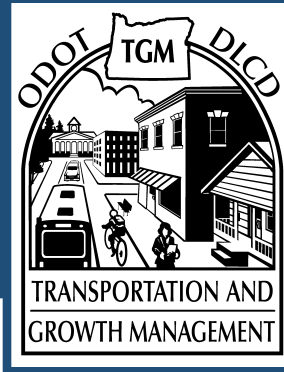


# Managing On-Street Parking in Residential Areas



## Why Manage On-Street Parking?

Oregon's city codes have long dealt with parking supply by simply mandating each development provide plentiful off-street parking. While this has decreased some conflicts over parking, it has resulted in unintended consequences: more expensive housing, costs to businesses, less walkable cities, more pollution, and a cross-subsidy of driving by those who do not drive.

It doesn't have to be this way.

Cities across Oregon are deciding to let property owners decide their own need for off-street parking. Reducing costly mandates, combined with city management of on-street spaces, can better meet community goals.

As TGM has recommended this approach, we've heard the question: how can small-to-medium cities manage on-street parking supply fairly, affordably, and efficiently?

This guide aims to help. A caveat: **this guide focuses on residential areas, not downtowns.** Other TGM guides, such as "A Guide to Tackling the Downtown Parking Beast" are available at <https://www.oregon.gov/lcd/TGM/Pages/Parking.aspx>

## Step 1. Identify Areas/Block Faces in Need of Parking Management

In most cities, our development codes and habits have provided ample, unpriced parking. Small changes to the supply brought about by cutting red tape of overdone parking mandates don't require additional action; drivers will be able to find a space to park, albeit at times with a short walk to their destination.

So where *should* cities manage on-street parking?

The short answer: **where it's overfull.**

What does "overfull" mean? One standard parking managers use is the 85% rule. Generally, it means parking on each block should aim to be 85% full. The idea is drivers should be able to find a space when they need one. And parking built by tax dollars or in response to development mandates should be used, not oversupplied and empty.

This basic rule can be adjusted based on circumstances; for example, in walkable downtowns the goal might be for a multi-block area have 15% available parking spaces, instead of a space available on each block face. Parking-and-walking can provide significant benefits to neighboring businesses who get more visibility when potential customers walk by their storefront, and visitors can enjoy a fuller experience of place.

But this guide focuses on residential areas. The neighborhoods and block faces where residents and their guests cannot find parking within a short walk are

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usually ripe for parking management. One important note: this isn't the universe of all drivers (which would include commuters and other visitors), rather it's the drivers cities tend to prioritize in residential areas.

TGM has published guides explaining **how to measure parking demand** by counting parking spaces and whether they're being used. See *Parking Made Easy: A Guide to Managing Parking in Your Community, 2013*. In residential areas, parking peak demand is best done in the middle of a weekday night, when nearly all residents are presumed to be home. Of course, some residential areas next to downtowns or other commercial and office areas may reach their peaks during dining hours or when commute parking overlaps with residential parking.



*Parking Made Easy* explains how to work with interested parties (often neighboring property owners) to define the scale of measurement, measurement times, and areas to measure. Volunteers can help collect the data. The results of the parking use study can highlight the areas where parking shortages aren't just perceived, but real.

A different option is to **ask residential areas to decide on permits**. These systems allow neighborhoods to petition for a parking district – in this context, meaning a certain number of adjacent block faces governed by a permit system. In theory, this allows neighbors to decide for themselves whether to manage parking in their area or let it be a free-for-all.

Some cities have a double-majority requirement to request parking management: a majority of property owners in the area must petition in favor of the district and/or vote, and a majority of those voting (sometimes a supermajority) must support implementing parking management. TGM does not recommend this approach, as efforts often bog down in people's struggle to prioritize casting a ballot.

## Step 2. Decide Management: Permits and/or Time Limits

Once a city has decided to manage an area's on-street parking, the first step is usually to develop a permit system for residents. This is usually combined with either visitor permits or time limits for those without permits. Clearly, areas allowing free visits with time limits are a less restrictive approach than requiring everyone to have a permit.

Visitor permits are usually purchased or given away at city hall, from whomever manages parking. Some cities (such as Fort Collins, CO) allow long-term visitors like out-of-town relatives to report their license plates to parking enforcement, allowing those cars to be parked in the neighborhood. Eugene allows residents to apply for up to 30 single-day guest permits per month; Bend offers free one-day visitor passes or a \$25 14-day visitor pass.

