



Do You REALLY Need All that Parking?



**MICHIGAN ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**

What you will learn:

How too much parking negatively impacts your community

Implementation techniques

How Less Parking Creates Vibrant Places

Vibrant places have people, but people need to be able to get to them. The single-occupancy automobile is still the primary mode of travel in Michigan. Parking is an essential consideration in a community, but parking policy should support your community's broader goals, not impede them. In planning any vibrant neighborhood or district in your township, city, or village, community leaders must recognize that building too much parking causes not just placemaking and walkability to suffer, but also stormwater quality, economic resiliency, and efficient delivery of government services.

Instead of primarily relying on privately developed and privately owned parking lots where the size is dictated by the minimum

parking space requirements in your zoning ordinance, consider a broader and comprehensive approach to your community's parking needs, using other tools and controls to limit the negative impacts of too much parking.

TERMS

Vibrant: Full of energy and enthusiasm

Walkable: Suitable or safe for walking

Most vibrant places in Michigan rely on some public shared parking. Public parking can range from the complex--large parking decks where parking is charged by the hour--to the simple--free, on street parking. Even the smallest downtowns and neighborhoods can offer on-street parking to provide spaces that do not diminish the walkability of these districts.

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1919 West Stadium Boulevard, Suite 4
Ann Arbor, Michigan, 48103
734.913.2000 | www.planningmi.org
info@planningmi.org
Photo Credit: Benjamin Horn

State laws that may apply:

Michigan Vehicle Code, Public Act 300 of 1949

Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, Public Act 110 of 2006

Michigan Recodified Tax Increment Financing Act, Public Act 57 of 2018

It's estimated that there are as many as two billion parking spots in the United States for a scant 200 million cars.*

* *Laura Bliss, Bloomberg City Lab*

Treat parking as a public utility in your downtowns by providing public shared parking strategically and sparingly, in conjunction with restricting private parking through zoning.

Besides offering public parking, other zoning tools can help keep parking spaces from becoming an overwhelming land use:

- Allow reductions in required parking where cooperative parking agreements allow for shared parking among private landowners.
- Reduce or eliminate required parking where public parking is located nearby.
- Eliminate parking minimums altogether, particularly in your walkable districts.
- Consider parking maximums to discourage the construction of unnecessary spaces.
- Insofar as possible, encourage other modes of transportation, such as transit, ride-sharing, and bicycling to enhance options for your community's commuters and visitors.
- Require surface parking to be located behind buildings to reduce the impact on the street frontage and walkability.

Resources:

The American Planning Association at Planning.org

The National Association of City Transportation Officials at Nacto.org

The Congress for New Urbanism at Cnu.org

High Cost of Free Parking by Donald Shoup

Michigan Association of Planning's Parking Workshop

WHAT COMMUNITIES ARE DOING THIS?

Michigan has many examples of communities implementing these practices, but here are a few:

Ann Arbor, Howell, Kalamazoo, Marquette- exempt certain portions of their downtowns from parking space minimums.

Berkley, Traverse City: exempts sites within 500 feet of public parking from minimum parking standards.

Mount Pleasant: no parking minimums in all districts throughout the city.

Marquette and Traverse City: impose parking maximums for specific uses, such as retail and office.

This tear sheet was developed by the Michigan Association of Planning (MAP) for the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC). The Michigan Association of Planning is a 501 c 3 organization, dedicated to promoting sound community planning that benefits the residents of Michigan. MAP was established in 1945 to achieve a desired quality of life through comprehensive community planning that includes opportunities for a variety of lifestyles and housing, employment, commercial activities, and cultural and recreational amenities.

