

# Myths about Parking Requirements

Rebuttal to proposed elimination of parking minimums

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# What we agree on

- Bend has a housing shortage and a housing affordability problem
- Bend residents should have more choice of housing type and price
- Making ADUs easier to build was a good thing
- Allowing duplexes and triplexes in single-family zones was a good thing
- Creating opportunity areas with more density and the transit & walkability infrastructure to support it was a good thing
- HB 2001, expanding middle housing opportunities, is a good thing
- Bend needs parking reform

# We disagree on the approach to parking reform

- Current standards are arbitrary and unfair
  - Households own vehicles; bedrooms don't
  - Average Bend household owns 1.9 vehicles
  - Commercial parking relates to the nature of the business, not the size of the space
- Imposing a total elimination of parking minimums would also be arbitrary and unfair
- Bend should follow its own policies for adjusting parking standards and use several methods that have proven successful in other cities

# Bend should follow its own official policy

- Policy #38 in the Transportation System Plan requires adjustments to parking standards be based “on changes in behavior and parking demand”
  - Parking reform should be data-driven
  - The latest parking studies in 2017 did not find an over-supply
  - Restaurants and some industrial uses had too little parking

# Myth 1: eliminating minimums is the only method available

- Most cities use a whole toolbox of strategies
- Non-pricing strategies
  - shared parking agreements, unbundled parking (parking spaces leased separately), parking maximums, reduced parking minimums, improved bicycling and walking infrastructure, improved public transit and micro-mobility options, peripheral parking lots, and employer incentives
- Pricing strategies
  - dynamic or variable rate pricing, performance-based pricing, park-once-and-walk public parking lots & garages, coordinated on-street and off-street pricing, and parking benefit districts
- Bend should explore all of these, not use one as a blunt instrument

## Myth 2: many cities have eliminated parking minimums

- About 120 cities have eliminated off-street parking requirements in specific areas
- These are mainly downtown cores and frequent transit corridors
  - Bend has a small downtown and no frequent transit corridors
- Only three cities have eliminated parking minimums citywide
  - Buffalo, NY; San Francisco, CA; and Berkeley, CA
  - All had a history of over-supply and extensive public transit
- Bend should explore eliminating parking minimums downtown and maybe in the Bend Central District

## **Myth 3: the disabled and elderly benefit from housing without parking**

- Eliminating off-street parking requirements actually discriminates against those very people
- If a dwelling unit doesn't have onsite parking, people who need it couldn't live there
- That would literally build discrimination in to housing for the next 100 years

## Myth 4: construction costs affect sale and rental prices

- Arguments about the cost of building parking spaces are almost all based on structured parking (e.g., \$24K – \$34K)
- A surface space costs about 1–3% of the construction cost of a residential unit (about \$4,000 – \$8,000)
- Housing prices are based on supply and demand in the market, not construction costs
  - Rents in Bend have increased 33% in the last year, including on years-old apartments and houses
  - Home sale prices continue to escalate in spite of code changes to reduce the cost of regulations

## **Myth 5: Professor Shoup favors eliminating parking minimums citywide as a singular strategy**

- In his landmark book, “The High Cost of Free Parking”, Shoup focuses entirely on parking in commercial areas
- He calls for two important steps prior to eliminating parking minimums:
  - first, charge fair-market prices for parking using dynamic pricing (price increases with demand)
  - second, establish parking benefit districts (revenue collected is returned to the district)
- Only then should parking minimums be eliminated
- Shoup supported a California law requiring 1 space per dwelling unit

# In conclusion

- Bend needs to:
  - Do its homework
  - Learn from other cities
  - Make adjustments that are data-driven, based on behavior and demand
  - Use multiple parking management strategies in appropriate places
  - Build community acceptance for parking reform
- Eliminating parking minimums citywide may be the easy thing, but it's not the right thing