Some cities (Chicago and Washington, DC) have approved new apartment buildings without off-street parking but made residents in those buildings ineligible for on-street permits. Other cities (like Boulder, CO) sell a few permits to non-residents on blocks with a regular vacancy rate of greater than 25%. Those permits cost \$100/quarter and are valid for only a specific block. Resident permits are \$17/year. To encourage adoption of such policies, cities could dedicate the revenue from non-residents to



improvements in the area. A Salem neighborhood has proposed non-resident permits as well (though not implemented them).

Cities usually designate parking zones of a couple dozen blocks and issue permits through car stickers. For example, Corvallis has three zones, each between 12 and 18 blocks. Cities can set different prices given the areas. Eugene's zones vary in price from free to \$150/quarter. In some zones, cities differentiate between homeowners and renters; TGM does not recommend this inequitable approach. Corvallis' rates are all \$25/year.

One option is to have additional cars from each household pay more (example, the first permit for a household is \$75/year, each additional permit \$100/year); this encourages reflection on how many cars a household needs to own.

### Step 3. Choose a Permit Price

There are few better deals (for car owners) than the price of on-street parking. While private parking lots sometimes provide more security, they are much less conveniently located. On-street parking in Oregon – when priced at all – costs pennies a day, while priced private parking lots cost dollars per day. For example, a private parking spot in La Grande costs \$720/year, whereas on-street residential permits are free.

This is an artifact of expectation; people presume on-street parking will be free or very low cost. Actual costs to the city of building and maintaining a parking place are rarely calculated, but are much higher than permit costs. (The Victoria Transportation Policy Institute found each on-street parking space costs cities \$535/year in 2020 dollars for building and maintenance costs).

In setting permit costs, your city must decide priorities. Are you prioritizing making parking easy and cheap? Trying to incentivize some behavior change? Working to decrease the subsidies of car ownership?

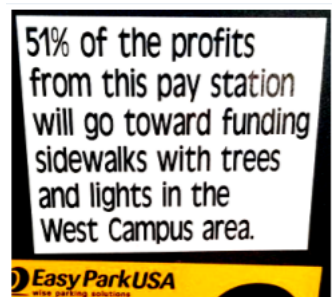
Are you planning on creating a parking benefit district – wherein some of the revenues from permits and citations is dedicated to neighborhood improvements?

Generally, cities set residential permit prices from free to \$75 per year; the City of Portland has a zone where permits cost \$75 plus a \$120 surcharge to provide those who opt out of permits subsidized transit and bike share (with a surcharge exemption for low income individuals).

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***There are few better deals (for car owners) than an on-street parking permit. Cities usually charge a very small fraction of comparable private car storage.***

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## Step 4. Select an Enforcement Approach

A common concern about implementing parking reform – time-limits, meters, and/or permits – is how to enforce the permits. Some small cities generally don't enforce signed downtown parking limits; relying on both inexperienced, uninformed visitors and people acting as good neighbors following the rules.

But most cities do some level of enforcement for residential parking zones. Options include complaint-based enforcement (similar to other code enforcement efforts), using a code compliance officer, dedicating a parking enforcement specialist, using police department officers, or contracting enforcement services from private vendors. Smaller cities usually have less than one full-time person working on parking enforcement. One way to limit time needed for enforcement is to use automated license plate readers, as Eugene and Bend do. The automated readers read license plates as the enforcement vehicle drives past and compare them with a database, providing enforcement data.

Often cities use a warning-first approach to nudge people into good behavior; wherein the first or first two violations are warnings or much lower cost. Cities also often have progressive parking fines – wherein the first ticket each year is a certain amount, and subsequent tickets are higher. Usually about 5% of drivers are responsible for about a quarter of violations; these serial offenders can be asked to pay more, to encourage compliance. (Donald Shoup, *Parking and the City*, p. 286)

With revenue from both permits and tickets, enforcement can be self-supporting.

## Step 5. Review Results; Adjust to Meet Demand

Unlike other infrastructure, parking management is relatively easy and cheap to adjust to meet the market – parking limits and zones can be adjusted block-by-block, or even parking space by parking space. Signs and paint are affordable to install, adjust, or remove. With modern parking meters, even parking pricing can be easily adjusted remotely to balance supply and demand.

TGM recommends periodic reviews of parking districts to ensure parking supply and demand are balanced. Parking zones and prices should be adjusted as needed. Large cities such as San Francisco and Seattle that charge by the hour often find about half of the adjustments are price decreases, allaying fears that periodic rate review means perpetually increasing parking prices.



