Updating Oakland’s Parking Regulations

The City of Oakland is updating its parking regulations as part of the Citywide Zoning Update. Our off-street parking regulations have not been comprehensively updated since 1965 and need to be revised to be consistent with current City policies. This update will focus on off-street parking—parking that is located on private or public property, off City streets. Parking that is on public streets will not be the focus of this process.

Why do the regulations need to be updated? Some of the regulations are outdated and don’t reflect modern parking policies. Other regulations are designed to suit the needs of suburban communities, not the density or character of Oakland’s diverse, urban neighborhoods. Finally, some of the City’s current regulations are confusing and difficult to use.

Prior to the City’s current regulations, which were written in the 1960s, there were no off-street parking requirements in Oakland. At the time, off-street parking lots were relatively uncommon and garages, where they existed, typically were designed for a single car. Since then, the size and character of vehicles has changed. Over time, our transit system has been reshaped by BART and changes to the bus system. Even the ways we shop, work and live have changed since the 1960s. Additionally, modern techniques to regulate parking have been developed.

Parking Update Goals

- Reducing adverse effects of parking on neighborhood livability
- Contributing to neighborhood walkability
- Reducing visual impacts of parking
- Achieving consistency with sustainability and mobility goals
- Encouraging efficient use of land
- Supporting business needs and the vitality of neighborhood commercial districts

Parking is Shaped by Policy

The City is interested in updating the off-street parking regulations to be consistent with other City policies, including the Land Use and Transportation Element of the General Plan, streetscape and transit-oriented development plans, bike and pedestrian plans, and the “Alternative Modes” (“Transit First”) policy.

These policies emphasize creating adequate and attractive parking that is screened from public view, promoting public transit and discouraging single occupant vehicle trips. The Transit First policy acknowledges that “decreasing demand for auto parking allows land to be put to more productive use” and another policy specifically directs that parking requirements should be reduced for new development near transit.
Parking Primer

Off-Street Parking is on private or public property in parking lots and is largely regulated by local planning and zoning codes.

On-Street Parking is along the curb in the public right of way that is largely governed by state and local vehicle codes.

Parking needs vary by land use and intensity of use—a townhouse requires different parking than a fast food restaurant.

Context is important, such as the cost of land or the demand for parking in a particular area or the proximity to transit.

Parking costs are hidden. The cost for land used as required parking may translate into higher rent, higher housing prices or higher product prices.

Buildings constructed before parking requirements were in place often don’t have the capacity to provide parking on site. Oakland distinguishes between new construction and new use of old buildings to encourage reuse.

Parking design can shape a city’s appearance and image. Is parking in front of a building? In the back? Landscaped? Environmentally friendly?

Existing Oakland parking regulations:

- Specify the number of spaces required for agricultural, civic, commercial, industrial and residential activities,
- Indicate the property on which parking/loading must be provided, and
- Establish requirements for parking space dimensions, grade (slope), illumination, location, screening and surfacing.

For a sample of current regulations and how they relate to different uses, please see Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>USE</th>
<th>REQUIREMENT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New single family home</td>
<td>One (1) to two (2) spaces</td>
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<tr>
<td>New church in a neighborhood commercial zone</td>
<td>One (1) space for each 15 seats, or for each 100 square feet of floor area where seats are not fixed, in principal meeting rooms</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fast food restaurant in a community commercial area</td>
<td>One (1) space for each 200 square feet of floor area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convenience market in a neighborhood commercial zone</td>
<td>One (1) space for each 300 square feet of floor area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Automotive repair</td>
<td>One (1) space per 1,000 square feet of floor area</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Parking Challenges and Trade-Offs What is the best way to balance competing priorities? Reducing parking requirements may encourage alternative transportation (public transit, bicycling and walking), improve the City’s visual streetscape, and reduce development costs. However, there may be concern that reducing parking requirements may create a “spillover effect” on neighboring streets. Another concern is that new developments with reduced parking may be less desirable for prospective tenants, buyers or customers. How much parking is “not enough”? “Too much”?

Alternative Parking Strategies

During the parking update, the City will explore new strategies to manage off-street parking, such as:

In-Lieu Fee
A developer pays a fee instead of providing parking spaces on site. The fee contributes to a fund used to create a new off-site parking lot or structure serving many different properties.

Unbundling
Parking spaces are sold or rented separately from housing or commercial space. In a non-residential setting, employees who opt out of a free parking space could receive additional income.

Environmentally-Friendly Parking Lots
A city adopts stronger design and landscaping standards (e.g., porous pavement, runoff control) to reduce environmental impacts.
Shared Parking
This strategy allows neighboring businesses with peak parking needs at different times to use the same lot. For example, when an office building closes for the day, the parking lot empties of office workers and evening users, such as those going out to a restaurant, can park in the lot.

Reduced Requirements Near Transit
Parking requirements are lowered for uses near subway, train and light rail stations and major bus lines.

Stacked Parking
New technology allows cars to be placed on lifts and stored vertically. This reduces the amount of space a parking facility occupies.

Ideas from Other Places
The City will also be looking at how other cities manage off-street parking, such as:

Portland, OR
- Off-street parking is not required in some commercial districts, including its Central Business District. Additionally, parking is not required within 500 feet of “transit streets”—places where buses or light rail run at least every 20 minutes.
- Parking requirements are reduced if bike or motorcycle parking is provided, or if there is a transportation management plan in place.
- Shared parking is encouraged.
- Parking structures are incentivized over surface lots.

Seattle, WA
- Off-street parking is not required in some areas, including downtown.
- Parking requirements are reduced for areas near frequent transit (runs at least once every 15 minutes) and for activities that provide carpool spaces, transit passes for employees, bike parking, or shared parking.
- Parking maximums, which limit the number of provided spaces, are applied in some areas to help reduce the number and size of surface parking lots and to help support the transit system.

Denver, CO
- Denver adopted a new zoning ordinance in 2010, with an emphasis on regulations—including parking requirements—that are tailored to each neighborhood.
- Parking maximums are applied around light rail stations.
- Some rules were adopted to make it easy for older buildings to change use without providing additional parking.

San Francisco, CA
- Parking maximums have been applied in the Central Business District for many years.
- There are fairly low requirements for residential uses. For instance, in high density residential districts, apartments are only required to provide one space for every four units.
- New residential buildings are required to include a dedicated space for car-share vehicles if there are more than 50 units in the building.
- One requirement stipulates that the cost of a parking space be unbundled from the cost of a condominium or the rent for an apartment.
Next Steps

In the coming months, we will be conducting research, collecting community input and preparing a draft proposal for further community review and feedback. Once we’ve incorporated community feedback into the draft, a final proposal will be presented to the Planning Commission and City Council for approval.

Check the Planning and Zoning Division’s website for regular updates:

www.oaklandnet.com/planning

Get Involved

如有问题或建议你可以任何时候联系我们。

Contáctenos en cualquier momento con preguntas o sugerencias.

Contact us at any time with questions or suggestions.

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