

Neighborhood Parking Solutions

How to manage parking to create better communities, affordable housing and greater access.

Parking management in an urban neighborhood is a difficult balancing act between the needs of residents, employees, shoppers and commuters—not to mention those who don't own a car at all. Parking is an essential component of a successful, vibrant business district. However, each space is extremely expensive, consumes land that could be used for housing or businesses, detracts from the pedestrian environment and adds more traffic to already congested streets.

In some neighborhoods, existing residents are demanding more parking be built into new buildings than is needed for new residents.

This practice unnecessarily drives up the cost of housing (an underground parking space commonly costs \$20,000 or more and can increase the cost of a unit by 20%) and reduces the opportunities to build more housing for people who want to live in popular neighborhoods where they can take transit and walk to stores.



To address parking needs and conflicts, and forge better approaches to access for all people attracted to the neighborhood, we need to manage parking efficiently, and ensure that everyone has good options for getting around.

It is important to determine the optimal amount of parking and to use more efficiently all parking facilities — on and off street. To start, neighborhoods need to comprehensively review parking demand, supply and pricing to assess how parking requirements can be adjusted and determine where innovative solutions are appropriate.

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Strategies to Manage Parking

- Separate the cost of housing from the cost of leasing or buying a parking space.
- Manage residential on-street parking — set permit prices to reflect demand and available curb space or limit the number of new residential parking permits issued if demand exceeds supply.
- Use meters to optimize turnover of spaces for priority short-term users such as shoppers. Use pricing of meters to reflect market demand. Extend meter hours to peak demand periods on nights and weekends.
- Manage spillover parking from commercial streets into residential by expanding residential parking restrictions and increasing enforcement. Extend hours for residential parking restrictions, institute multi-space meters to improve enforcement of time limits for visitors.
- Manage visitor parking on high demand residential streets through the selling of a limited number of visitor parking permits to residents.
- Encourage/require “transportation demand management” plans (TDM) for all new large developments — both commercial and residential. Office buildings should include showers for bicyclists and secure bicycle parking. Residential TDM plans should include bicycle parking, transit benefits for residents and discounted use of ZipCars and FlexCars offered at the site.
- Encourage/require shared parking in mixed-use developments and in mixed use areas, since peak demand periods occur at different times.
- Offer employee parking “cash out” (keep the space or pocket the cash), Commuter Choice transit benefits, and not subsidize parking.
- Create “Transportation Management Associations” (TMAs) in high activity mixed use districts to provide transportation services to employers and residential buildings to help meet their goals of access and reduced vehicle trips. Require all new large developments to join a TMA if in a TMA district. TMAs provide the on-going support to commitments made in transportation demand management plans.
- Reduce minimum zoning requirements for parking in new development for senior special needs and affordable housing, since residents in these buildings tend to own substantially fewer vehicles.
- In walkable, transit-rich neighborhoods, eliminate minimum requirements for parking to encourage more housing and transit use; in centrally-located neighborhoods, maximum limits for off-street parking might even be appropriate.

