

Oregon's proposed parking reform: questions and answers

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What is Oregon's proposed parking reform?

To either eliminate or greatly reduce costly parking mandates in Oregon's eight largest metro areas: the ones in and around Albany, Bend, Corvallis, Eugene, Grants Pass, Medford, Portland, and Salem. (See reverse for details.)



Why would it be good? Nearly all new developments in Oregon will include parking spaces for many years to come, whether or not they are required. (This is clear from the parts of Oregon that have already removed parking mandates.) The point of removing mandates is that it turns the size of parking lots into a site-specific decision. This lets projects take advantage of specific situations like (for example) a half-empty parking lot across the street. It lets any area gradually evolve to become more walkable by building things closer to one another.

With new housing, especially lower-cost and regulated-affordable housing, parking mandates drive up costs and force some people to pay for parking spaces they don't need. (Each stall in a parking garage adds about \$50,000 to an apartment's cost.) Even in Grants Pass, for example, [one out of every six tenant households doesn't own a car](#).

The bottom line is that no parking space in Oregon is more important than a home or a job. If Oregonians can find ways to create homes and jobs for each other without dedicating as much of our land to parking, we should be allowed to.

How much parking is mandatory today in the jurisdictions where reform would happen? It [varies somewhat](#) by jurisdiction. But for example, the median jurisdiction in the Portland metro area requires a new 2,000-square-foot café to be surrounded by 5,000 square feet of parking lot. Parking mandates make traditional "main street" development functionally illegal.

Why is the state involved? The benefits of homes and jobs spill across city lines. So do the costs of pollution and of paving more land than we actually need to. Like with climate action in general, you only see the full benefit of land use policy if many jurisdictions act together.

This reform comes out of many laws over the last 50 years, including the 1973 anti-sprawl law that protected Oregon's farms and forests by creating a gradually expanding urban growth boundary. A goal of that law has always been to reduce the need to sprawl by making efficient use of land within cities and suburbs. Avoiding unnecessarily large parking lots is one small part of this.

Summarizing Oregon's proposed parking reform

Three options for affected jurisdictions
(those in Oregon's eight largest MPOs)

1

No mandates

That's it, you just make parking optional in your jurisdiction and you're done.

2

Fair parking policies

No parking mandates for: affordable housing; adult & child care; emergency, transitional & domestic violence shelters; homes of less than 750 square feet; or near the most frequent local transit.

Shared & nearby parking spaces count toward on-site mandates. No more than one mandatory parking space per home. Low mandates in designated "climate-friendly areas." EV chargers & solar panels on site reduce mandates. In largest cities, mandates are void until cities charge at least 50 cents per day for at least 10% of street parking.

Choose 3 of these 5:

- unbundle parking from residential leases
- same for commercial
- larger employers must offer flexible commute benefits
- 10% income tax on commercial parking
- reduce mandates in multi-family buildings to 0.5 spaces per home

3

Reduced regulation

No mandates for: small businesses, expanding businesses, long-vacant buildings, adaptive reuse, transit-oriented or mixed-use projects, historic structures, bars, schools, energy-efficient buildings, one-bedroom homes, condos in 5+ unit buildings. Must manage at least some on-street parking.