



Report: World on track to breach 1.5°C warming mark soon

07:12 - Source: [CNN](#)

New York (CNN) — America is jammed with parking spots.

Approximately 2 billion parking spots cover the country, enough to pave over the entire state of Connecticut. From baseball stadiums in Los Angeles to malls in Atlanta, parking lots are bigger than the buildings they surround.

Cities have built so much parking through a policy few people know: minimum parking requirements. Cities don't just require parking spaces for nearly every office, mall, store, movie theater, bowling alley, restaurant and other building, those requirements often include a certain number of spots for every building.

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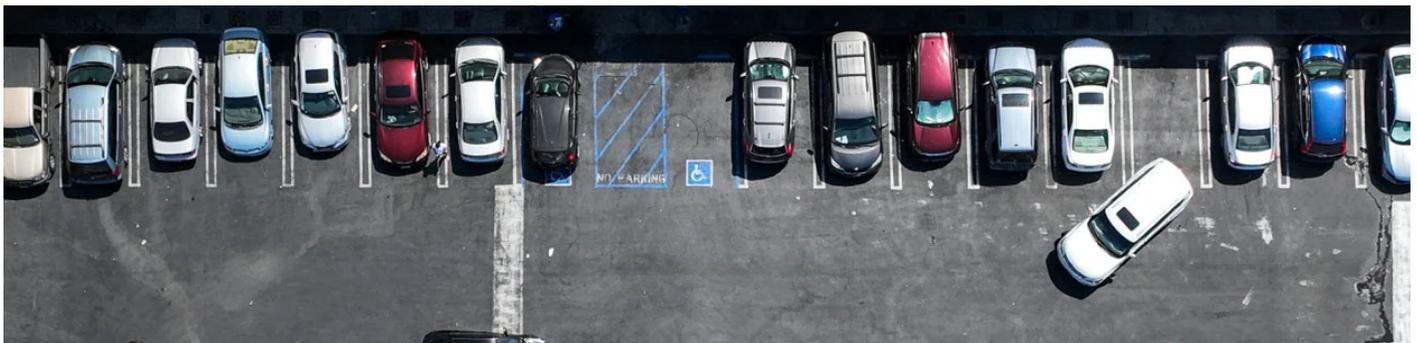


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Mandatory parking minimums helped shape the modern makeup of America cities. They become a self-fulfilling prophecy, in effect. More parking spaces mean bigger parking lots. Bigger parking lots mean more buildings isolated from roads and sidewalks, separated from arterial infrastructure by vast oceans of asphalt. Faced with so much mandatory automotive-centric infrastructure, many people abandon walking and choose to drive.





Qian Weizhong/VCG/Getty Images

There are an estimated three to eight parking spots for every car in America.

Parking requirements have come with other downsides, and a growing number of cities and towns — in both Republican and Democratic-led areas— are now reforming their parking rules. The effort to end parking requirements has gained federal support as well.

In their zoning codes, many cities mandated that any new or re-purposed real estate projects include a minimum number of off-street parking spaces, often based on the size of the development or type of land use.

But now, US Rep. Robert Garcia, a Democrat from California, recently introduced a bill that would eliminate parking minimums for new affordable residential, retail, industrial and commercial construction. Separately, he introduced legislation to scrap parking requirements close to public transit.

Affordable housing, environmental and public transportation advocates say parking minimums reduce the supply of housing and raise costs. Developers often bundle the costs of parking in rent or housing prices.





Jeenah Moon/Bloomberg/Getty Images

It costs around \$36,000 to build a new parking spot in New York City.

It costs about \$28,000 to build a parking spot, according to WGI, a construction engineering company. Construction costs are highest in New York City, where it's notoriously difficult to find a spot. A new parking spot in the city runs up to \$36,000, not including the cost of buying the land.

Parking rules deter developers and businesses that can't afford to construct the required parking, and spaces that could have held apartments have instead been swallowed up by parking mandates.

They also increase traffic congestion, carbon emissions and make cities less walkable, critics say.

And they are unequal because everyone pays for them — even people who don't own or can't afford a car.

"It damages the economy because everything everywhere has to include the cost of parking," said Donald Shoup, a professor of urban planning at UCLA and an evangelist of anti-parking mandates. "It's a long train of consequences."

Arbitrary rules

Parking requirements began a century ago.

By the 1920s, New York City, Los Angeles and other US cities were jammed with cars on

the curbs. To manage this problem, cities began adding newly-invented parking meters in their densest areas, hoping to both keep the amount of cars to those who truly needed them, and to make some money at the same time. They also created off-street parking requirements for new buildings.

The mandates accelerated during the postwar period as more people drove, highways developed and suburbanization swept the country.

Minimum parking laws “spread faster than any other planning regulation ever has,” Shoup said. “They went from nowhere to everywhere.”

Policymakers, planners and developers designed cities and suburbs with the goal of providing everyone — even if they didn’t drive — ample places to park.



Gregory Rec/Portland Press Herald/Getty Images

Parking lots are often bigger than the buildings they surround.

“Planners were responding to what people wanted without thinking there would be terrible effects in the long run,” he said.

