

Revisions to Off-Street Parking Standards in Minneapolis

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Rail~Volution 2009



Twin Cities Context

- 16th largest metro area (pop. 3,229,878); right between Seattle and San Diego metro areas
- 13th largest bus system in the U.S. by daily ridership
- 268,000 average weekday transit rides, including 31,000 daily LRT boardings
- Commuter rail begins Nov. 16th: 40 mile line, 6 stations. Estimated avg weekday rides in 2010: 3,400
- BRT in progress
- Next LRT line, connecting the two downtowns: 2014
- Southwest Corridor LRT: 2015

Minneapolis – Two Recent Initiatives

- New comprehensive plan, *The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth*, adopted Oct. 2nd
- *Access Minneapolis: 10 Year Transportation Action Plan*
 - Downtown Action Plan
 - Citywide Action Plan
 - Street and Sidewalk Design Guidelines
 - Streetcar Feasibility Study
 - Pedestrian Master Plan
 - Bicycle Master Plan

The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth



The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth

Policy 2.8: Balance the demand for parking with objectives for improving the environment for transit, walking and bicycling, while supporting the city's business community.

The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth

“The City is committed to a policy direction designed to reduce car use, and thereby moderate both vehicle traffic and demand for parking. This includes land use policies and parking strategies that encourage increased use of transit, walking, biking, and carpooling. To address parking and mobility issues comprehensively, these strategies need to address the supply, management, and demand for parking spaces.”

Selected Implementation Step:

- 2.8.4 Consider **eliminating minimum parking requirements for certain small-scale uses** as well as parking requirements in areas served by off-street parking facilities that are available to the general public.

Promoting Alternatives

The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth

2.8.7 Promote transit, walking, and biking as safe and comfortable transportation alternatives through **reduced parking requirements**, encouragement of employee transit incentive programs, and improved facilities.



Minneapolis Off-Street Parking Revisions

Overall Goal

Ensure that the City's off-street parking standards align with adopted policies and goals related to land use, transportation, community character, economic development, and environmental sustainability.

Minneapolis Zoning Codes

- 1924 – City's first zoning code
- 1963 – City's second zoning code, which included the city's first minimum off-street parking requirements
- 1999 – Adoption of current zoning code

Off-Street Parking Regulations 1999-2008

- Some flexibility added in 1999, but most minimum parking requirements from the 1963 ordinance remained in effect.
- The City had been well-served by relatively low minimum parking requirements for most small-scale uses.

Restaurants and Coffee Shops



- Restaurants and coffee shops had a relatively high off-street parking requirement:
 - Parking equal to 30 percent of the capacity of persons*
 - Capacity = 1 person per 15 square feet of public area

Parking Variances in Minneapolis

- Applications for off-street parking variances have been supported overwhelmingly...

City Planning Commission

(2004 through June of 2008)

*Granted 101 of 109
requests,
a 93% approval rate*

Board of Adjustment

(2004 through June of 2008)

*Granted 56 of 59
requests,
a 95% approval rate*

- Overall, 157 of 168 off-street parking variances were granted during this period of time



The Revisions Process



Established a cross-department staff team that included members of:

- Planning, including...
 - Development Services/Zoning
 - Community Planning
 - Heritage Preservation
- Business Development
- Public Works
- Business Licensing
- Minneapolis Development Review

Public Engagement & Adoption Process & Timeline

- Web site created
(8/08)
- Downtown-focused open house
(9/18/08-City Hall)
- Business association focus group
(10/1/08-Northeast Minneapolis)
- Neighborhood-focused open house
(10/16/08- South Minneapolis)

City Planning Commission
public hearing (11/17/08)

City Council's Zoning &
Planning Committee (12/18/08)

City Council Adoption (1/9/09)

Mayoral signature and
publication following City
Council adoption

Main Messages

- Align regulations with policies
- Reduce the number of variances...
 - Eases regulatory burden on Mpls businesses
 - Allows City staff to focus on more productive things
- Excessive parking...
 - Prevents a balanced transportation system
 - Is a stormwater management problem
 - Contributes to urban heat island
 - Conflicts with objectives for promoting urban character and mixed use development

Revisions

- The minimum parking requirement for most retail and office uses (outside of downtown) was reduced as follows:
 - 1 space per ~~300~~ 500 square feet of floor area in excess of 4,000 square feet, but not less than 4 spaces



Comparing Previous and New Standards *Office & Retail Uses*

<i>Use</i>	<i>Previous minimum parking requirement</i>	<i>New minimum parking requirement</i>
1,000 sq. ft or less office or retail	4	0
2,500 sq. ft office or retail	4	4
5,000 sq. ft. office or retail use	4	4
7,500 sq. ft. office or retail use	12	7
10,000 sq. ft. office or retail use	20	12

Restaurants & Coffee Shops

- Previous minimum parking requirement for restaurants and coffee shops:
 - Parking equal to 30 percent of the capacity of the public area based on the maximum capacity allowed by the building code.
- New minimum for these uses when they do not have general entertainment:
 - 1 space per 500 square feet of total floor area for the first 2,000 square feet + 1 space per 300 square feet for floor area in excess of 2,000.

