

# Modernizing Lincoln's Commercial Parking

## 2023 Zoning Ordinance Update

### Proposal

- Elimination of minimum parking requirements for most commercial and industrial zoning districts.
  - All districts that require a Use Permit: B-2, B-5, O-3, I-3, R-T.
  - All "H" and "I" districts.
- Maintaining existing minimum parking requirements in residential districts and commercial districts typically found in close proximity to neighborhoods.
  - R-1 - R-8, B-1, B-3, O-2.

### Parking Reform is Envisioned in the 2050 Lincoln-Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan

#### Policy 11: Parking Requirements

*Eliminate or reduce minimum parking requirements in additional zoning districts (beyond B-4 Downtown) and include conditions that minimize the impact on neighboring properties.*



### Parking Requirements in Lincoln Today

Automobile parking requirements first appeared in Lincoln's zoning ordinance in 1951. The ordinance continued to evolve over the next 70 years to its present form today.

Parking requirements are determined by zoning district and use category, with certain uses having "special" parking requirements that apply across districts.

**Parking standards are not an exact science.** Many of Lincoln's current standards are based on decades-old assumptions and broad national trends - "exact" numbers with an uncertain foundation.

Over time this has resulted in **thousands of parking stalls that were never needed** but built to satisfy zoning requirements.

### Excess Parking has Resulted in...

- Increased development costs that are passed on to tenants.
- Long-term urban sprawl as development footprints were increased to accommodate expansive parking lots, leaving us with: wider distances for streets and utilities that lead to higher construction and maintenance costs, longer trips, and higher carbon emissions.
- Commercial districts that are unfriendly to pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Heat islands created by large concrete environments.

**For more information visit**

**[lincoln.ne.gov](http://lincoln.ne.gov) search: parking reform**

### What are Lincoln's Goals with these Commercial Parking Updates?

- **Promote economic development** by allowing enhanced flexibility and cost savings for businesses when developing a site.
- **Allow for more market driven parking decisions.** Parking for automobiles in commercial and industrial districts would be primarily determined by market needs.
- **Encourage redevelopment** of vacant or underutilized sites, including underutilized parking lots. This would contribute to the PlanForward 2050 goal of 12,000 infill units by 2050.
- **Remove barriers to compact development.** Benefits include: efficient provision of infrastructure, shorter automobile trips, increased viability for alternate modes of travel, and reduced carbon emissions.

### What are the Expected Results?

Most residents in Lincoln today use automobiles. Even without specific parking requirements, **most businesses will continue to provide on-site parking for customers and employees.** In the near-term some businesses may build less parking than previously required. Some sites within the city with limited parking availability may be redeveloped.

The biggest impact of parking reform will be in the long-term, when multiple decades of smaller parking lots will result in a **more-efficient growth pattern and vibrant urban environment.**