The requirements were often arbitrary and puzzling, said Tony Jordan, the co-founder of Parking Reform Network.

A few examples Jordan has found: Tiny Woodbury, Georgia, population 905, has dozens of specific parking mandates, including for separate regulations for heliports and helistops. (Five spaces per helistop, and one per 1,000 square feet of heliports.)

SeaTac, Washington, requires one parking spot at butterfly and moth breeding facilities for every 150 square feet of office or retail space.

And Dallas requires one parking space for every million gallons of capacity at a sewage treatment plant, but two parking spaces for a water treatment plant.

“Take a sample of any 10 municipalities almost anywhere in the country and you’ll find a similar set of contradictions and headscratchers,” Jordan said.

Cities reverse course

In Shoup’s influential 2005 book, “The High Cost of Free Parking,” he recommended that cities should remove off-street parking requirements, charge demand-based prices for curb parking – the lowest prices that will leave one or two open spaces on each block to alleviate parking shortages – and spend the meter revenue to improve public services.

His ideas are having a moment.

Last year, 11 cities ended their minimum parking mandates, including Raleigh, Anchorage and Lexington, Kentucky, according to the Parking Reform Network, a nonprofit group that researches and advocates for parking policy changes.

California became the first state to pass legislation ending parking minimums for new developments close to public transit.





Alexi Rosenfeld/Getty Images

Cars fill a parking lot near the Santa Monica Pier in California. California has banned parking minimums in most areas of the state.

Four cities have ended them so far in 2023, including Richmond, Virginia.

“The parking minimums have contributed to urban sprawl, lack of abundant and affordable housing, and automobile dependency,” said a staff report by Richmond’s Department of Planning.

Richmond and other cities will allow property owners to decide how much parking to add in their proposed developments, allowing market forces to determine how many parking spots are needed.

Some cities, including Nashville, are moving in the exact opposite direction of parking minimums, creating maximum parking requirements that cap the number of spots developers can build.

Affordable housing

Cities are looking for ways to reinvent their public spaces after the damaging impact of the pandemic. They also face a lack of affordable housing.

Scrapping minimum parking requirements could help both challenges. Instead of developers setting aside land to build parking, it could be turned into smaller apartment complexes, advocates say.

In Buffalo and Seattle, which ended parking minimums in 2017 and 2012 respectively, nearly 70% of new homes built after parking reforms would not have been allowed under the previous rules, according to research from Sightline Institute, a non-partisan sustainability advocacy group.





Beata Zawrzel/NurPhoto/Shutterstock

Spaces devoted to parking lots could be turned into affordable housing, advocates say.

In Buffalo, developers built less parking than previously required and made parking an amenity, charging individual users fees rather than bundling it into rent or housing prices, researchers at the University at Buffalo found.

Seattle developers built 40% less parking than would have been required prior to the reforms, resulting in 18,000 fewer parking spaces, researchers at Santa Clara University found.

“These findings highlight the impact that policymakers can have by reducing or eliminating off-street parking requirements,” the researchers said.

A better policy, Brookings Institution researchers said in a 2020 report on parking minimums, would be to let developers and businesses decide how much off-street parking to build.

In places where demand for parking is high, developers will choose to build spots, the researchers predict.

But in places with an oversupply of parking spots and a shortage of affordable housing, they say, “parking minimums are 20th century relics that deserve to be retired.”

MORE FROM CNN BUSINESS

From: [CityCouncil](#)
To: rmvanderpool7@gmail.com
Cc: [Councilmembers](#); [Jay Burney](#); [Rich Hoey](#); [Debbie Sullivan](#); [Kellie Braseth](#); [Leonard Bauer](#); [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: Re: Parking Memo [Public Comment]
Date: Tuesday, May 30, 2023 8:23:47 AM
Attachments: [Parking Memo.docx](#)

Thank you for your comments. I will forward them on to all Councilmembers and appropriate staff.

Susan Grisham (*she/her*)
Assistant to the City Manager
Legislative Liaison
City of Olympia | P.O. Box 1967 | Olympia WA 98507
360-753-8244 | sgrisham@ci.olympia.wa.us

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Please note all correspondence is subject to public disclosure.

From: rmvanderpool7@gmail.com <rmvanderpool7@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, May 26, 2023 8:52 PM
To: [CityCouncil](#) <citycouncil@ci.olympia.wa.us>
Subject: Parking Memo [Public Comment]

Good Afternoon,

Please see attached public comment brief memo on the parking.

