

Parking Minimum Reform



Like the rest of the nation, Minnesota has a severe housing shortage. With too few homes, everyone pays more for housing. Many people have to accept poor quality homes, double up with friends or family, or move away. Local zoning laws that restrict and prohibit homes drive up construction costs. Existing policies reward land speculation. As rules put a stranglehold on adding homes in our communities, each year we lose ground and have a bigger workforce housing shortage. Long-standing policies are blocking Minnesota from creating abundant housing. These policies are making existing housing too expensive.

Part of the solution is parking minimum reform.

Local zoning laws mandate arbitrary amounts of parking which do not align with what is actually used day to day. Minnesota's homeowners, renters, business owners, and developers know how much parking they want and need. Parking minimum reform lets the people investing in spaces choose how much car storage to build. We can replace parking lots with more homes and build abundant homes through removing parking minimums.

What is the problem?

Mandated parking minimums require land that could provide more homes, a larger space for business customers, or other amenities to instead be used to store cars. This increases construction costs and limits home choices. Those higher costs are passed onto property owners, renters, business, and the public.

- Cities and counties mandate building and business owners provide arbitrary amounts of parking to meet the perceived need for places to store cars.
- 2-4 parking spaces are often required per home **adding on average \$225 to monthly rent per parking spot**, and other parking mandates exist for businesses, places of worship, government buildings, and other structures.
- Parking lots rob cities of much needed tax revenue. They also force cities to build redundant and expensive infrastructure because they take up so much land.
- By requiring parking minimums, the government contributes to sprawl and climate change by encouraging car dependency in new construction.
- These mandates create red tape for developers, business owners, and residents. Instead of letting individuals decide how much parking they want, parking minimums force people to build and pay for parking spots they may not want or need.

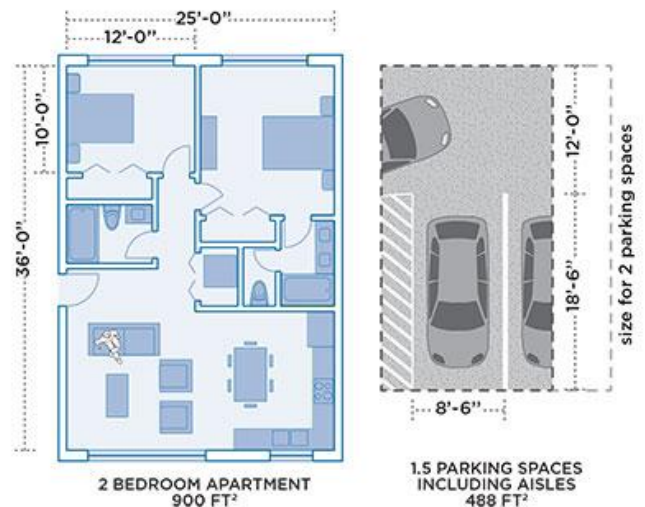


Image showing 1.5 parking spaces are about half the size of a 2 bedroom home. Image created by Seth Goodman - graphingparking.com



What is the policy proposal? Remove Parking Minimums Statewide

Today, Minnesota municipalities impose a wide variety of parking mandates. We recommend removing all parking minimums statewide. Decisions about how much parking to provide can be made by families, builders, architects, and landowners.

How Removing Parking Mandates solves the problem:

- It allows individuals to decide how much parking to create. This removes the cost of building unneeded parking and lowers the cost of constructing homes.
- Land can be used either to house cars or to house people. In built-up communities, ending mandates to house cars opens space to build homes for people. It becomes possible to build abundant homes so more people can find a home.
- Building parking increases the land needed for a project which drives sprawl. Without parking mandates, it is possible to reduce sprawl and prevent greenfield development eating up farmland and natural areas. Reducing surface parking protects our clean water, and it reduces stormwater runoff improving flood resistance.
- Parking lots create dead zones in any community. Ending requirements for parking gives communities the option to replace parking lots with amenities.
- A uniform parking standard allows builders and developers to more quickly adapt their proposals to different places, speeding up housing construction of enough homes for all Minnesotans.

Where else has this been implemented?

Parking minimum removal is widespread throughout the United States and internationally.

- Minneapolis and St Paul have removed parking minimums. Developers continue to build parking in both cities, but the number of spaces varies based on the needs of the building. In Minneapolis new smaller infill buildings are being built on previously vacant land.
- Oregon caps the number of parking spaces a city may require at 1 per home for most new residential development. Cities can choose to require less.
- Fayetteville, Arkansas removed parking minimums for commercial buildings. As a result, new mixed-use buildings, revitalization of dilapidated buildings, and businesses are opening that were previously prohibited due to parking requirements.

Resources/More Information:

- Detailed infographics on the costs of parking: <https://graphingparking.com>
- Ending parking minimum requirements in the Twin Cities led to more homes. <https://minnesotareformer.com/2023/08/31/ending-minimum-parking-requirements-was-a-policy-win-for-the-twin-cities/>
- Ending commercial parking mandates revitalized downtown Fayetteville Arkansas. <https://www.reinventingparking.org/2022/03/Fayetteville.html>

