Less Traffic, Better Places

A Step-by-Step Guide to Reforming Parking Requirements

Patrick Siegman
Nelson\Nygaard Consulting
Three Reforms

1. Charge fair-market prices for curb parking

2. Spend the resulting revenue to pay for neighborhood public improvements

3. Remove the requirements for off-street parking
Where can these principles apply?

Successful precedents: reviving neighborhoods by abolishing minimum parking requirements:

- Coral Gables, FL
- Eugene, OR
- Fort Myers, FL
- Fort Pierce, FL
- Great Britain (entire nation)
- Los Angeles, CA
- Milwaukee, WI
- Olympia, WA
- Portland, OR
- San Francisco, CA
- Stuart, FL
- Seattle, WA
- Spokane, WA
- Ventura, CA
Agenda: A step-by-step guide

1. Set goals
2. Assess the status quo
3. Offer alternatives
4. Build a consensus
Step 1: Set Goals

What is the goal of your community’s parking requirements?
Petaluma Smart Code - Key Issues

- Want new life downtown, economic success
- Perceived parking shortage
- Vacant buildings – couldn’t meet parking requirements
- Fear of spill-over parking
- Fear of traffic
- Worsening housing crisis
- Budget crunch
Petaluma Smart Code - Vision
Patrick Siegman: Less Traffic, Better Places
Patrick Siegman: Less Traffic, Better Places
Central Petaluma Smart Code

How can their vision be realized?

...parking policies must support it.
What is the goal of parking requirements?

- ...To create ample parking?
- Transportation is a means of achieving larger community goals, not an end in itself
- Always set parking policies as part of a larger vision
Petaluma, CA: Smart Code Results

Key Policies
1. ‘Park Once’ Environment
2. Manage On-Street Parking
3. Parking requirements drastically reduced, then abolished
   - Nov ’02: Project start
   - June ’03: Code adopted
   - July ’03: $75 million project (theater, retail, apartments, office) approved
   - Today: Theater District open
Step 2: Assess the Status Quo

1. What is the stated purpose of current parking requirements?
2. Are they achieving that purpose?
3. Where did they come from?
4. What are the physical consequences?
5. Would they allow you to build people’s favorite places?
6. Assess parking supply and parking occupancy.
   - What are the real problems?
   - Can more spaces solve the problem?
Palo Alto, CA – parking requirements adopted in 1951
Minimum Parking Requirements

**Purpose**
- **Palo Alto**: “to alleviate traffic congestion”?
- **San Diego**: “to reduce traffic congestion and improve air quality”
- **to prevent spill-over parking problems**
Example: Office Parks

Peak Occupancy Rates, in spaces per 1000 sf of building area:

- Lowest: 0.94 spaces
- Average: 2.52 spaces
- Highest: 4.25 spaces

Typical requirement: 4.0 spaces/1000 sf
Typical office: 4 parking spaces per 1000 sq.ft.

1.3 sq. ft. of asphalt per sq. ft. of building area
Ventura’s minimum parking requirements...

...often require more parking than building
Glendale Minimum Commercial Parking Requirements

- Banks: 1.4
- Auto Service Stations: 1.4
- Car Washes: 0.5
- Gyms and Health Clubs: 3.4
- Medical and Dental Offices (not adjacent to hospital): 1.7
- Offices: 0.9
- Fast Food Restaurants: 4.3
- Restaurants: 3.4
- Retail: 1.4
- Hotels and Motels: 0.4
- Taverns: 3.4
- Auditoriums/Assembly Halls: 9.7
- Churches, Synagogues, Temples: 9.7
- Private Schools (Kindergarten-9th grade): 0.9
- Private Schools (10th grade+): 9.7
- Theaters: 9.7
- Industrial (Warehouse): 0.3
- Industrial (Research and Development): 0.9

1 Sq. Foot of Building
"x" Sq. Feet Parking
Step 2: Assessing the Status Quo

Would they allow you to build people’s favorite places?
Standard Parking Generation Rates Are Derived From Isolated, Single-Use Developments
Patrick Siegman: Less Traffic, Better Places
Mixed-Use Zones Act as a “Park Once” District
One space serves several destinations
Demand vs. Requirement: Downtown Palo Alto

**Observed peak occupancy:**
- 1.91 spaces per 1,000 s.f.

**Peak occupancy w/ 10% vacancy:**
- 2.1 spaces per 1,000 s.f.

**Existing Requirement:**
- 4 spaces per 1,000 s.f.
- Would require 5,210 more spaces than observed demand to bring downtown to 4 spaces per 1,000 sf requirement
  - At $51K/space = $298 million
Step 2: Assessing the Status Quo

Assess parking supply and occupancy

What are the real problems?
Can more spaces solve them?
No Parking Requirements on Main Street

Downtown Ventura
Mobility & Parking Plan
Peak demand, Downtown public parking: 8 p.m. Saturday

All Downtown: Combined Weekend Parking Occupancy (On- & Off-Street)

Occupancy: 55%

Time of Day: 20:00

Patrick Siegman: Less Traffic, Better Places
Building more spaces cannot solve the perceived parking shortage

Source of Base Map: April 2003 Katz, Okitsu and Associates Parking Study
Ventura Parking Benefit District Boundaries

Source of Base Map: April 2003 Katz, Okitsu and Associates Parking Study
Step 3: Offer Alternatives

1. Which alternative fits your town’s larger goals?
2. With each alternative, who gains and who loses?
3. How many council members will vote for this?
### Parking: High & Low Traffic Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traffic</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Low</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Housing Costs</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pollution</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Typical Minimum Requirements
- Requirement > Average Demand
- Hide all parking costs

#### ‘Tailored’ Minimum Requirements
- Adjust for:
  - Density
  - Transit
  - Mixed Use
  - ‘Park Once’ District
  - On-street spaces
  - …etc.