Thank you,

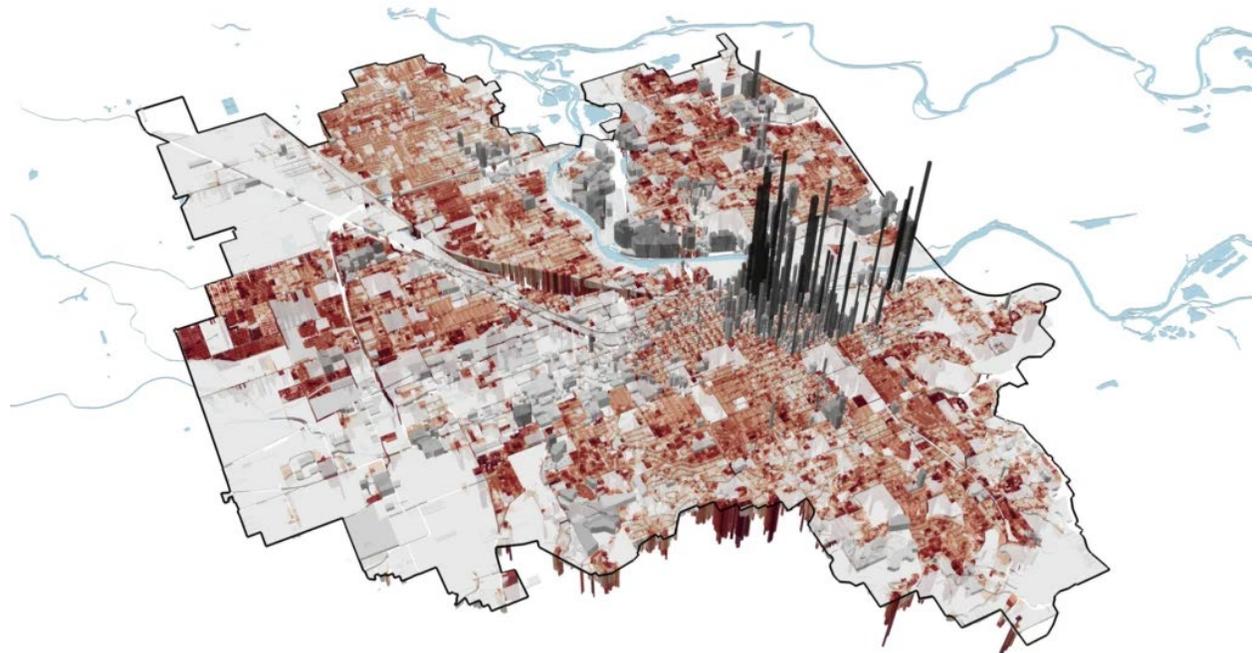
Robert Vanderpool

From: Robert Vanderpool
To: Olympia City Council
Subject: Parking Minimums

Council Members,

I would like to bring to attention the issue of parking minimums in the City of Olympia. Parking minimums, as you are aware, has been a bit of a city-wide conversation in the last few months. Many members of the community have shown support, and some have shown concerns about changing parking restrictions. I would like to express why the changes, as they were passed by the Land Use & Environment Committee and by the Planning Commission, are the appropriate measures to support.

First and foremost, the direct benefits of reducing parking minimums would be creating flexibility in housing types. According to Jeff Speck in his Urban Planning book *Walkable City*, younger members of the community are less likely to drive and are more likely to move to cities that reflect that notion. Cities need to attract younger community members that drive the economic engines of cities. Townhomes, condos, five-over-twos and other mixed-income (often mixed-usage) housing types developed without parking would reflect well-known growth trends. Cities that do not attract younger people are often restricted by conditions that do not produce taxes and do not develop city projects at scale. Urban3, studies this phenomenon in their tax revenue maps (see below). Dense areas, often without parking requirements, attract more people and create more economic growth (and less cost per acre).



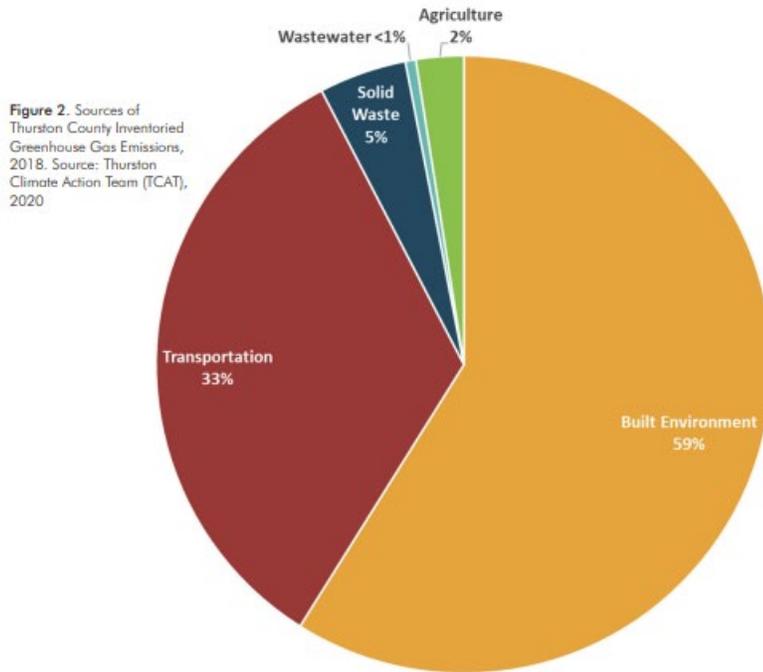
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Eliminating parking minimums, in the medium and long-term, would reduce our dependency on driving infrastructure, reduce climate impacts, and reduce wasted spaces between destinations. Communities developed without parking often produce better alternatives to driving through wider sidewalks (short

¹ Eugene, OR. Spikes upward indicate areas where sales taxes pay for city projects, and the flat areas indicate where they do not. Suburban areas without businesses cost more in roads, than they produce in taxes. Credit Urban3. <https://www.urbanthree.com/case-study/eugene-or/>

From: Robert Vanderpool
To: Olympia City Council
Subject: Parking Minimums

distances) dedicated bicycle infrastructure (short to medium distances), and rapid transit (medium to long distances). This is because space is prioritized for these forms of transportation. Parking, in short, only serves driving. The largest two climate admitters, according to TRPC, are transportation and energy from the Built Environment. Dedicated parking will only continue to add to this problem. This is because parking being built only prioritizes travel by cars and parking creates gaps between housing.

