

Pedestrian Advisory Council (PAC) Recommendation:

Eliminating Parking Minimums and Expanding Parking Benefit Districts in Austin

WHEREAS, the purpose of the PAC is to advise the City of Austin on pedestrian planning, policy, design, funding, education, and enforcement efforts regarding the creation, maintenance and operation of pedestrian facilities;

WHEREAS, cities around the country are experiencing an infrastructure crisis. Rights of way, pipes and electrical grids are depreciating faster than cities can afford to repair them and the City of Austin is not immune to this problem;

WHEREAS, City of Austin zoning rules currently require that developments outside of the Central Business District (CBD) provide enough car parking (usually on-site) to accommodate expected “peak demand” for parking, resulting in a large-scale, over-consumption of land that further spreads out buildings, exponentially increases infrastructure requirements, and makes walking from place-to-place impractical and often impossible;

WHEREAS, by complying with current parking minimums, the lengths of associated roads, pipes, powerlines and other critical infrastructure increases dramatically. In addition to reducing walkability, the long-term maintenance liabilities required for this infrastructure are much more expensive for the taxpayers of Austin;

WHEREAS, the few studies that have been completed to establish the parking minimums used in Austin do not predict actual parking needs and are considered so unreliable by statisticians that their use is not recommended;

WHEREAS, the cost of construction can be 20 - 100% higher per project due to parking requirements;

WHEREAS, the higher costs of complying with minimum parking requirements flow through to all Austinites in the form of higher prices for goods, services, rents, etc. and thus, parking minimums reduce affordability for Austinites;

WHEREAS, many Austinites are inequitably impacted by these costs as 30 - 40% of renters in Austin do not own cars;

WHEREAS, the costs to the citizens of Austin of the requirement to massively overbuild parking far outweighs any potential spillover impacts from under-building parking;

WHEREAS, the commonly prescribed solution for mitigating spillover—variable pricing for all City-owned curb parking—can be an ideal source for the funding required for sidewalks, parks (i.e. active infrastructure) and other associated projects (e.g. burying overhead lines and street lighting improvements) within neighborhoods;

WHEREAS, sidewalks will continue to depreciate faster than we can afford to repair them until a dedicated funding source is established;

WHEREAS, the citizens of Austin deserve better pedestrian infrastructure that enables walking to be a safe and dignified transportation choice;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Pedestrian Advisory Council recommends that the City of Austin

1. Expand the City’s current elimination of parking minimums in the CBD to the rest of Austin,
2. Expand the City’s current Parking Benefit District structure to the rest of Austin to create a dedicated funding source within each neighborhood for sidewalks, parks and other associated infrastructure in the pedestrian right of way, and

3. Implement the following:

- a. Remove time limits for paid parking city wide
- b. Dynamically adjust the price of parking so that there is usually a space or more available on every block
- c. Install pay stations when demand for parking justifies raising the price for parking above \$0 per hour

Date of Approval:

Vote:

Attest:

DRAFT