Parking Study

How simpler, smarter parking rules can make Saint Paul an even better place to live
Today, properties must include a certain amount of off-street car parking.
These are called *minimum parking requirements*, and they apply to just about every type of property.
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All this parking is expensive to build

$5,000 initial cost per space for surface parking
All this parking is expensive to build

$25,000-$50,000
initial cost per space for structured parking
All this parking is expensive to build

$25,000–$50,000

initial cost per space for **structured parking**

$$$

This becomes an added cost for the property: monthly operations, maintenance, and debt-service—which is passed on to residents and tenants
And minimum parking requirements assume that cars are the only way to get from Point A to Point B.
This shapes how we build our city, which turns that assumption into reality.
So, why is this a problem?

1. Housing Affordability
2. Business Flexibility
3. Economic Development
4. Transportation Options and Climate Change
To help explain, let’s introduce five characters:

- Renter Renee
- Homeowner Harriet
- Shopkeeper Shauna
- Developer Danielle
- Planner Paul
Why are parking minimums a problem?

1. Housing Affordability
2. Business Flexibility
3. Economic Development
4. Transportation Options and Climate Change
Parking minimums make housing expensive
Parking adds $142 per month to rent, on average
But many people don’t need car parking, including Renter Renee

People who choose not to drive, young people, older people, people with lower incomes, people with low vision, the list goes on.
There are even minimum parking requirements for housing designed for lower income households.

34%

One-third of families that need and would qualify for housing affordable at 30% of the Area Median Income (AMI) do not own a car.

Developer Danielle has to build parking, even when she knows it will drive up rents and much of it will go unused.
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Developer Danielle has to build parking, even when she knows it will increase rents and much of it will go unused.
Without minimum parking requirements, Developer Danielle could build more homes, more affordably priced, with less parking.
Renter Renee would have more affordable housing options that better suit her budget and car-free lifestyle.
And for subsidized housing, Planner Paul wouldn’t have to spend public money to build parking for people who don’t need it.
Why else are parking minimums a problem?

1. Housing Affordability
2. Business Flexibility
3. Economic Development
4. Transportation Options and Climate Change
Even before the pandemic, our shopping and work patterns were changing.
For example, Homeowner Harriet was increasingly ...

- Using ride hail
- Shopping online
- Prioritizing experiences over things
- Working from home
Even though she has a car, she uses it less often for shopping, visiting friends, and getting to the office.
Shopkeeper Shauna sees these trends ...

... and wants to attract people like Harriet with a better customer experience by converting part of her parking lot into a patio.
Not so fast: parking minimums!
Why else are parking minimums a problem?

1. Housing Affordability
2. Business Flexibility
3. Economic Development
4. Transportation Options and Climate Change
Parking minimums can be a roadblock to a growing economy
Surface parking lots take up a lot of space today, thanks in part to parking minimums.

2,600 Acres of off-street parking in Saint Paul
Surface parking lots take up a lot of space today, thanks in part to parking minimums.

2,600

Acres of off-street parking in Saint Paul

That's four times bigger than the entire area of Downtown Saint Paul.
Without parking minimums, we could dedicate more space to homes and businesses, which would mean ...
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More housing choices for Renter Renee
Without parking minimums, we could dedicate more space to homes and businesses, which would mean ...

More shops and restaurants for Homeowner Harriet
Without parking minimums, we could dedicate more space to homes and businesses, which would mean ...

More customers for Shopkeeper Shauna, and a bigger talent pool for employees
Without parking minimums, we could dedicate more space to homes and businesses, which would mean ...

More development opportunities for Developer Danielle
Without parking minimums, we could dedicate more space to homes and businesses, which would mean ...

A more sustainable tax base for Planner Paul to provide public services
Tax Revenue

Transit Oriented Development

- The market value per parcel square foot is $679.42
- The tax revenue per square foot is $12.72

Auto Oriented Development

- The market value per parcel square feet is $49.16
- The tax revenue per square foot is $1.81
Why else are parking minimums a problem?

1. Housing Affordability
2. Business Flexibility
3. Economic Development
4. Transportation Options and Climate Change
Zooming out, we are facing a climate crisis, and Saint Paul is aiming to be carbon neutral by 2050.
Nearly one-third (31%) of Saint Paul’s carbon emissions come from vehicle travel.
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So how does this relate to parking minimums?
First, when there’s a lot of parking, people have an added incentive to drive ...
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... even if they’d be happy taking lower emissions options, like walking, biking, and transit
Second, too much parking pushes destinations farther apart.
This makes alternatives to driving—like walking and transit—less effective and unappealing.
Without minimum parking requirements, we can reduce the incentive to drive, make alternatives to driving more appealing ...
Without parking minimums, we can reduce the incentive to drive, make alternatives to driving more appealing ...

... and reach our climate goal faster
Why are parking minimums a problem?

Let’s recap

1. Housing Affordability
2. Business Flexibility
3. Economic Development
4. Transportation Options and Climate Change
Reducing or eliminating parking minimums would help:

1. Increase housing affordability and reduce construction costs
   - Renter Renee
   - Homeowner Harriet
   - Shopkeeper Shauna
   - Developer Danielle
   - Planner Paul

2. Give new flexibility to small business owners who want to use their off-street parking for other uses

3. Support economic growth

4. Reduce our emissions and make walking, biking, and transit more appealing
Reducing or eliminating parking minimums would help:

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2. Give new flexibility to small business owners who want to use their off-street parking for other uses
3. Support economic growth
4. Reduce our emissions and make walking, biking, and transit more appealing
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4. Reduce our emissions and make walking, biking, and transit more appealing
But minimum parking requirements are only half the story

**PARKING STRATEGY**

Right-size the parking supply to avoid building excess parking spaces and incentivizing driving over alternatives