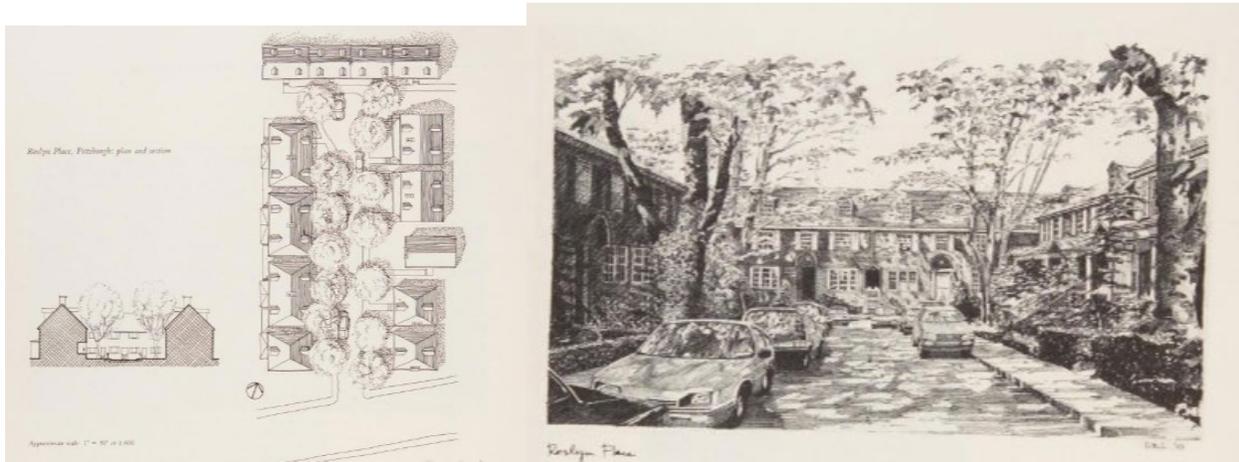


2

Lastly, the urban fabric of our cities is always under threat when we dedicate land that could be housing, businesses, parks, or other important destinations for parking. Alan Jacobs describes what makes a great street in his wonderful book, *Great Streets*, by showing examples of streets throughout the world. Streets were built in different times and by different cultures. He expresses that a great street is one with a strong fabric. A continuous flow of places by foot. Places that push people to watch, walk, and admire. Parking lots do not make great streets, they create gaps in approach to a city fabric. Mostly people stop and turnaround at these gaps because they produce no destination.

² Thurston Regional Planning Council, *Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan*. 2020. Page 31.

From: Robert Vanderpool
To: Olympia City Council
Subject: Parking Minimums



3

Parking minimums produce a status quo approach to development standards, city-wide unaffordability, declines in population, increased carbon emissions, driving dependency, declines in a taxbase, and an underutilized fabric. Parking, more than anything else, produces a service for folks who already own homes. It does nothing for young people, it does nothing for the future of the city. We must remember that the city is nothing without a future.

Sincerely,

Robert Vanderpool

³ Allan Jacobs, *Great Streets*. 1993. Roslyn Place, Pittsburgh. A single-family attached housing, small street with only on street parking (no parking requirements). This neighborhood style producing a density double most of Olympia's neighborhoods without changing must in form of development.

From: [CityCouncil](#)
To: [Ben Welna](#)
Cc: [Councilmembers](#); [Jay Burney](#); [Rich Hoey](#); [Debbie Sullivan](#); [Kellie Braseth](#); [Leonard Bauer](#); [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: RE: Parking public comment
Date: Monday, June 05, 2023 4:35:21 PM

Thank you for your comments. I will forward them on to all Councilmembers and appropriate staff.

Susan Grisham (*she/her*)
Assistant to the City Manager
Legislative Liaison
City of Olympia | P.O. Box 1967 | Olympia WA 98507
360-753-8244 | sgrisham@ci.olympia.wa.us

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Please note all correspondence is subject to public disclosure.

From: Ben Welna <welnaben@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, June 5, 2023 12:25 PM
To: CityCouncil <citycouncil@ci.olympia.wa.us>
Subject: Parking public comment

Good Morning,

I am an Olympia resident writing in support of the proposed amendment to the residential parking code. Reducing the amount of required parking will provide more space for housing, make public transit more accessible, reduce traffic, and encourage use of public transportation. Adopting the proposed amendment will mean more space for cyclists and pedestrians in our public spaces. This will make multi modal transit safer and more accessible, and reduce air pollution and carbon emissions from personal vehicles.

