

# Salem's Right-Sizing Parking for Multifamily Homes

North Shore Task Force - November 20, 2025

## Project team:

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# Project Overview: Elimination of parking minimums for multifamily housing



Origins in Salem's 2022 Housing Roadmap.



Desired outcomes focused on housing production and affordability, alongside several other City planning goals.

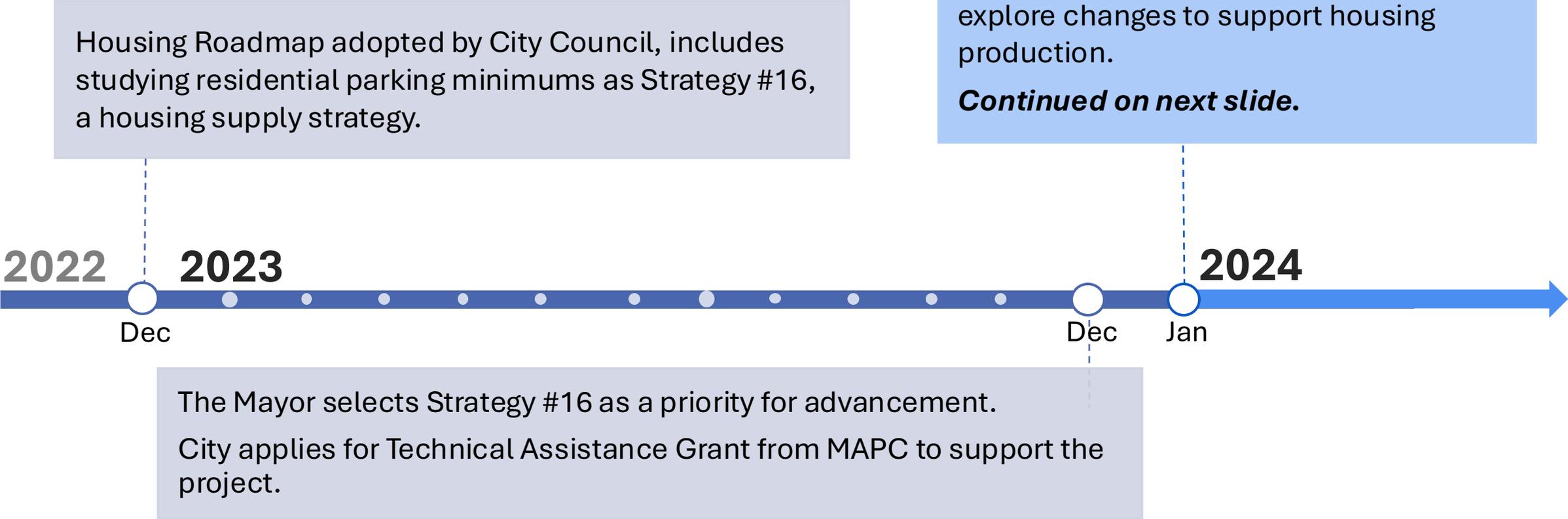


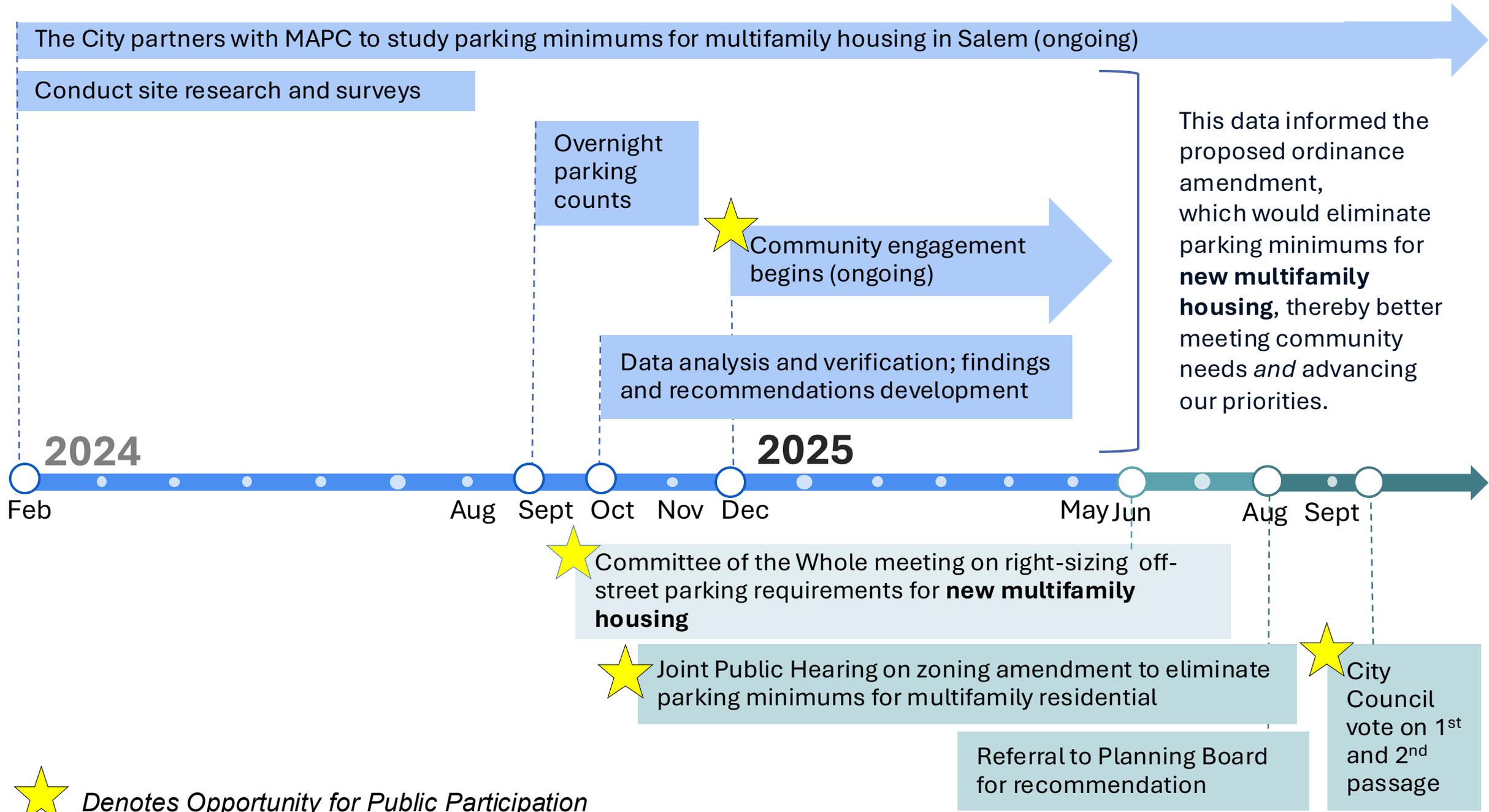
Aided by the City's current housing and parking context (recent plans, data, market knowledge).