Comparing Previous and New Standards *Restaurants & Coffee Shops*

<i>Use</i>	<i>Previous minimum parking requirement</i>	<i>New minimum parking requirement (if the use does not have general entertainment)</i>
1,000 sq. ft. restaurant with 450 sq. ft. of public area	9	0
1,500 sq. ft. restaurant with 675 sq. ft. of public area	14	4
2,000 sq. ft. restaurant with 900 sq. ft. of public area	18	4
2,500 sq. ft. restaurant with 1,125 sq. ft. of public area	23	6
3,000 sq. ft. restaurant with 1,350 sq. ft. of public area	27	7

Parking Maximums

- Previously applicable only in Pedestrian Oriented Overlay Districts.
- New maximums apply citywide, with more restrictive maximums in PO Overlay Districts and downtown.

Bicycle Parking



- Most uses are now subject to a bicycle parking requirement.
 - For example:
 - Retail uses:
 - 3 bicycle spaces or 1 space per 5,000 sq. ft. of gross floor area, whichever is greater
- Location standards for short-term vs. long-term bicycle parking.

Bicycle Incentive



- A revised bicycle incentive for those uses that go above-and-beyond the minimum bike parking requirement.
- Allows a reduction in the number of required automobile spaces.

Other Incentives

- Additional parking reduction incentives:
 - Shared parking
 - Transit incentives – reduced parking for proximity to high frequency transit and integration of transit shelters into new development
 - Valet Parking
 - Historic landmarks – reduced parking requirement
 - Reduced minimums in Ped Oriented Overlay Districts/LRT station areas

Downtown Maximums

Maximum parking standards for selected nonresidential uses:

<i>Use</i>	<i>Maximum # of parking spaces allowed</i>
Retail sales and services	1 space per 500 sq. ft. of GFA
Offices	1 space per 1,000 sq. ft. of GFA
Food & Beverages (Restaurants, coffee shops, nightclubs, etc.)	1 space per 200 sq. ft. of GFA

Downtown Parking Overlay District

- DP Overlay District has been in place since 1999:
 - Boundaries = the entire area within the downtown freeway ring, the river, and Plymouth Ave.
 - Previous purpose (551.730 of the zoning code):
The DP Downtown Parking Overlay District is established to preserve significant and useful buildings and to protect the unique character of the downtown area and the mixed-use downtown neighborhoods by restricting the establishment or expansion of surface parking lots.
 - **Expanded purpose** allows for substantially reduced parking requirements outside the downtown core.

Parking for Downtown Residential Uses

Downtown Districts:

- Minimum requirement: *None*
- Maximum allowed:
 - B4 District: 1.5 spaces/unit
 - B4S & B4C: 1.6 spaces/unit

Within DP Overlay District but outside the B4, B4S, B4C Districts:

- Minimum requirement: 0.9 spaces/unit
- Maximum allowed: 1.7 spaces/unit



Visitor parking now required in all downtown buildings with 50 or more units but do not count toward the maximum # of overall spaces allowed

Downtown Bicycle Parking



- Retained requirement for bike parking and shower/locker facilities for developments with more than 500,000 sq. ft.
- For developments with less than 500,000 sq. ft. in B4, B4S, B4C: 1 bike space for every 20 auto spaces provided but never require less than 4 or more than 30 bike spaces
- Outside B4, B4S, B4C: new citywide bike parking standards apply

Since Adoption – Adaptive Reuse

- Approved April 2009
- Conversion from office/retail to 40 market rate dwelling units and ground-level restaurant
- No off-street parking provided



Since Adoption - Approved New Construction

- Approved May 2009
- 259 dwelling units with 194 enclosed parking spaces (0.75 spaces per unit)
- 7,500 sq. ft. of ground-level commercial with 20 enclosed parking spaces



Lessons Learned

- Ensure that the policy framework is in place
- Engage other City departments
- Engage wide range of stakeholders
- Encourage those who support adopted policies to show up and speak at public hearing
- Balance the desire to be bold with whatever the political reality might be in your community
- Don't underestimate the value of incremental change
- Research best practices
- Emphasize range of issues rather than relying on one...
(e.g., adopted policies, transportation, environmental sustainability, community character, economic development)

More Information

<http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cped/parking.asp>

<http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/government/ordinances.asp>

Zoning Code: Title 20

Chapter 541, Off-Street Parking and Loading

Chapter 551, Overlay Districts (see PO and DP Overlay Districts)

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