**TDM STRATEGIES**

Manage demand for parking by providing high-quality alternatives to driving, such as walking, biking, and transit
We also want to actively make it easier and more appealing to walk, bike, and take transit.
These kinds of strategies are called **travel demand management**, or TDM

**PARKING STRATEGY**
Right-size the parking supply to avoid building excess parking spaces and incentivizing driving over alternatives

**TDM STRATEGIES**
Manage demand for parking by providing high-quality alternatives to driving, such as walking, biking, and transit
TDM strategies support parking strategies and vice versa

**PARKING STRATEGY**
Right-size the parking supply to avoid building excess parking spaces and incentivizing driving over alternatives

**TDM STRATEGIES**
Manage demand for parking by promoting high-quality alternatives to driving, such as walking, biking, and transit
So, how does TDM work?
How the TDM program works

Planner Paul provides a menu of tools designed to make it easier to walk, bike, and take transit.

Developer Danielle chooses tools from the menu for her new development.

Renter Renee and Homeowner Harriet feel more empowered to walk, bike, and take transit.

Shopkeeper Shauna chooses tools for her new store.
How TDM works

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The menu will be called the TDM Program Standards Guide.
The Guide will include tools like ...

- **Subsidized Transit Passes**
  - Cost: $$$$

- **Protected Bike Parking**
  - Cost: $$

- **Street Traffic Calming**
  - Cost: $$$$$$
Move Minnesota
TDM Reviewer

The TDM Program Standards Guide will include different strategies.

Move Minnesota helps both the community and the developer to find the right strategies based on the proposed project.
With more development comes more people—customers, employees, neighbors.
With more development comes more people—customers, employees, neighbors.

They all need to get around.
TDM tools mean more customers, more talent, and more neighbors in Saint Paul
TDM tools mean more customers, more talent, and more neighbors in Saint Paul

Without the negative impacts on traffic and parking
So, how do we go from today ...
... to this?
Saint Paul has two options on the table

- **REDUCE** parking minimums
- **ELIMINATE** parking minimums
Both options rely on a combination of parking and TDM strategies.

**PARKING STRATEGY**
Right-size the parking supply to avoid building excess parking spaces and incentivizing driving over alternatives.

**TDM STRATEGIES**
Manage demand for parking by providing high-quality alternatives to driving, such as walking, biking, and transit.
How does the REDUCE option work?

- REDUCE parking minimums
- ELIMINATE parking minimums
The REDUCE option reduces parking minimums overall.
This means Developer Danielle still needs to build some parking for her new development, but the minimum is lower.
She can use the extra space for more homes, businesses, or amenities, if she wants.
She could reduce her minimums further by investing in TDM strategies.
The more TDM investments, the less parking required ...
... all the way down to zero parking at all

- Subsidized Transit Passes
- Protected Bike Parking
- Street Traffic Calming
Speaking of zero, many properties would become exempt from parking minimums altogether.
Speaking of zero, many properties would become exempt from parking minimums altogether such as ...

The first 3,000 square feet of most commercial development
Speaking of zero, many properties would become exempt from parking minimums altogether such as …

- The first 3,000 square feet of most commercial development
- Affordable housing units under 60% AMI
Speaking of zero, many properties would become exempt from parking minimums altogether such as ...

- Buildings built before 1955
- The first 3,000 square feet of most commercial development
- Affordable housing units under 60% AMI
Speaking of zero, many properties would become exempt from parking minimums altogether such as ...
The REDUCE option provides flexibility for developers and small business owners.

- REDUCE parking minimums
  - More affordability
    - Renter Renee
  - More flexibility
    - Homeowner Harriet

- ELIMINATE parking minimums
  - Most affordability
    - Shopkeeper Shauna
  - Most flexibility
    - Developer Danielle

Simplest admin: Planner Paul

Less leverage:
How does the ELIMINATE option work?

- REDUCE parking minimums
- ELIMINATE parking minimums
The ELIMINATE option is easier to explain:

No required parking minimums in Saint Paul, period
This doesn’t stop developers from building more parking if they wish to … up to the maximums in Saint Paul, period.
The TDM Guide would still exist

Planner Paul provides a menu of tools designed to make it easier to walk, bike, and take transit.

Developer Danielle chooses tools from the menu for her new development.

Renter Renee and Homeowner Harriet feel more empowered to walk, bike, and take transit.

Shopkeeper Shauna chooses tools for her new store.
But there would be no tradeoff between TDM and parking requirements.
Certain investments in TDM would be required for large developments, unrelated to the number of parking spaces.

- 25+ residential units
- 20,000+ square feet gross floor area
The ELIMINATE option reduces administrative burden for the City, small businesses and developers.
Each option has different benefits

**R** REDUCE parking minimums

- **Renter Renee**
  - More affordability

- **Homeowner Harriet**
  - More flexibility

- **Shopkeeper Shauna**
  - Simpler admin

- **Developer Danielle**
  - More leverage

**E** ELIMINATE parking minimums

- **Renter Renee**
  - Most affordability

- **Homeowner Harriet**
  - Most flexibility

- **Shopkeeper Shauna**
  - Simplest admin

- **Developer Danielle**
  - Less leverage
But both options help us:

1. Increase housing affordability and reduce construction costs

2. Give new flexibility to small business owners who want to use their off-street parking for other uses

3. Support economic growth

4. Reduce our emissions and make walking, biking, and transit more appealing
We need your voice!

- Public comment can be submitted online at stpaul.gov/Parking-Study or on the phone at the **public hearing on April 30, 2021**
- After the hearing, the Comprehensive and Neighborhood Planning Committee will make a recommendation to the Planning Commission
- Planning Commission will make a recommendation to the City Council
- The **City Council will also hold a public hearing**, and will vote to adopt one of the options