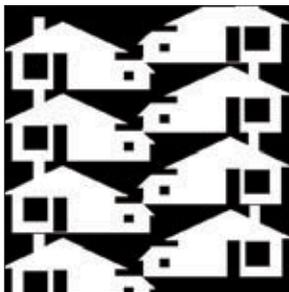
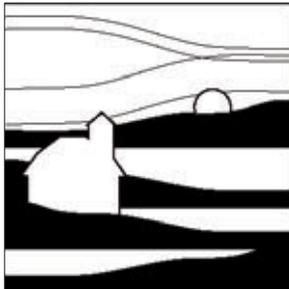


8. Shared Parking

Fact Sheet



This smart growth tool can be used in rural, suburban, or urban communities.

What is Shared Parking?

Shared parking is a tool through which adjacent property owners share their parking lots and reduce the number of parking spaces that each would provide on their individual properties. Shared parking is not a new concept. It has been used extensively in traditional neighborhood commercial nodes and downtown settings for decades. In these locations, there are higher-density office or apartment buildings, with shops and restaurants lining the sidewalks. People often park in one spot and then walk from one destination to another. The effect is that those various uses share the same parking spaces. Shared parking is being used more and more in conjunction with new development. If adjacent land uses have different peak hours of parking demand, then they can share some of the same parking spaces.

Why use Shared Parking?

Parking is one of the largest uses of land in urban and especially suburban areas. In a typical suburban shopping center, for example, parking occupies more land area than the building itself. Often, sites with large parking lots are located next door to other sites with equally large lots. If adjacent sites serve different purposes, each parking lot may lie empty for long periods of time. This suggests that an excessive amount of space is given over to parking, and that less parking would be needed if the lots were somehow connected, shared, and used more efficiently. Shared parking can reduce the amount of land needed for parking, creating opportunities for more compact development, more space for pedestrian circulation, or more open space and landscaping.

Two Approaches to Shared Parking

There are two main approaches to shared parking: (1) contractual agreements between adjacent uses; and (2) parking management districts. Whereas the first approach involves only two adjacent users, the second approach encompasses an entire district with multiple property owners. Under a contractual agreement, the circumstances under which parking spaces would be shared would be explicitly defined in the contract. In a parking district, all uses within the district would have access to all the parking spaces at any given time.

Approach 1: CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN TWO ADJACENT USES

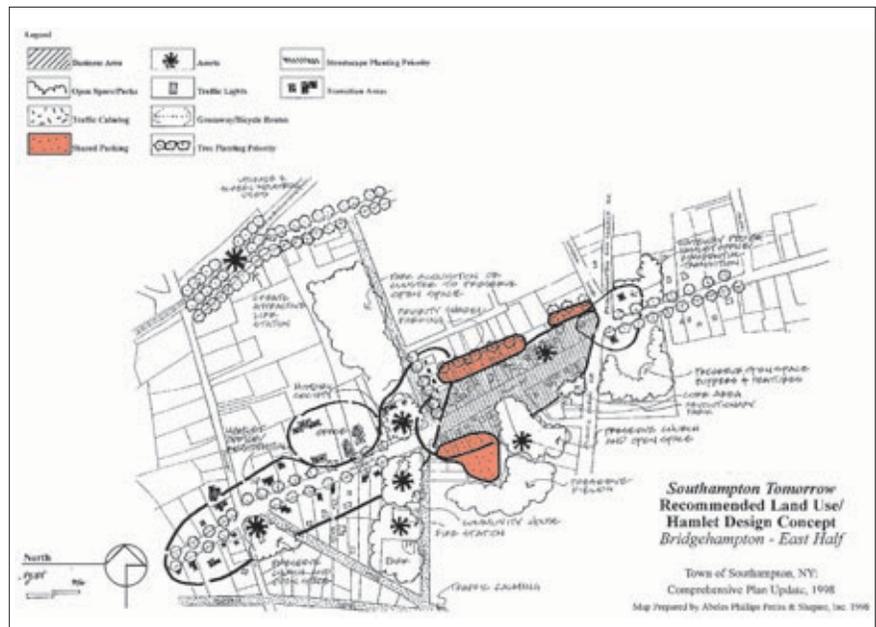
Toolbox

-  **Special Permit Approval.** For two uses in a commercial area, shared parking should be encouraged as part of the review process. The provisions should state that shared parking between two adjacent land uses (whether on the same site or on adjacent sites) would be preferred, especially if they have different peak times (e.g., a movie theater and a supermarket) or, conversely, if they share the same patrons (e.g., a dry cleaner and a deli)
-  **Demonstrated Difference in Peak Parking Demand.** As part of the approval process, the developer would have to demonstrate that the two land uses have differing peak-hours (or days, or seasons) of parking demand, or that the total parking demand at any one time would be adequately served by the total number of parking spaces.
-  **Contractual Agreement Required.** A development agreement between sharing property owners is necessary in order to ensure the proper functioning of the shared parking arrangement. The adopting ordinance needs to require such an agreement between developers as a condition of engaging in shared parking, and model language for an agreement should be adopted.

This plan for the Bridgehampton hamlet center in Southampton, Long Island calls for a shared parking area that would serve the hamlet businesses. (Source: APPS, Inc.)

