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# Parking and Affordable Housing: Practical Strategies for Changing Codes

# The problem

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- Deficiencies in minimum parking requirements hamper the development of affordable housing:
  - Increase development cost – there's no parking Santa Claus
  - Encourage larger, more upscale units
  - Reduce the feasibility of urban infill sites
    - Constrain design on smaller parcels
- Negative transportation and environmental impacts by incentivizing auto ownership and driving



# Typical ordinance deficiencies

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- Parking minimums often exceed demand because they fail to account for any or all of the following:
  - Unit size and occupancy
  - Auto ownership of residents
  - Transit availability, location
  - Effect of pricing (if unbundled)
  - Alternative shared parking resources



# Ordinance alternatives

- Simple “dumb” rules
  - Tend to require an oversupply
  - Easy to administer, explain
- Demand-based requirements
  - Minimums based narrower use categories, empirical data
  - May require restrictions on changing use
- Requirements that tighten supply/recognize pricing
  - Parking maximums, lower minimums
- Deregulating off-street parking
  - Allow market to determine; manage and control spillover



# Cities' reasons for minimums and sources of information

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- Southern California jurisdictions' reasons:
  - Avoid spillover on local streets
  - Traffic circulation
  - Avoid spillover on adjacent properties
  - Ensure economic success of project
- Sources of information about requirements
  - Survey nearby cities
  - Institute of Transportation Engineers data
  - APA/ULI data
  - Commission parking studies



# Community readiness to change

- Experience with residential permit districts
- Experience with on-street parking time limits and charges
- Recently changed at least one minimum parking requirement in their ordinance
- Experience with shared parking
- Successful collaboration with neighborhoods/businesses (not just parking)



# Low “readiness” communities

- Parking requirements have not been revised for decades
- Parking is not analytically based:
  - No parking occupancy surveys or use of census or other data
- Discussion about parking takes the form of...
  - “That’s how we’ve always done it”
  - “That’s what our neighbors do”
  - “That’s what the development community demands”
- Parking requirements are being used as an indirect tool to prevent affordable housing
- Residents and/or business owners are angry about on-street parking conditions



# Ways forward in low readiness communities

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- Assemble data about parking occupancy, educate stakeholders
- Provide tours of well-designed projects with less parking
- Assemble best practice examples from similar cities
- Implement pilot projects to provide local experience
- Conduct on-street parking management experiments
- Unpack various objections – density, design, social exclusion, and parking/transportation
- Emphasize offering choices for those with fewer or no cars



# Outcome: improve minimum requirements

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- Reduce minimum requirement for all housing (based on empirical evidence)
- Create special minimum requirements for affordable housing and transit-oriented development
- Examples:
  - City of Los Angeles, San Diego, Santa Monica: reduce requirements for affordable units
  - Berkeley: bases requirement on sf, not bedrooms
  - Reductions for senior housing



# High “readiness” communities

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- Neighborhoods and commercial districts have experience with the benefits of on-street parking regulation, parking districts, etc.
- Minimum requirements have been revised to be more in line with demand
- Established stakeholder processes produce agreement on controversial issues
- Residents accustomed to growth and change



# Way forward in high readiness communities

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- Deregulate minimum requirements in designated areas
- Introduce on-street parking management in areas for future deregulation
- Expand deregulation on a district-by-district basis
- Partner for shared neighborhood parking facilities



# Outcome: deregulation and market pricing

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- Eliminate minimum parking requirements
- Require unbundling
- Price and manage on-street parking
- Example: City of Los Angeles is studying eliminating minimum requirements in parts of downtown



# Stakeholders' questions

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- Elected officials: How can I explain to constituents why ordinance changes are needed?
- Planners: is there community, planning commission and council support?
- Long-time residents: Why are you turning my neighborhood into a city?
- Business community: is there a linkage between affordable housing and the business climate?
- Aspiring residents : What took you so long?



# Resources

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- Parking & Housing: Best Practices for Increasing Housing Affordability and Achieving Smart Growth – Russo
- Parking Requirements Guide for Affordable Housing Developers – SCANP
- Parking Generation Handbook, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition – ITE
- US Census – American Factfinder