Thanks,

Ben Welna

From: [CityCouncil](#)
To: adan@sermontipublicaffairs.com
Cc: [Councilmembers](#); [Jay Burney](#); [Rich Hoey](#); [Debbie Sullivan](#); [Kellie Braseth](#); [Leonard Bauer](#); [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: FW: Habitat for Humanity Comments on Resolution 23-0421
Date: Monday, June 05, 2023 4:35:53 PM
Attachments: [SPSHFH Resolution 23-0421 Letter to Counciln.docx](#)

Thank you for your comments. I will forward them on to all Councilmembers and appropriate staff.

Susan Grisham (*she/her*)
Assistant to the City Manager
Legislative Liaison
City of Olympia | P.O. Box 1967 | Olympia WA 98507
360-753-8244 | sgrisham@ci.olympia.wa.us

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From: Adan Espino <adan@sermontipublicaffairs.com>
Sent: Monday, June 5, 2023 3:56 PM
To: CityCouncil <citycouncil@ci.olympia.wa.us>
Cc: Clark Gilman <cgilman@ci.olympia.wa.us>; Dani Madrone <dmadrone@ci.olympia.wa.us>; Yên Huỳnh <yhuynh@ci.olympia.wa.us>; Iparshley <iparshley@ci.olympia.wa.us>; Cheryl Selby <cselby@ci.olympia.wa.us>; Dontae Payne <dpayne@ci.olympia.wa.us>; Jim Cooper <jcooper@ci.olympia.wa.us>; Jay Burney <jburney@ci.olympia.wa.us>; Carly Colgan <carly@spshabitat.org>
Subject: Habitat for Humanity Comments on Resolution 23-0421

Dear city of Olympia council,

I am submitting this letter on behalf of South Puget Sound Habitat for Humanity on their concern of lowering parking maximums for multi-family projects as proposed in Resolution 23-0421.

In short, we request that the council either remove all parking maximums or retain current city code's 1.5 spaces/unit parking maximum for multi-family projects because lowering said maximum will cause delays to the Boulevard Rd project for redesign and undue hardship to future residents of the project.

Let me know if there are any questions.

Best,

Adán
360-553-2874

Dear City of Olympia Councilmembers,

South Puget Sound Habitat for Humanity (SPSHFH), a nonprofit affordable homeownership developer headquartered in Olympia that builds homes for low-income homebuyers, sends this letter regarding our concern with the way council resolution 23-0421 reduces parking maximums.

We are excited to see the energy there is to increase housing opportunities within the city, such as with our Boulevard Rd partnership, and to improve the ability to develop diverse housing types. However, we are concerned about reducing the parking maximums for multi-family projects (3+ unit projects) from 1.5 spaces/unit to 1.25 spaces/unit as outlined in resolution 23-0421.

This single change will mean that we must spend additional time and money reshaping the Boulevard Rd project for this major reduction in allowable parking spaces. Currently, we are proposing 223 parking spaces (including garages) for the 110+ housing units that will be built. We need a minimum of 180 parking spaces within the existing project design. With a 1.25 parking maximum, we may be unable to build more than 150 parking spaces depending on how our townhomes and apartment buildings classify in the proposed ordinance language.

The vast majority of our low-income homebuyers are reliant on their vehicles for all travel, especially given that many of our projects are built in suburban areas of the county that are not close to transit. For the Boulevard Rd project particularly, Intercity Transit does not have quick transit service - the nearest bus stop is usually a 30 minute wait, and sometimes up to an hour - and Boulevard Rd itself is not at all pedestrian friendly. Given these realities, it is our experience that Habitat projects must have adequate parking space for residents and some guests.

Additionally, the project will include a commercial area, which could be subject to additional parking stress if residents and patrons find themselves fighting for parking.

We are enthusiastic about the future potential of increased transit and pedestrian infrastructure within the city, but as we undertake the challenges of rapidly building affordable housing for Olympians it is imperative that the city does not prevent ongoing affordable housing projects from completing. If these changes were to be enacted as is, the Habitat team will not be able to meet our city partner's expectations to be ready for land use permitting submissions by July because we will have to redesign the Boulevard Rd project.

We request that the city remove the parking maximum for multifamily (3+ units) projects entirely within city council resolution 23-0421 or retain the existing 1.5 spaces/unit maximum code and not cause negative implications and slowdowns to a major affordable homeownership project.

Sincerely,
South Puget Sound Habitat for Humanity

Best Regards,
Adán Espino Jr
360-553-2874



South Puget Sound Habitat for Humanity

June 5, 2023

To:
City of Olympia Council

Subject:
Comments on Resolution 23-0421

601 4th Ave E
Olympia, WA 98501
via. e-mail

Dear City of Olympia Councilmembers,

South Puget Sound Habitat for Humanity (SPSHFH), a nonprofit affordable homeownership developer headquartered in Olympia that builds homes for low-income homebuyers, sends this letter regarding our concern with the way council resolution 23-0421 reduces parking maximums.

