

November 2, 2016

Dear Mr. Mayor and Portland City Commissioners,

Portlanders for Parking Reform supports abundant, diverse, and affordable housing options in every neighborhood. We encourage City Council to support the Residential Infill Project's recommended concepts and policies that will create more "missing middle" housing (e.g. duplexes, triplexes, cottages, multiple ADUs) in every neighborhood in the city.

Currently, Portland housing options are limited and becoming increasingly unaffordable. Many people are forced to move further away from the inner neighborhoods that are accessible by foot, bike, and transit, and, as a result, they become more car-dependent. If we want to meet our 2035 transportation and climate goals and build an active, healthy, and inclusive community, we must provide diverse housing options in every neighborhood to allow more people have access to transportation choices and economic opportunities.

A [recent study](#) from the National Association of Home Builders shows that more 3-car garages have been built than 1-bedroom apartments in the U.S. since 1992. The [White House](#) recently reported that "parking requirements generally impose an undue burden on housing development". Considering these findings, the Residential Infill Project is an opportunity for City Council to decide whether Portland will prioritize housing for people over shelter for cars.

In general, Portlanders for Parking Reform believes the Project Concept Report is heading in the right direction. Specifically, we support the following recommended concepts:

- **Recommendation 4: Allow more housing types in select areas.** Housing diversity allows people of different income and backgrounds to have access to more housing and transportation choices that match their needs. Missing middle housing also fosters walkable neighborhoods and pedestrian-oriented commercial districts accessible to people of all ages and abilities.
- **Recommendation 7: Provide added flexibility for retaining existing houses.** Exempting the conversion of an existing house into multiple units from required parking will encourage preserving historic homes and reduce barriers to housing infill.
- **Recommendation 10: Revise parking rules for houses on narrow lots citywide.** The current parking requirements for houses on narrow lots reduce ground level living space and street facing windows on ground floors. Driveway curb cuts remove curb parking spaces and increase potential hazards for people walking on sidewalks. Eliminating parking requirements and prohibiting front-loaded garages on narrow lots will improve design, allow more living space and sidewalk landscaping, and preserve on-street parking spaces.



Portlanders of Parking Reform believes the Recommended Concept Report can do better in the following areas:

- **Exempt parking requirements as an incentive for affordable housing units.** Low-income people are more likely to use transit and not own a car. Infill development that provides affordable housing should be exempt from parking requirements. Maximizing living space and providing flexibility in siting and design will benefit low-income households more than requiring parking spaces.
- **Offer parking exemption for tree preservation.** Parking requirements often force tree removal. The result is the degradation of livability caused by more impermeable pavement and fewer trees in the neighborhood.
- **Housing choice for all.** The Housing Choice options (Recommendation 4) should be allowed in all neighborhoods, not only in the Housing Opportunity Overlay Zone. Neither East Portland nor other areas should be denied the benefits of walkable neighborhoods and housing choices.
- **Eliminate parking requirements for all future infill and manage parking with pricing.** Bundling parking and housing increases the costs of development and forces people who don't own cars to pay higher housing costs for parking they don't use. The City is already developing better parking management tools, such as residential permits and transportation demand management incentives, to more effectively manage residential parking demand. In the long-term, parking requirements should be eliminated as more parking management tools become available.

Sincerely,

Tony Jordan  
President - Portlanders for Parking Reform