



ZONING TOPIC – Minimum Parking Standards

Parking requirements are an often-overlooked transportation policy that holds significant importance. When new buildings are constructed, cities commonly require a minimum number of parking spaces, which may sound reasonable but often results in excessive amounts of parking.

Parking is one of the single largest uses of land in a municipal footprint, although it typically does not receive significant attention. Besides encouraging vehicle use, parking supply influences the character, form, function, and flow of communities.

For example, dispersed parking, as is the general layout along Shasta Dam Boulevard, keeps buildings widely spaced, can detract from the village feel, and alters the perception of safety for cyclists and pedestrians. On the other hand, on-street parking can serve as an additional speed reduction mechanism.

City requirements to provide a minimum amount of parking, combined with smaller commercial lot sizes, often result in reduced productive development on lots. The General Plan reflects that over the coming decades, the city will explore alternatives that reduce parking footprints, including decreasing or removing parking minimums, adding more public parking, and expanding or modifying on-street parking.

While adequate parking is necessary in suburban communities like Shasta Lake, strategic reductions in minimum parking standards can support the reuse of existing buildings and reduce startup costs for new businesses, while also allowing the land that would have been used for parking to be put to more productive uses.

The topic of parking standards is multifaceted, and there are various perspectives to consider. However, it's critical to recognize that when parking supply greatly exceeds typical real parking demand, it has negative effects on a community. Balancing parking needs with community development objectives is crucial in achieving the desired community form.

Why should we consider reforming our parking standards?

- Parking spaces are expensive. A cheap structured stall costs \$20,000, and in many cities, \$40K-\$60K per stall is common. Underground parking can easily double the per-stall cost. Generally, \$10,000 in construction costs adds \$100/mo. in needed rent.
- Car parking takes up lots of space!
- Excessive car parking makes communities less affordable by increasing land and other development costs, which are ultimately passed on to customers.
- The conversion from forested areas to commercial and residential development is a significant factor in creating the "urban heat island effect." Heat islands form as cities replace natural land cover with buildings and dark-colored impermeable pavement for roads and parking lots.

The article “A Business Case for Parking Reform” (see link at the end of the discussion) addresses the economic case for considering reducing mandatory minimum parking standards. The accompanying link from the “Parking Reform Network” takes you to a map tool that allows you to access the parking standards of other communities nationwide and see how they are responding to this issue.

Below are some relevant General Plan development policies that touch on this topic. In reading the articles, you should see the link between the policies below and the information in the article(s). In summary, reevaluating parking standards involves striking a balance between practicality, community needs, and accessibility.

General Plan Policies

- POLICY -CIR-1.3 Encourage practical parking solutions to serve community needs while avoiding excessive amounts of surface parking that disrupt the urban fabric of the city. Explore alternatives that reduce parking footprints, including decreasing or removing parking minimums, adding more public parking, and expansion or modification of on-street parking. (Source: New)
- IMPLEMENTATION-LU-1.3 “Regularly monitor all parts of the Municipal Code to identify requirements or standards that limit flexibility and creativity in the reuse of developed properties and existing structures. The City should make appropriate changes consistent with the goals and policies of the General Plan when needed.
- POLICY-LU-3.1 “Where practical, promote mixed-use development patterns and higher densities that use land and resources efficiently, reduce automobile dependence and pollution, and facilitate walking, bicycling, and transit use. (Source: New)”

APA - A Business Case for Dropping Parking Minimums [A Business Case for Dropping Parking Minimums \(planning.org\)](#)

Map of Parking Reforms
[Parking Mandates Map - Parking Reform Network](#)