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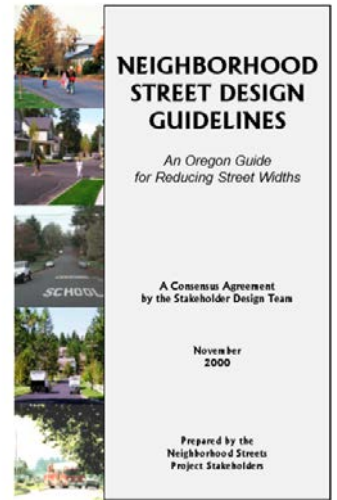
## Concerns about Narrow Streets

As cities have worked on updating parking codes, a common concern is about how on-street parking intersects with narrow streets.

TGM published a guide to narrow streets, which was a consensus document with various stakeholders, including the Office of the State Fire Marshal.

That document found 28-foot wide streets were sufficient to meet fire needs, even with parking on both sides, and 24-foot wide streets were sufficient with parking on one side. It is available here:

[https://www.oregon.gov/lcd/Publications/NeighborhoodStreetDesign\\_2000.pdf](https://www.oregon.gov/lcd/Publications/NeighborhoodStreetDesign_2000.pdf)



## Implementing Change

Changing parking rules is no easy feat. To help, TGM published “A Strategic Guide to Implementing Parking Reform,” here:

<https://www.oregon.gov/lcd/TGM/Pages/Parking.aspx>

For implementing residential parking management, we recommend looking particularly at the language and messengers sections, and using incremental experimentation – if your city has no parking districts, forming one small parking district on a trial basis.

Another common way to get more interest in permit programs is to set them up as parking benefit districts – wherein at least half of the revenues from permits and tickets go back into the neighborhood. Bend’s program does this. Northwest Portland’s program helps fund transit pass and bikeshare subsidies to those who have had permits in the past but forgo them. Learn more about the “transportation wallet” at:

<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/transportation/article/757304>

In Vancouver, BC’s West End, the City rebalanced prices for on-street parking permits to market rate (\$285/year) but grandfathered in low-income residents and pre-2017 residents who were paying old, subsidized prices (\$60/year), allowing for a more palatable transition to fairer pricing.

### A Strategic Guide to Implementing Parking Reform



Reducing costly parking mandates can be a challenging task for planners and decision makers.

Too often, the easiest thing to do is to continue the pattern of the past: require new development to provide lots of parking, avoiding potential complaints from people accustomed to abundant, “free” (subsidized) parking.

This hides the large costs of parking, but makes it harder to walk and easier to drive, artificially driving up the demand for parking and the costs of housing, doing business, and getting around.

How to break the cycle? Here are some recommendations on how cities might go about reforming the costly, counter-productive market distortion of mandated car parking.

#### Understanding the Fears

The average person worried about parking reform usually recalls a time about when they failed to find free, available parking exactly where and when they wanted it. That experience leads to a belief: mandating more parking will make travel easier and more pleasant, at no cost to themselves.

Embedded in this story are important assumptions. First, the assumption is parking is a public good, where the government can and should help people store their vehicle wherever they go at little or no cost. Second, someone else will pay for the costs of providing parking (people often ascribe this to a “developer” who makes large profits). Third, walking a short distance from parking to a destination is a problem.

This narrative isn’t easy to break down. The rest of this piece suggests some ways around it.

#### 1. Provide Data – and Images

Cities generally try to meet parking demand. Here’s the good news: when communities take the time to collect data, they nearly always find there is sufficient supply of car parking within a block or two of each location. It just needs to be better managed through signage, time limits, or pricing.

(Parking surveys can be a small effort of just a few hours, larger efforts are better, or you can hire a professional).

Walking, on-the-ground studies of parking supply and use is one of the best ways to get over the anecdotal.



Just some of the land in downtown Gresham falls devoted to parking.



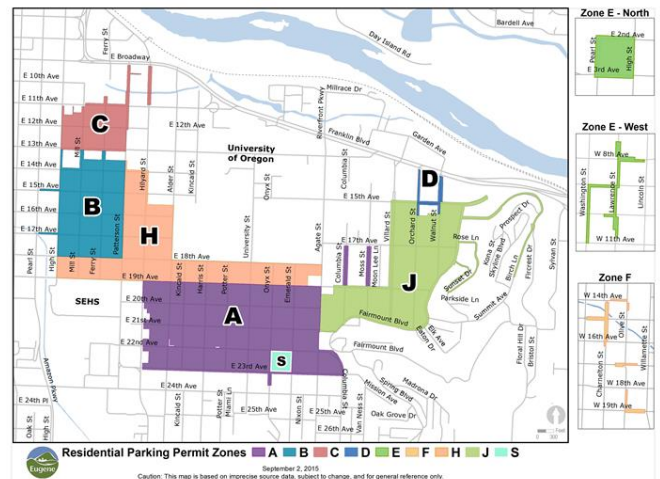
# Oregon Cities Managing Residential Parking

**Beaverton** provides residential parking permits free of charge to people who live downtown.

**Bend** is implementing a residential permit program in its Old Town Neighborhood. The program is structured as a parking benefit district, with 60% of net revenues going back into improvements in the neighborhood. The City contracts with a private company for enforcement. Permits will be \$30; citations are \$50.

