

SPECIAL MEETING
BRAINERD PLANNING COMMISSION AND
CITY COUNCIL SAFETY AND PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE
Monday, October 12, 2015
6:00 p.m.
City Hall 2nd Floor Conference Room

1. Call to Order
2. Discussion Regarding Off Street Parking Requirements
3. Adjourn

Any individual needing special accommodations please call 218/828-2309

MEMO

TO: Safety and Public Works Committee

CC: Planning Commission

FROM: Mark Ostgarden, City Planner 

DATE: October 8, 2015

RE: October 12th Planning Commission and Safety and Public Works Committee Meeting

The purpose of the Planning Commission and SPW Committee meeting is to discuss whether our off-street parking requirements should be reviewed and modified. The Planning Commission has had discussion about this in 2015 and concluded that there is merit to giving serious consideration to making changes.

In preparing for the meeting, it was my suggestion to the Planning Commission Chair, Sarah Hayden Shaw, data and logical reasons why the City should consider such a significant change in City policy and our zoning requirements will be needed if a change is going to be considered.

Reducing or eliminating parking requirements has had increased discussion at a national level. One large city (Buffalo, New York) has eliminated its off-street parking requirements. The Planning Department has not been successful in identifying smaller cities that have taken on this issue in a comprehensive manner like what is being considered by the Planning Commission.

In discussing the meeting with the Chair, it is her desire that possible meeting outcomes include:

1. A review of the reasons to support amending our requirements.
2. A better understanding of the how current requirements have affected our (re)development.
3. Discuss possible amendment options.
4. Determine if more information is needed.
5. If possible, support of the SPW Committee to continue working on the possible changes.

Information provided to the Planning Commission earlier this year that supports changes to off-street parking requirements is attached.

Sunday, January 11, 2015

Ten reasons your city should DITCH minimum parking requirements

The top ten reasons your city should DITCH minimum parking requirements:

- 10) Minimum parking requirements raise the cost of entry for a business to move to your city. Adding parking spaces is expensive. First you have to acquire the land, then you have to pay to have it appropriately cleared, surfaced, and marked... then of course maintenance. If a business owner does not feel he or she needs this parking, this is a huge unnecessary cost that will deter some businesses.
- 9) Younger generations are becoming less dependent on cars. Car ownership decreases every year. We simply need less and will continue to need even less parking. Despite this, many cities have parking standards that have not changed for decades.
- 8) Excess parking is an economic drain. An unused parking space is a lost opportunity for economic activity in a city.
- 7) Business that serve a neighborhood often need very little parking.
- 6) If minimum parking requirements are eliminated, existing businesses with more parking spaces than they need could use that space for more productive purposes.
- 5) A city block with many empty parking lots and spaces lacks vitality. Conversely, a city block that is packed full of businesses and recreational space is an inviting and desirable space. People who occasionally have to walk an extra block to get to their destination will generally be glad to do so, for the pleasure of visiting a bustling, vibrant district.
- 4) The often-cited fears of not enough parking are unfounded. Your city probably has too much parking already. Look around your city at the busiest time of day. How much unused parking do you see?
- 3) Historic neighborhoods are not designed for massive amounts of parking spaces. The redevelopment of historic commercial neighborhoods to meet minimum parking requirements forces removal of buildings and/or green space-an extremely undesirable outcome for a historic city.
- 2) Minimum parking requirements drive businesses to the exurbs. These requirements can be difficult or impossible to meet within an existing city space, especially city centers where space is a premium. It is often just easier and less expensive to locate a business elsewhere. This is the last thing a city that is trying to promote economic growth and a solid tax base should be doing.

And the number one reason to ditch minimum parking requirements is...

- 1) You don't have to be a complete free-market capitalist to believe that a business owner is a better judge of how much parking is needed for his or her operation than the city.

-Sarah Hayden

Shaw



Posted by Sarah Warrior Princess at 7:15 PM No comments:



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CITYFIXER

Just Because You Can't Find a Place to Park Doesn't Mean There Aren't Way Too Many Parking Spots

A new analysis of 27 mixed-use areas finds that parking in U.S. metro areas is, on average, oversupplied by 65 percent.

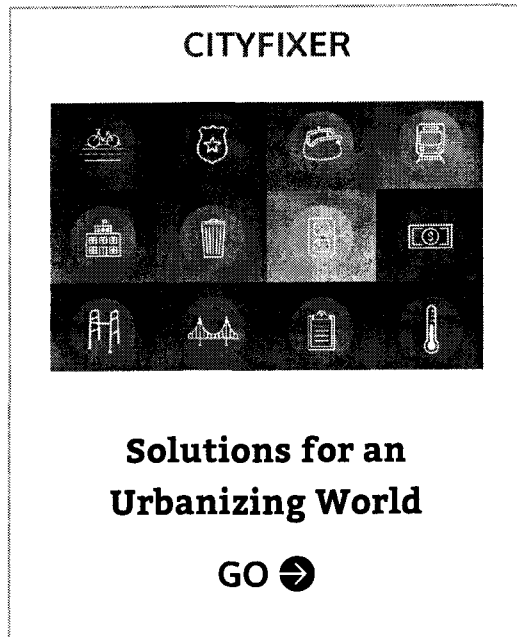
ERIC JAFFE |  @e_jaffe | Jan 14, 2015 |  24 Comments



[radcliffe dacanay / Flickr](#)

When we say we can't find anywhere to park, what we usually mean is we can't find a free or insanely cheap parking spot within spitting distance of our destination. As a nation of parkers we're all home run hitters who've forgotten what it's like to knock a single—or, as a closer metaphor, to draw a walk. The

result is a misperception that parking is scarce despite the great deal of lots, street spaces, or garages that might exist a block or two away.