Keys to Success

-  **Target auto-oriented mixed-use commercial uses.** Shared parking works best in situations where there are somewhat dissimilar land uses, with different peak hours of use — i.e., a hotel and an office, or a home supply store and a movie theater. A traditional mix of uses (in the form of a "Main Street" environment) is not necessary, but the use mix must be varied enough to generate different peak times of demand. But



bear in mind that shared parking can also work for complementary uses where the patrons go from store to store (e.g., an antique center). The essential ingredient in both cases is that patrons park once.



Keep the "sum" clause. Most zoning ordinances have minimum parking requirements for each individual use, and on multi-use sites, most zoning ordinances require that the total parking requirement be equal to the sum of the requirement for each individual use. This requirement should not be removed, because it ensures an adequate amount of parking where there are two similar uses on the same site, especially where they do not share the same customers. For example, a site with a grocery store and a home supply store would tend to have the same peak-hours of customer attraction. The "sum" clause would ensure that adequate parking is available during weekends and evenings.



Provide zoning incentives in auto-oriented business centers. In many commercial centers and office parks, businesses depend on large parking lots for business and have a natural business incentive to provide as much parking as possible. Zoning incentives for shared parking can encourage a reduction in the size of the parking lots. Incentives that could be provided for shared parking include an increase in floor area ratio (FAR) and increased flexibility in certain bulk regulations, such as building coverage or height. Incentives for shared parking are generally not necessary in traditional neighborhood centers or downtown areas, because the scarcity of land in those locations provides an inherent economic incentive for pursuing shared parking.



Make shared lots walkable. Parking spaces that are shared should be located within a reasonable walking distance of all the destinations they are intended to serve. Generally, the preferred parking-space-to-front-door distance that a person is willing to walk for shopping or work is 400 to 800 feet, and the maximum is generally 1,200 feet. In addition, walkways, crosswalks, decorative paving, stop signs for cars, and landscaping are needed to allow ease of walking through the parking areas, such that the shared parking area is well-integrated with each of the sites that it serves.



Conduct a demonstration project. Demonstration projects can help develop interest in shared parking. A local government can spearhead the task of developing a shared parking arrangement between two adjacent uses, taking on the time and cost of analyzing the parking demand, developing a potential sharing scheme, and preparing and negotiating the shared parking agreement. This initiative would create a model that could be used by other developers on independent shared parking arrangements.

Approach 2: PARKING MANAGEMENT DISTRICTS

Toolbox



Collection of Fees. In a parking management district, each property is levied a fee, based on the assessed value of the property, which is used to support the functions of the district. The district is responsible for parking-related maintenance, security, taxes, enforcement, utilities, signage, and so on. Fee collection can be facilitated by the local government, by being included as a separate line item on property tax bills.



Governance by Oversight Committee. A parking district is typically governed by an oversight committee elected by the members of the district. The oversight committee would be responsible for overseeing the district and responding to the concerns of members.

Keys to Success



Target compact, mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented commercial nodes where parking is in short supply. Parking districts are particularly well-suited to locations with multiple small property owners in a compact, pedestrian-oriented setting. Such an environment is conducive to walking, and therefore, most customers will prefer to park once and then circulate on foot. The parking district allows many businesses to share the same pool of parking, a desirable outcome in locations where parking is in short support.



Redesign the parking lots. As compared to shared parking agreements between two adjacent sites, the creation of a parking management district opens up the opportunity of comprehensively redesigning the parking lots. Rather than having a



Parking is often provided to excess. These shopping centers along Route 58 in Riverhead, Long Island have provided acres of parking that are often underutilized. This image is ubiquitous in America. (Source: APPS, Inc.)

series of smaller-sized parking lots divided by arbitrary lot lines with landscaped buffers, lots can be consolidated and circulation systematized, with more creative and effective landscaping, pedestrian circulation, and lighting.



Charge for parking. Users are generally accustomed to paying for parking in a neighborhood or downtown environment. Because parking is limited, paid parking will encourage some people to walk, carpool, or use transit, rather than driving. Also, paid parking encourages greater turnover of parking spaces, which is critical for business in an environment where parking is in short supply.



Establish rules for new development. Even though all spaces in a parking district are shared, property owners often maintain title over the portions of their properties that lie within the common parking field. If the membership in the district exempts the owner from making available a minimum number of spaces on his or her property, the owner could potentially remove the parking spaces on the property to make way for an addition. Such an action would remove spaces from the district while creating additional parking demand through the increase in building space. When the parking district is established, rules should be set up to determine whether such an action would be permissible and what the property owner's obligation would be to the district. For example, the district bylaws could stipulate that a property owner could undertake an expansion only if he or she provided additional spaces elsewhere. Similarly, rules would have to be established in the case of a district expansion or contraction.



Take on-street parking into account. In a compact environment, where parking spaces are in short supply, on-street parking is a critical resource. Those on-street spaces should be managed by the parking district as well. They should be metered, as the turnover of on-street spaces is particularly important for business, and they should be redesigned in conjunction with the redesign of the off-street lots.

For More Information

1. Portland Metro. Shared Parking Handbook, 1997. <www.metro-region.org/metro/growth/main/sharedpark.pdf>.
2. Victoria Transport Policy Institute, Online Transportation

Demand Management Encyclopedia, 2001.

<www.vtpi.org/tdm>.

3. Urban Land Institute, Washington, DC. Phone: (202) 624-7000, <www.uli.org>.

See also, Detailed Technical Analysis on Shared Parking, available through CRCOG.

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