**Corvallis** manages three residential districts near Oregon State University. Each district is a several blocks in size. Residents pay a \$25 permit fee to park all day in the 2-hour zones; citations are \$50 for violations. On-campus parking is separately managed; permits cost from \$108 to \$522/year or \$5/day. Residents can petition for new parking districts, by collecting signatures from 50% of adjacent property owners or tenants. New districts must be at least 10 blocks. Parking is enforced by a three-person team in the Police Department. In 2014, an effort to extend its residential parking zones ran up against a citizen referendum, and the effort was defeated 39-61%.

**Eugene** is a helpful model for how to successfully manage residential parking. It has nine residential zones, and has worked to adjust rates and areas to help supply meet demand. The most compelling part of its system is quarterly permits near the university costing \$99-\$150. This provides a regular way for car owners to save money by adjusting to their parking habits. Each quarter students can decide whether to bring a car to campus. Other residential zone permits tend to cost \$40/year; in one zone the first two are free and additional permits are \$40. In two of the zones near the university, homeowners and long-term renters (4+years) can get \$40 permits, while others must pay the \$99/quarter rate. TGM does not recommend that inequitable approach.



The first citation for improperly parked cars is generally \$25; subsequent citations are \$50. Learn more at their web site: <https://www.eugene-or.gov/781/Residential-Permits>

**Klamath Falls.** Klamath Falls has a small residential parking program for residents living in its downtown area. Permits are \$15/month or \$120/year.

**La Grande** has managed on-street parking with permits for over 25 years, addressing areas with some parking constraints – near Eastern Oregon University, middle schools and the high school, and downtown.

Near the university, the City signs blocks as residential parking requiring a permit, encouraging students to park on campus. In that zone, each household gets two permits free of cost, which they can use for themselves or visitors. Eastern Oregon University has an annual \$84 parking pass (or \$33/term), which allows drivers to park in various parking lots.

For a few block faces next to the university, there's a two-hour parking zone, some spaces of which can be parked in all day with a permit. The same permit allows drivers to park all day on certain downtown

blocks and parking lots designated for 2-hour parking. The permit is purchased in 2-3 month intervals, with averaging \$10-30/month. Rates are higher during peak snow removal season.

Parking enforcement generally pays for itself with permit and ticket revenue. The parking enforcement officer is a member of the police department who also does code enforcement.

The Public Works Department has a Parking, Traffic Safety and Street Maintenance Advisory Committee to review challenging areas; that committee decides how to approach each parking challenge and the extent of each zone.

Learn more at their web site:

<http://www.cityoflagrande.org/muraProjects/muraLAG/lagcity/index.cfm/city-offices/finance/municipal-court/>

**Oregon City** has a residential parking permit district near its downtown. Permits are free; enforcement is generally complaint-driven.

**Portland** has many residential parking zones; details: <https://www.portland.gov/transportation/parking>

**Salem** manages parking where residential uses overlap with downtown commercial uses or heavily parked streets near the State Capitol mall. Residential parking permits are \$15/year and come with three visitor passes valid for a year; residents can also buy a pack of 25 day passes for visitors for \$2.50. Downtown city-owned parking garages have monthly passes costing from \$28 to \$74. Citations start at \$25. <https://www.cityofsalem.net/Pages/Parking-Permit-Fees.aspx>

**Tualatin** manages parking downtown and near schools. Residents can apply for permits if they live in school zones where parking is tight during school days. Its Core Area Parking Board manages downtown parking, funded through a Core Area Tax. Details: <https://www.tualatinoregon.gov/police/parking>

## Additional Advice and Assistance

Staff at the Transportation and Growth Management program are available to help with your parking codes and reform efforts. View our complete set of parking reform resources at <https://www.oregon.gov/lcd/TGM/Pages/Parking.aspx>

Find contact information at:

<http://www.oregon.gov/LCD/TGM>

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*The Transportation and Growth Management Program is a joint program of the Department of Land Conservation and Development and Oregon Department of Transportation.*

*We support community efforts to expand transportation choices. By linking land use and transportation planning, TGM works in partnership with local governments to create vibrant, livable places in which people can walk, bike, take transit, or drive where they want to go.*