We are excited to see the energy there is to increasing housing opportunities within the city, such as with our Boulevard Rd partnership, and to improving the ability to develop diverse housing types. However, we are concerned about reducing the parking maximums for multi-family projects (3+ unit projects) from 1.5 spaces/unit to 1.25 spaces/unit as outlined in resolution 23-0421.

This single change will cause us to completely halt the progress of the Boulevard Rd project and spend additional months reshaping the project for this major reduction in allowable parking spaces. Currently, we are proposing 223 parking spaces (including garages) for the 110+ housing units that will be built. We need a minimum of 180 parking spaces within the existing project design. With a 1.25 parking maximum, we may be unable to build more than 150 parking spaces depending on how our townhomes and apartment buildings classify in the proposed ordinance language.

The vast majority of our low-income homebuyers are reliant on their vehicles for all travel, especially given that many of our projects are built in suburban areas of the county that are not close to transit. For the Boulevard Rd project particularly, Intercity Transit does not have quick transit service - the nearest bus stop is usually a 30 minute wait, and sometimes up to an hour - and Boulevard Rd itself is not at all pedestrian friendly. Given these realities, it is our experience that Habitat projects must have adequate parking space for residents and some guests.

Additionally, the project will include a commercial area, which could be subject to additional parking stress if residents or patrons find themselves fighting for parking.

We are enthusiastic about the future potential of increased transit and pedestrian infrastructure within the city, but as we undertake the challenges of rapidly building affordable housing for Olympians it is imperative that the city does not prevent ongoing affordable housing projects from completing. If these changes were to be enacted as is, the Habitat team will not be able to meet our city partner's expectations to be ready for land use permitting submissions by July because we will have to redesign the Boulevard Rd project.

We request that the city remove the parking maximum for multifamily (3+ units) projects entirely or retain the existing 1.5 spaces/unit maximum law within city council resolution 23-0421 and not cause negative implications and slowdowns to a major affordable homeownership project.

Sincerely,
South Puget Sound Habitat for Humanity

From: [CityCouncil](#)
To: [Greg Griffith](#)
Cc: [Councilmembers](#); [Jay Burney](#); [Rich Hoey](#); [Debbie Sullivan](#); [Kellie Braseth](#); [Leonard Bauer](#); [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: RE: Support for Eliminating Parking Minimums
Date: Tuesday, June 06, 2023 8:33:41 AM

Thank you for your comments. I will forward them on to all Councilmembers and appropriate staff.

Susan Grisham (*she/her*)
Assistant to the City Manager
Legislative Liaison
City of Olympia | P.O. Box 1967 | Olympia WA 98507
360-753-8244 | sgrisham@ci.olympia.wa.us

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From: Greg Griffith <griffithgrega@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, June 5, 2023 4:41 PM
To: CityCouncil <citycouncil@ci.olympia.wa.us>
Cc: Greg Griffith <griffithgrega@gmail.com>
Subject: Support for Eliminating Parking Minimums

Dear City Council Members:

I am writing to you with a recommendation for your vote to support adoption of proposed amendments to city codes that would eliminate minimum parking requirements for residential developments. Further, I recommend further action to eliminate minimum parking requirements for commercial and office developments.

In writing this message, I know and appreciate that your support for eliminating minimum parking requirements will be a difficult vote to cast. That said, I entirely understand and can sympathize with the outcry that has been made against this proposal. As a senior citizen, I grew up in post-World War II United States where being able to drive one's automobile to anywhere at any time and weather...and park for free, was considered a national birthright. This national mindset has provided most of us with ease and convenience for travel or running errands in town. However, the long-term and hidden costs that are harmful to our economic, social, and environmental well-being can no longer be ignored.

In a May 2, 2023 Washington Post article by Michael Coren, makes the case for eliminating parking minimums based on Donald Shoup's book "[The High Cost of Free Parking](#)." Coren's article refers to parking reform efforts in Portland and writes: "Businesses and housing complexes-instead of city officials-should decide how much on-site parking they need...That would encourage developers to

build the 'missing middle' of housing--small, multifamily buildings rather than skyscraper or suburban sprawl- while reinvesting in districts and small businesses accessible by multiple forms of transport."

We live and work in a free market economy, where the marketplace drives decision-making. Then why not let the market drive the number of parking spaces needed,..or not? If the market demands parking be provided, then so be it. But if not, why require it along with all the long-term costs that come with more parking than needed?

In closing, I urge your support of proposed code amendments that eliminate parking requirements. Again, I know that eliminating parking requirements will be seen as too radical and burdensome a solution. Clearly, those fears should be addressed and mitigating measures adopted. Nevertheless, adopting this code revision is a needed first step to reduce our nation's decades-old dependence on automobile transportation.

Thank you for this opportunity to express my perspective on this proposal.
Greg Griffith

From: [CityCouncil](#)
To: [Larry ofNottingham](#)
Cc: [Councilmembers](#); [Jay Burney](#); [Rich Hoey](#); [Debbie Sullivan](#); [Kellie Braseth](#); [Leonard Bauer](#); [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: RE: Parking Changes
Date: Tuesday, June 06, 2023 1:23:58 PM

Thank you for your comments. I will forward them on to all Councilmembers and appropriate staff.

