



Land Use Housing Strategies Project: Phase I

Housing Strategy O-6: Minimum Parking Standards

Consider creating a hierarchy of minimum parking standards based on proximity to transit and/or dwelling unit affordability.

Clackamas County, like many other regions in the United States, is in the midst of a housing crisis; housing in the county is rapidly becoming less affordable and the amount of land available for housing development is decreasing. To address this crisis and try to meet the range of housing needs in the county, the county needs to deploy several strategies through:

1. Implementation of programs administered by the Department of Health, Housing & Human Services (H3S) and non-profit organizations; and
2. Changes to the land use regulations implemented by the Department of Transportation and Development (DTD) through the Planning & Zoning Division.

The Planning & Zoning Division compiled information and data for a three-phased plan to ensure that the county's Comprehensive Plan and Zoning & Development Ordinance (ZDO) will help facilitate development of more housing and a more affordable variety of housing ([Issues Paper #2020-1](#)). Phase 1 contains four strategies. This paper investigates one of those strategies: **minimum parking standards**.

Current Status

ZDO [Section 1015](#) regulates parking.

- Multifamily units require 1.25 - 1.75 parking spaces per unit, depending on the number of bedrooms in the unit. There is no established parking ratio for studio (no bedroom) units in multifamily developments.
- Duplexes, triplexes and townhomes (attached single-family dwellings) require 1.0 - 2.0 parking spaces per unit depending on the zoning district.
- There are no parking maximums for multifamily developments.

There is no option to approve a variance or reduction to this parking ratio, except by request to the Board of County Commissioners pursuant to the Board's emergency declaration in response to the housing crisis.

The Need

- **Vehicle ownership corresponds to household size and tenure.** Based on information gathered for cities in Oregon:
 - The vast majority of one-person households have zero or one vehicle, two-person households typically have one or two vehicles, and the number of vehicles increases as household size grows.
 - More than one-half and up to two-thirds of renter households have zero or one vehicle, in most jurisdictions, and
 - Owner-occupied households tend to have one to two vehiclesⁱ
- **Providing parking can substantially increase the costs of housing and development both directly and indirectly.** In multifamily developments,
 - One parking space per unit can increase total development costs by approximately 12.5%;
 - Two parking spaces per unit can increase costs by up to 25%.

- Increased surface parking reduces the maximum potential development density (units per acre) for any given project. These effects are proportionally greatest for smaller, lower-priced units, largely because the cost of a parking space is the same regardless of unit type, size or price.ⁱ
- **The proximity of housing to a light rail station can reduce, but does not necessarily eliminate, the need for a car.** As demonstrated in Figure 1, average demand for parking spaces at apartment developments near light rail stations in the Portland Metro area is 30% less than the supply of spaces, with more than half showing an actual usage at peak demand times of less than one space per unit.ⁱⁱ

Site	Supply per Unit	Peak Demand per Unit	Demand: % diff. from Supply	Demand : % diff. from ITE Rate	Site	Supply per Unit	Peak Demand per Unit	Demand: % diff. from Supply	Demand : % diff. from ITE Rate
Beaverton Creek Station					Gateway Station				
Center Pointe	1.6	1.23	-23.1%	2.5%	Gateway Terrace	1.58	0.53	-66.5%	-55.8%
Elmonica Station					Gateway Park				
Elmonica Court	1.50	0.90	-40.0%	-25.0%	Gateway Park	1.34	0.82	-38.8%	-31.7%
Cambridge Crossing	2.15	1.04	-51.6%	-13.3%	E. 148th Ave. Station				
Willow Creek					Rachel Anne	1.41	0.88	-37.6%	-26.7%
Wyndhaven	1.35	0.90	-33.3%	-25.0%	Dalton Park	1.31	1.17	-10.7%	-2.5%
Quantama Station					E. 162nd Ave. Station				
Briarcreek Apartments	1.50	1.12	-25.3%	-6.7%	Morgan Place	1.31	0.65	-50.4%	-45.8%
Quantama Crossing	1.55	1.32	-14.8%	10.0%	Sequoia Square	0.84	0.79	-6.0%	-34.2%
Quantama Village	1.41	1.37	-2.8%	14.2%	Gresham Central Station				
Orenco Station					Gresham Central	1.44	1.00	-30.6%	-16.7%
Orenco Gardens	1.53	0.76	-50.3%	-36.7%	ALL 15 PORTLAND STATIONS				
					Weighted Average	1.52	1.07	-30.0%	-11.0%

Figure 1: Table excerpt from *Are TODs Over-Parked*. UC Berkeley 2009. <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/655566km>

- **Commercial land use within ¼ - ½ mile of a transit station may impact transportation mode used by area residents and parking needs for nearby housing developments.** The variation of demand for parking spaces in housing complexes near light rail stations suggests that commuting needs may be met, but if shopping, grocery stores or services are not accessible by transit, a vehicle may still be needed. This conclusion is also confirmed in survey data from Portland State University regarding vehicle ownership and usage in transit-oriented (TOD) developments in the region.ⁱⁱⁱ
- Data also suggests that car ownership is lower among households with lower incomes. Based on this data, the parking needs of low and extremely low income residents may be as much as 20-40% lower than the minimum currently required in ZDO 1015^{iv}.

Meeting the Need

We can help ensure that parking needs are met appropriately by ensuring that the ZDO provides more flexibility to be responsive to varying needs of different types of housing development and/or identifies specific minimum parking ratios that more directly correspond to actual vehicle ownership and use for locations near transit and commercial services, and for varying income levels of residents.

- The required minimum parking standards need to be appropriate for level of unit affordability and proximity to transit and commercial services.
- Reduced/more appropriate parking requirements will save development costs and help facilitate the development of affordable housing and/or higher densities.

Below are options to consider and present for public feedback. As input is gathered, the draft code amendments will be developed and refined to reflect public and stakeholder concerns.

1. Create a detailed hierarchy of required parking ratios based on various levels of unit affordability, age restricted units, and/or proximity to major transit stations/commercial services.
2. Maintain a single minimum parking ratio for each unit type, but allow for a developer to request a different/reduced parking ratio to support the reduction of parking of up to:
 - a) ___% with a traffic impact assessment that considers transit, bike/ped connectivity and commercial use;
 - b) ___% for units affordable to households earning 30%- 60% AMI and/or ___% for units affordable to households earning <30% AMI, with data submitted from comparable developments that demonstrates that actual car ownership and use supports the reduction of parking; or
 - c) ___% if a developer invests in or constructs bike/ped supportive public infrastructure in lieu of parking.
 - d) ___% of units that are age-restricted
3. Consider reducing parking by identifying any surface lots that could become additional housing units if parking demand remains sufficiently low as indicated through resident surveys and traffic studies.

ⁱ *PARKING AND MIDDLE HOUSING Analysis of Demand and Impacts – Implications for Middle Housing Rulemaking*. DLCD Fact sheet RELEASED: March 30, 2020

ⁱⁱ *Are TODs Over-Parked?* UCTC Research Paper No. 882 Robert Cervero, Arlie Adkins, and Cathleen Sullivan, University of California, Berkeley 2009. <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/655566km>

ⁱⁱⁱ PSU data: Findings from 2018 TOD Surveys and 2014 TOD Surveys: Findings (February 8, 2015). Jennifer Dill, Ph.D. and Nathan McNeil.

^{iv} Hillsboro Parking data 2018 from Brian Davis at Lancaster Mobley.