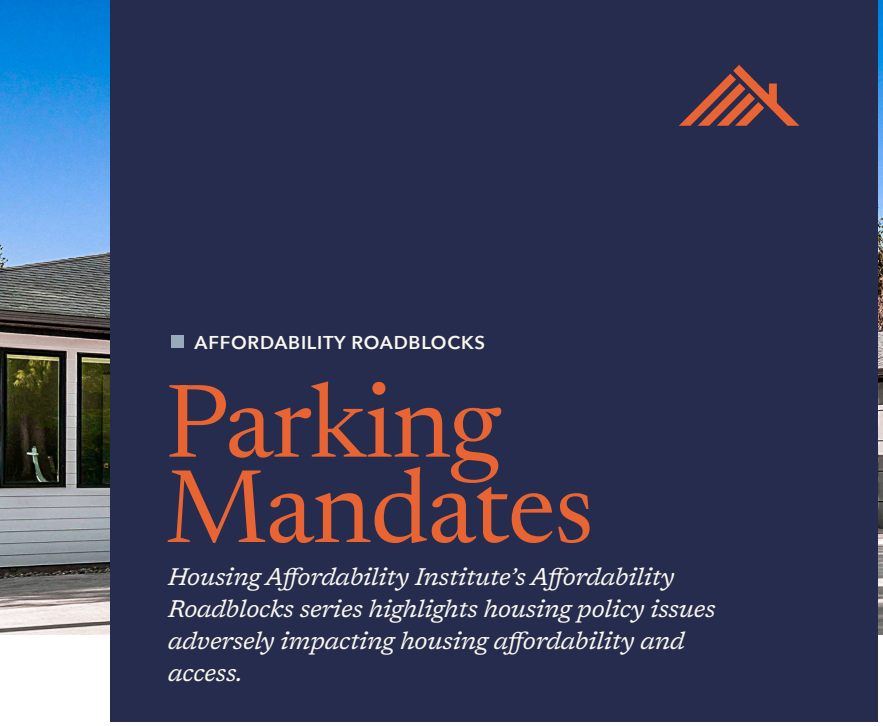

AFFORDABILITY ROADBLOCKS

Parking Mandates

Housing Affordability Institute's Affordability Roadblocks series highlights housing policy issues adversely impacting housing affordability and access.

PARKING MANDATES

Parking mandates are local zoning requirements that mandate a minimum number of parking spaces required for various types of developments: commercial, residential, and even public facilities. Intended to address potential parking shortages, these requirements have garnered significant attention and debate due to their implications on urban development, transportation, affordability, and overall sustainability.

From an affordability and access perspective, larger parking minimums force buyers and renters to pay for parking spaces they may not want or need, which could cause would-be buyers and renters to be unable to afford to live in a particular area. Parking mandates can also decrease the number of housing units in a development, thereby reducing access through fewer units.

From a sustainability perspective, concerns exist about the impact parking requirements have on incentivizing car utilization, the increase in impervious surfaces and concern over flooding risks.

In addition to the concerns over affordability, the policy's routinely impact the number of housing units created in a development.

ON PARKING MANDATES

The debate of parking mandates illustrates how the zoning discussion transcends the political spectrum. Critics argue that parking minimums are government overreach that impede property owners' rights, decrease housing affordability, and encourage car dependency.

> *"In this era of climate change and a crisis of affordability, we have to reclaim urban land for people. Ending mandates for parking is a vital contribution to this project."*

Friedman, Laura and Shoup, Donald. "Cities Need Housing. Parking Requirements Make it Harder." Bloomberg. April 26, 2021

In cities and states that have successfully lifted parking mandates, the emphasis on sustainability has been a central focus of policymakers.

> *"This oversupply [of parking] has created a host of problems: parking requirements can inflate housing costs, block buildings from being adapted to new uses, and contribute to sprawl, making additional driving (and parking) necessary. They create an administrative burden. And the impervious surfaces of parking lots increase the risk of flooding and contribute to the urban heat island effect."*

Gould, Catie. "Shifting Gears." Lincoln Institute of Land Policy. Oct. 12, 2022.

AFFORDABILITY ROADBLOCKS

Parking Mandates

PARKING MANDATES AND HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

One of the key challenges of parking minimums is that they impose significant and sometimes unnecessary costs on developers and homebuyers.

$225 PER MONTH
National Average Cost of Parking, For-Rent *

$18,000 PER STALL
National Average to Construct a Parking Garage *

$40,000 PER HOME
Cost to Add a Third Stall in the Twin Cities, Minn. **

Local impervious surface requirements, paired with parking requirements, can also require larger lots. From a multifamily perspective, both for-rent and common interest communities (CIC), there are additional costs for the maintenance of shared parking facilities, which are covered by increased rent (for-rent properties) or increased homeowners association fees (for-ownership CIC properties).

* Goodman, Seth. "How much does one parking spot add to rent?" Reinventing Parking. 2015.

** Added lot width, materials and structure costs.

ADDRESSING PARKING MANDATES

Like many zoning-related policy challenges imposed at the local level, there are two options for addressing the negative impact parking minimums have on affordability, access, and sustainability: establishing extremely low minimum parking requirements, or eliminating minimum parking requirements altogether.

Local governments can and are addressing the impact of parking minimums. The city of Bloomington, Minn., reduced its parking minimums in 2021 to one stall in a garage and one space off-street (such as a driveway). Buffalo, N.Y., (2017) and St. Paul, Minn., (2021) eliminated all parking mandates for new development.

Absent local action, state legislators or agencies can take similar action. In California, A.B. 2097, passed in 2022, prohibits local parking minimums within a half-mile of a transit stop. Also enacted in 2022, the Oregon Land Use Commission significantly curbed local government's ability to impose parking minimums, with a special emphasis on residential development.

Federal action prohibiting parking has even been considered, as Rep. Robert Garcia (D-Calif.) introduced the "Homes for People Not Cars Act of 2023" which would leave property owners in charge of the number of parking spaces, not the government.