Susan Grisham (*she/her*)
Assistant to the City Manager
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360-753-8244 | sgrisham@ci.olympia.wa.us

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From: Larry ofNottingham <larryofnottingham@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 6, 2023 11:43 AM
To: CityCouncil <citycouncil@ci.olympia.wa.us>; Clark Gilman <cgilman@ci.olympia.wa.us>; Cheryl Selby <cselby@ci.olympia.wa.us>; Dani Madrone <dmadrone@ci.olympia.wa.us>; Jim Cooper <jcooper@ci.olympia.wa.us>; Dontae Payne <dpayne@ci.olympia.wa.us>; Lisa Parshley <lparshle@ci.olympia.wa.us>; Yên Huỳnh <yhuynh@ci.olympia.wa.us>
Subject: Parking Changes

Dear City Council,

Please refrain from adopting your zero and reduced parking changes until you have more fully engaged the community on these changes.

The rushed and poorly considered proposal that has changed repeatedly without adequate community input needs to be delayed. From personal experience I know how poorly constructed it was as I drew attention to problems that resulted in fixes to some of the egregious problems with the proposal. For example, it came as a surprise to staff and the Planning Commission when I pointed out that zero parking means zero accessible parking as well.

The city's rush to push this through by suggesting that it is required to do so by the Commerce grant rings hollow. Nothing in the grant proposal puts at risk the lion's share of the funding and even then, nothing in the grant calls for a specific action of zero and reduced parking in all areas of the city.

Faulty Reasoning that Builders Know Best

While there has been a lot of focus on allowing developers to provide zero off-street parking it is also important to note the proposal calls for lowering the maximums.

This fact undercuts the proponents' argument that "builders know best" when it comes to parking. Apparently, "builders know best" when they want to build as few as zero parking spaces but somehow, builders' wisdom fails when they want to build more parking spaces than the 1.25 spaces per multi-family unit limit in the proposal.

Please explain to the public the internal contradiction in your argument that "builders know best"?

If you truly believe that "builders know best", then the premier builder of affordable home ownership housing, Habitat for Humanity, would not be asking you to put aside the ceiling on the number of allowed parking spaces.

A World Without Cars

We have heard the members of the city council and planning commission as well as some members of the public imagining a future Olympia without cars. Convenient and plentiful transit at all hours of the day and night and all your shopping and service needs within a 15-minute walk along safe streets with sidewalks and car-free streets.

I agree what a wonderful world it would be to have a small low-cost city like Olympia with all the amenities of living in Manhattan which, coincidentally, has the approximate land area of Olympia. But that is not realistic. Nor is it in the realm of being aspirational.

Olympia is not going to approach the density of major cities that will allow for a carless future. In fact, few cities have uniform density that makes going carless practical. Nearby Seattle has three times our density and in some areas not having a vehicle is possible, but Seattle had 460,000 vehicles in 2019. "Carless in Seattle" is not a movie that will be made anytime soon. It is also important to observe that renters in Seattle own 195,000 of the cars.

A Questionable if not Faulty Logic Model

The logic model employed by the city's proposal is that by making Olympia less hospitable to cars the public will have to ride the bus and give up their vehicles because as one advocate said, "necessity is the mother of invention". Then, having to rely on transit, the frequency and hours of transit operations will rise to meet the demand along with all the stores and services you need nearby.

The logic model also follows that if millionaire investors and syndicates save money from not building parking, they will charge below market rents rather than maximize their profits.

Do most Olympians believe that the logic being used to allow for zero parking minimum and lowering the parking maximum will work for them in the real world? And if yes, when will these salubrious effects happen?

Also, if higher density cities and cities with zero parking requirements have higher rents and housing ownership costs than Olympia, then on what basis should we believe that following their lead results in lower prices?

Real People, Right Now

Another advocate for change says, in her opinion, that our bus service is exceptional and that by forcing more density, the transit system will eventually get better.

But it is not true that Olympia's transit is adequate and how long should real people living here today sacrifice for a hoped for and uncertain future benefit?

People of today cannot ride the buses and transit of the future. Their jobs and return home from their service industry jobs won't allow for transit to work for them if they

must work after 9:00 p.m. or on weekends and holidays.

Intercity Transit route planning shows that someone working until 10:00 pm at McDonald's downtown trying to get home on the Westside to their low-income apartments would face challenges. According to Intercity, that low-income service worker has two choices: Walk or wait to take the next available bus at 6:02 a.m. the next morning. (The 62A and 47 bus). But if they decide to walk the 2.4 miles at 10:00 pm, in the dark and often in the rain, Intercity Transit does advise, "Use caution – This route may be missing sidewalks or pedestrian paths."

The reality is that when planning for worker housing, those workers will need cars. They will need places to park those cars. They will need places to charge those cars. And when you look at future low-income housing sites like the Habitat property on Boulevard Road, you can see that there is no viable off-street parking.

We Know What Happens Already

We have had an experiment with zero parking already. For decades Downtown has had a zero-parking requirement. The outcome is that builders build *some* parking because their renters (mostly high-end renters) demand it. But they haven't built enough and now the city has bought property and plans are to shift the cost to the taxpayers and build a public parking garage because there is not enough on-street parking.

