



## News Release

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# Mayor Rybak and Minneapolis City Council Approve New Off-Street Parking Regulations

January 9, 2009 (MINNEAPOLIS)—Minneapolis Mayor R.T. Rybak and the City Council today adopted a zoning code amendment that updates the city's off-street parking standards. Many of the existing parking provisions were put in place in 1963. Since that time, City goals and strategies related to land use and transportation have evolved, as have best practices.

High parking requirements conflict with goals related to retaining and enhancing Minneapolis' traditional urban and transit-oriented character and often deter development of restaurants and coffee shops—amenities in our neighborhoods. The solution to high parking requirements has often been to grant off-street parking variances.

"The City has changed since 1963; today, we don't rely as heavily on the automobile. Residents are moving through the city on bicycles and using a variety of transit options, therefore our parking requirements must change, too" said Mayor Rybak. "We want to respond to parking needs by consumers and encourage a variety of development throughout the city."

"Small businesses have complained for years that it takes too long to open a business in Minneapolis," said Council Member Gary Schiff, Chair, Zoning and Planning Committee. "These changes in our parking code will cut red tape and make it easier to open a small business in Minneapolis."

### The Revisions

The City's zoning ordinance regulates the number of off-street parking and loading spaces that must be provided when establishing or expanding land uses in Minneapolis.

Revisions recognize there are negative consequences associated with undersupplying or oversupplying parking. An overabundant supply of off-street parking:

- Precludes a balanced transportation system by encouraging use of single-occupant automobiles;
- Sends excessive stormwater runoff into lakes, rivers and streams;
- Increases urban heat island effect;
- Conflicts with the traditional urban character that the City's policies seek to promote.

The new regulations respond to policies that call for balancing the demand for parking with other important objectives such as maintaining the city's traditional urban form and encouraging the use of alternative modes of transportation.

Some of the components of the amendment include:

- Commercial uses: Reduces requirement, for most uses, to one space per 500 sq. ft. of floor area, while retaining a four-space minimum. New standards would not significantly change the minimum parking requirement for most small-scale uses (such as retail sales and services).
- Residential uses: Does not significantly change parking requirements for residential uses, outside of downtown.
- Downtown: Eliminates minimum parking requirements in the downtown zoning districts.
- Food and beverage uses: Substantially lowers off-street parking requirements for food and beverage uses. Small-scale restaurants and coffee shops without general entertainment would have the same parking requirement as retail sales and services uses, while larger restaurants and coffee shops would have a higher parking requirement.
- Bicycle parking: Establishes bicycle parking for most uses and ensures that a certain percentage of required bicycle parking would accommodate either long-term users or short-term users.
- Minimum threshold for off-street parking: All uses over 1,000 sq. ft. (an increase from 100 sq. ft) must provide off-street parking, however, the amendment limits the number of small-scale uses that could be exempted from parking requirements within any single development.
- Parking maximums: Establishes limits on the amount of parking that can be provided accessory to new development; a strategy previously limited to the city's Pedestrian Oriented Overlay Districts.

### **Approval Process**

Following public engagement and subsequent revisions that respond to public input, revisions were forwarded to the City Planning Commission, City Council Zoning and Planning Committee, and then to City Council for consideration and adoption.

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