Some new research reminds us just how oversupplied parking really tends to be in American metro areas: in a word, enormously. Rachel Weinberger and Joshua Karlin-Resnick of Nelson\Nygaard Consulting Associates analyzed parking studies of 27 mixed-use districts across the United States and found "parking was universally oversupplied, in many cases quite significantly." On average across the cases, parking supply exceeded demand by 65 percent.

"You see a huge amount of land dedicated to parking," said Karlin-Resnick, who presented the work Tuesday at the 94th annual meeting of the Transportation Research Board. "That land, particularly in downtowns, could really be dedicated to more active uses, economic generators, and by extension tax generators."

In nine mixed-use areas that had believed parking to be scarce, the oversupply ranged from 6 percent to 82 percent.

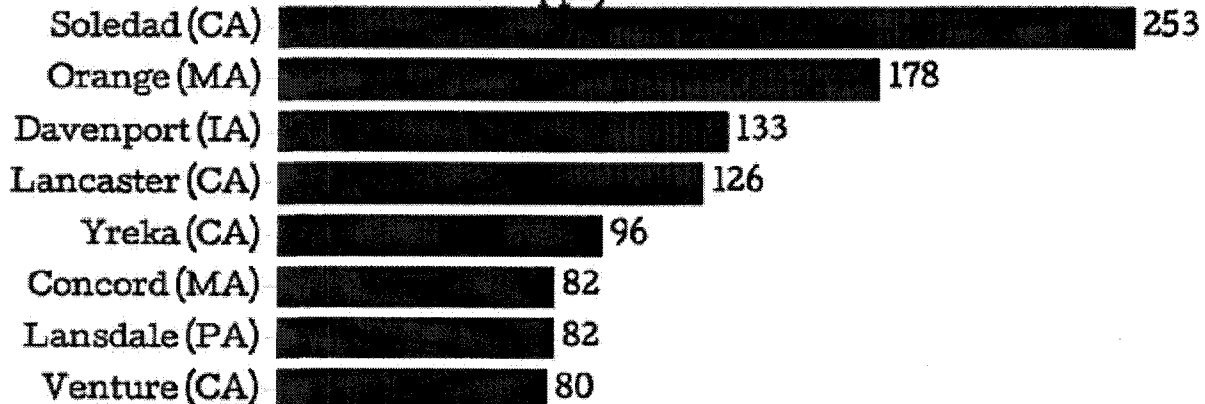
The researchers focused on districts with both residential and retail developments in a variety of settings—17 suburbs, 6 cities, and 4 towns—mostly in New England or California. (Interestingly, a third of the areas were documented as having the impression that local parking was scarce.) By looking at previous parking studies in these areas, as well as satellite imagery

via Google Earth, they identified existing parking supplies and peak weekday and weekend demands.

Critically, the researchers also took into account the accepted practice of supplying 15 percent more spaces than necessary—a sort of buffer zone that reduces the congestion caused by drivers circling for spaces.

In all 27 districts, spanning places with 420 spaces to those with 6,600 spaces, Weinberger and Karlin-Resnick found an oversupply of parking over and above the buffer zone. The oversupply ranged from 6 percent up to 253 percent across the study areas (below, the highest over-suppliers). And in the nine areas that had believed parking to be scarce, the oversupply ranged from 6 percent to 82 percent.

Oversupply of Parking in Select Mixed-Use U.S. Districts



SOURCE: Weinberger & Karlin-Resnick, "Parking in Mixed-Use Districts"

CityLab

Surprisingly, Weinberger and Karlin-Resnick found no connection between parking oversupply and several local factors that might explain the trend, such as region, area type, commute mode, and parking cost. Instead they found oversupply to be the norm in West Coast areas designed with cars in mind as well as in East Coast districts designed around transit, and in suburbs with higher driving shares as well as in cities with lower ones. They also found that the oversupply trend held true in mixed-use districts with paid parking as well as in places where parking was free.

In other words, the tendency to supply too much parking seems to rest above the shifting winds of local behavior. Here's Weinberger and Karlin-Resnick in a write-up of the research:

Though it would be appealing to have a "scientific" or "engineering" basis for determining appropriate parking supply, the evidence here suggests that levels of parking provision are unmoored from demand, travel behavior, pricing or other dimensions where theory suggests there would be a relationship.

As for why parking supply tends to outpace demand so dramatically, a number of reasons might apply. Planners have been known to copy parking codes from other nearby cities rather than identifying specific local needs. And business owners retain the (often outdated) mindset that their sales depend on an abundance of adjacent parking. Mandatory parking minimums for developers no doubt play a role, too.

"The costs of oversupply really aren't felt."

Weinberger and Karlin-Resnick suspect another major factor is risk-aversion. Public officials (and, by extension, the planning staffs they assemble) might view any undersupply of parking as such a political risk that they compensate by providing way too much. And since the costs of providing parking are distributed widely among taxpayers or businesses, or hidden in the decision not to build a mixed-use development at all, officials are inoculated from the consequences.

"The costs of oversupply really aren't felt," said Karlin-Resnick. "That's perhaps what drives the picture we're seeing in a lot of these places."

And of course the flawed belief, felt most acutely as we circle for a homerun spot, that oversupply doesn't really exist.

About the Author



Eric Jaffe is a senior associate editor at CityLab. He writes about transportation as well as behavior, crime, and history, and has a general interest in the science of city life. He's the author of *A Curious Madness* (2014) and *The King's Best Highway* (2010), and lives in New York.

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