



Chapter 9: Rethinking Residential On-Street Parking

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The Issue

Residential streets serve a variety of uses. First and foremost, they provide access to homes alongside the street, but they also provide movement through neighborhoods. Within the roadway, however a large amount of public space is often given to the parking of private automobiles. In a typical 34-foot curb-to-curb roadway, parking constitutes 14 linear feet (41 percent) of the paved space, assuming 7-foot parking lanes on each side of the street.

The Implications

To better understand how residential on-street parking spaces are used and not used, a study of three neighborhoods from different development eras in Eugene, Oregon, was conducted to answer a very basic, but rarely asked, question: *Does the supply of on-street parking exceed the demand in low-density residential areas?*

Project Information

Chapter Authors:

Marc Schlossberg schlossb@uoregon.edu
Dave Amos

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The Research

Key Points and Practice Takeaways:

1. Planners should conduct a simple block-by-block survey of parked cars and parking spaces on local suburban streets.
2. Older neighborhoods often need on-street parking, but local streets in neighborhoods built after 1950 are likely to have excess of on-street parking spaces.
3. Unused parking is wasted space. Narrow streets can save money on construction and maintenance for housing developers and city public works departments. In addition, the land that would have otherwise gone to parking can be sold by developers to generate municipal tax income.
4. Much like cities have begun to rethink parking in dense urban areas via parklets, there may be creative reuse opportunities for underutilized suburban residential parking strips. Neighborhoods should be given permission to be creative and to repurpose some of the public space on their streets for gardens, games, murals, or storm water catchment.
5. Local street standards should be revised to reduce required right-of-way and curb-to-curb width standards for local streets, such that unnecessary parking lanes can be eliminated before they are built.