Care more about the people who built this city and live here today.

We need the council to not look past the needs and desires of the people who live here now.

Creating policies that sacrifice the livability and workability of the city to focus on the potential of 20,000 people who don't and may never live here is not sound policy making.

Don't ask the people who paid the impact fees that built our current infrastructure, paid and continue to pay today for the transit, the streets, and the sidewalks we do have to sacrifice for an unrealistic vision. A vision that does not reflect the reality of Olympia as it is lived by real people today and the foreseeable future.

Who Wins and Who Loses?

Who pays in the short term? Who benefits in the short term? The answer is almost always the same: The public pays and sacrifices now for some hoped for contingent-on-a-million-variables benefit in the far-off future. Meanwhile, the investor class gets to reap a guaranteed benefit immediately.

The public is told to believe their benefits will come sometime later (how much later the proponents won't even hazard a guess) and to have faith in a trickle-down econometric model's artifact that defies lived experience. Again, the investors get to bank their money today while we are asked to wait for imagined and highly contingent laudable social benefits to materialize.

If you believe this policy change is wise and the savings to investors will be so substantial you should require the developers (who you say in your grant proposal stand to save up to \$25,000 per parking space) to return half of that money back to the community as an in-lieu of parking fee.

Why not share in the savings and dedicate the money to improved transit or affordable housing? Or, where necessary, reduce the impact on neighborhoods adversely impacted by the loss of on-street parking such as making sure they have sidewalks to walk on instead of competing for space with cars on the road?

I am asking that the council care as much about the people who are here now as they

do about the people who are not here. The ones who made Olympia a good place to live through their hard work, volunteerism and taxes and who care deeply about making it a great place to live in the future.

As I wrote already to the city you should include the following:

1. Neighborhoods need the assurance of mechanisms that protect them from adverse results. Those protections need to be implemented before approving a project and with the data and analysis you would expect from professional transportation engineers. That is just like the Planning Commission is recommending for amendment when developers are seeking approval for increasing parking (“transportation engineer licensed in the state of Washington”). We need to know whether the neighborhood streets have the infrastructure to support additional parking from new development without undue harm.

Some neighborhood streets are clearly inappropriate, such as those with narrow street widths, no sidewalks or off-road pathways and mailboxes where parking means not getting mail and where transit is not convenient or frequent. Any parking reduction approach should include a process to reveal, analyze and remediate identified problems before being approved. In addition, wide boulevards and streets also present a problem. On many of our streets such as Yelm Highway and Boulevard for example, where transit is more available than in most places in Olympia, there is no place to park on the road. By default, that means residents of large-scale developments without parking will be searching for parking in the closest neighborhoods.

2. The city should also not allow developers to maximize their profits by allowing them to treat available neighborhood on-street parking as an under-exploited asset. In exchange for allowing less parking they should be required to provide some social equity benefit in return, as suggested above.

3. Particular attention should be paid to the critical need for lower-income workers to have a vehicle in Olympia in order to travel to their jobs. Too often our lower-income working residents have multiple part-time jobs or supplement their low wage full-time job with a second or third part-time job. As Habitat for Humanity has pointed out, transit as it stands today cannot meet their needs. Therefore, you need to assess the needs of those in the housing you are permitting regarding the need to have easy access to a vehicle in terms of social equity and income equality.

Thank you for your consideration of these policy points and also please consider the process concerns that have led us to this juncture.

From: [CityCouncil](#)
To: [Pat Cole](#)
Cc: [Councilmembers](#); [Jay Burney](#); [Rich Hoey](#); [Debbie Sullivan](#); [Kellie Braseth](#); [Leonard Bauer](#); [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: RE: Parking Changes
Date: Wednesday, June 07, 2023 8:12:04 AM

Thank you for your comments. I will forward them on to all Councilmembers and appropriate staff.

Susan Grisham (she/her)
Assistant to the City Manager
Legislative Liaison
City of Olympia | P.O. Box 1967 | Olympia WA 98507
360-753-8244 | sgrisham@ci.olympia.wa.us

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-----Original Message-----

From: Pat Cole <pcbiglife@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 6, 2023 2:41 PM
To: CityCouncil <citycouncil@ci.olympia.wa.us>
Cc: Jay Burney <jburney@ci.olympia.wa.us>
Subject: Parking Changes

Olympia City Council,

Having had a career in construction and serving in city government, I'm fairly confident that developers "don't know best". Especially since that's such an amorphous declaration; how is "best" even defined? Best for who? Isn't the very function of government to protect their citizens, not specific interests, and look out for their people's interest? Following this logic to its conclusion, if developers and builders "know best" we'd have no zoning laws, no urban planning, no design standards, no SEPA.

We have long had minimum parking requirements in the Downtown, and that may be ok in a small, confined urban area with lots of services. But it doesn't hold true anywhere else in the city, especially since our public transportation system is hardly a model of urban efficiency; it simply does not support working families. To create a maximum allowable parking standard, thus expecting single parents and our new working class to give up an additional two hours a day using our bus system, or worse, while trying to care for their children is faulty logic, unfair, unsubstantiated social engineering, and extremely poor public policy. Please don't do this.

Pat Cole