#### Abolish Minimum Requirements
- Market decides
- Garages funded by parking revenues
- Manage on-street parking
- Residential pkg permits allowed by vote

#### Set Maximum Requirements
- Limit parking to road capacity
- Manage on-street parking
- Market rate fees encouraged/required

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traffic</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Low</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Housing Costs</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pollution</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Step 4: Building a Consensus

1. Focus on the revenue.
   - Who receives it? They will be the supporters.
   - How do they want it spent?

2. How can you minimize the number of losers?
   - Who can we grandfather in, so they don’t lose their free parking?
Potential Revenue: $1.8–3.5 Million Annually

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daily (Weekday)</td>
<td>$5,356</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily (Saturday)</td>
<td>$7,626</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>$34,404</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>$308,443</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual</td>
<td>$3,701,321</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Downtown Opportunities - Landscape Greening

Patrick Siegman: Less Traffic, Better Places
Downtown Opportunities - Trash Collection
Boulder’s Transportation Improvement District

- No nonresidential parking requirements in CAGID area
- Public garages – 84% funded by parking fees, 16% by taxes
- Parking benefit district: $1 million per year in meter revenue kept
- Employee benefits: free universal transit pass (Eco-Pass); Guaranteed Ride Home; ride-matching services; bicycle parking, etc.
- $325,000/year TDM budget
- Carpooling: 35% in 1993 to 47% in 1997
- Eco-pass: reduces commuter parking demand by 850 spaces
Step 4: Building a Consensus

Implementing Residential Parking Benefit Districts

Protecting neighborhoods from spill-over parking
Errors to avoid

Boston’s Beacon Hill neighborhood

- 3,933 resident permits issued - free
- 983 curb spaces available
- Lesson: limit # of permits issued to spaces available
Glendale, California, Residential Parking Permit Districts

Allow two hours free parking for anyone

- **Visitors** park to avoid meter and garage fees
- **Employees** do the “2-hour shuffle”
- Expensive garages sit half-empty
Glendale - Proposed Residential parking benefit district

Existing problem:
- West side of street: garage @ $2.25/hour
- East side: 2 hours free in residential permit zone

Solution:
- East side: same price, except with residential permit
- Return all revenues to the neighborhood
Glendale’s residential parking permit districts

- City currently issues *unlimited* number of permits for *limited* number of spaces

Residential permit fee: $6/year
Public structure fee: $540 – 660/year
Cost of new structure: $2000+/space/year
Cost of 10’x 20’ storage space: $2700 – 3300/year
Residential Parking Benefit District - Glendale Proposal

**Existing residents**
- Grandfather in existing permit holders at existing price
- Allow resale to other residents

**Future residents**
- Limit permits issued to spaces available
- Set goal: 85% occupancy
- Sell permits at market rate
- Use proceeds to benefit neighborhood
Parking Benefit
District Results

- No more on-street parking shortage
- New revenues for public improvements

- Only small change in demand (~15%) is needed
- Garages will be used to park cars – not junk
- Renters with many cars will choose apartments with ample off-street parking
- Drivers will rent excess spaces in underused nearby garages
Residential parking benefit districts - Ventura

Proposal

- Residents park free
  - Limit permits issued to available curb space
  - Property owners receive one permit per 20 feet of available curb space along the frontage of their lot
  - Permits may be sold or transferred

- Sell excess space to nonresidents
  - Payment method: In-vehicle meters
  - Residents decide how to spend revenue

Parking on local streets is limited to 2 hours on weekdays, unless an “H” permit (for residents) is obtained.
Step 4: Building a Consensus

Transforming the suburbs:
A Silicon Valley example
Example: NASA Research Park
Military Base Re-Use
Sunnyvale, California
Example: NASA Research Park

NASA Research Park, Santa Clara County, CA

- Former military base
- 300 acre development site
- 3.7 million square feet of office, research & development space
- 7,000 employees
- 3,000 students,
- 1,120 apartments for 3,300 residents,
- 810 dormitory-style units for 1,560 students
NASA Research Park Transportation Plan

- What is the best investment mix for NASA Research Park?
- What is the cost per commuter served?
- Key Considerations: attracting tenants, traffic impacts, effect on urban design
Improve Access By All Modes

- **Surface Parking with Land** - $3,000
- **Structured Parking** - $2,000
- **Surface Parking** - $300
- **Transit** - $200
- **Bike/Ped Improvements** - $50
- **Housing Joint Development** - ($300)

For Each New Commuter

Efficiency Point
Parking Cash Out Reduces Demand for Parking

Amount offered to employees who do not drive alone ($/month)

% of previous parking demand

Patrick Siegman: Less Traffic, Better Places
Tenants must make cost of parking visible to employees
- Full-cost parking fees, or
- Full parking cash-out

No monthly or annual permits
- These are “bulk discounts” for parking
- They encourage driving every day to “get money’s worth”
- Switch to hourly parking instead

Free transit passes, menu of rideshare, bike/ped programs

Will reduce peak-hour vehicle trips by 40% below normal
Aside from congestion pricing, parking management is the ONLY useful tool for eliminating congestion.

San Francisco 1968-1984:
- 250,000 new jobs
- Little or no private parking
- 11,000 spaces in City-owned garages
- Prices set to discourage commuter parking
- No increase in congestion

Downtown Los Angeles: 0.6 spaces/1000 sf max

Portland uses same approach
# Parking: High & Low Traffic Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traffic</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Low</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Housing Costs</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pollution</td>
<td>High</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For more information

Patrick Siegman
Nelson\Nygaard Consulting
(415) 284-1544
www.nelsonnygaard.com
PSiegman@nelsonnygaard.com