Capitalized on existing support and opportunity.

# Project Timeline





 Denotes Opportunity for Public Participation

## September 29, 2025

Mayor signs ordinance eliminating parking minimums for new multifamily housing citywide, following a final 10-1 vote at City Council and unanimous support from the Planning Board.



### Looking forward:

Salem is spinning up our plan to track the parking ratios at future multifamily development. May also undertake data collection concerning parking needs of single-family and duplexes, for which parking minimums remain in place.

The City of Salem is the first community to directly apply MAPC Perfect Fit Parking methodology to inform their zoning changes, following over a year of technical assistance.



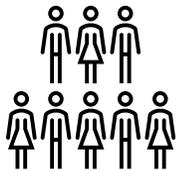
<https://www.mapc.org/news/parking-mandates-new-multifamily-housing-salem/>

<https://www.bostonglobe.com/2025/09/29/business/salem-parking-spaces/>

# Salem's Parking and Housing Context

- In Salem, for every 1 new unit of multifamily housing, a minimum of 1.5 parking spaces are required, with limited exceptions.
  - Existing minimum adopted in 1969, increased from 1 parking space to 1.5 spaces, meaning we've held the same requirement for over fifty years.
- Per the [MassINC report](#), Salem needs **2,229 new housing units in the next ten years.**
- Studying residential parking minimums is **Strategy #16** in the City's [Housing Road Map](#), as a method of unlocking additional housing supply, including affordable housing.

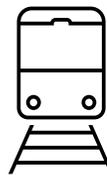
## Salem's Parking Context



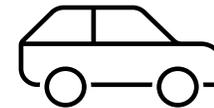
**Population:** ~45,000 people  
(Census 2020).



**Parking requirements:**  
Zoning Ordinance requires 1.5 parking spaces per housing unit with limited exceptions.



**Commute patterns:**  
68% commute by car (60.9% drive alone, 7.1% carpool), 6.8% commute by public transit, 6% by walking, and 0.5% by bike.  
(ACS 2018-22).



**Car Ownership:**  
Of occupied housing units in Salem, 60% have 1 or fewer cars.  
(ACS 2019-23).



**Cost of Building Parking:**  
\$35K + of podium parking & \$10K - \$15K per space of surface parking.  
(2022 Developer Interviews)

# Multifamily Housing Projects that Received Parking Relief from Variances or Special Permits Granted by the ZBA (2015-2025)

Property	Variance/Permit Received	Year Parking Ratio Approved	Parking Ratio (# of parking spaces/# of units)
1-2 Leefort Terrace	Comprehensive Permit (# of spaces)	2022	0.81
Lighthouses (47 Leavitt St and 38 Palmer St)	Comprehensive Permit (# of spaces)	2017	0.91
197 Lafayette St	Variance (# of spaces)	2024	1.00
301 Essex St	Variance (# of spaces)	2023	1.00
75 North St	Variance (# of spaces)	2023	1.00
30 Federal St	Variance (# of spaces)	2021	1.00
9 Boston St	Variance (# of spaces)	2019	1.00
84 Congress St	Variance (# of spaces)	2018	1.25
11 ½ Hardy St	Variance, Special Permit (# of spaces)	2023	1.00
61 Mason St	Variance, Special Permit (# of spaces)	2022	1.40
11 West Ave	Variance, Special Permit (# of spaces)	2019	1.00
7 Howard St	Variance, Special Permit (# of spaces)	2015	1.00

# Multifamily Housing Projects that Received Parking Relief through the Planning Board via PUD and Municipal and Religious Reuse Special Permit (2015-2025)

Property	Special Permit Received	Year Parking Ratio Approved	Parking Ratio (# of parking spaces/# of units)
Residences on Canal St (266 Canal St)	PUD	2025	1.18
Courthouses (32-24 Federal St)	PUD	2025	1.27 (including offsite parking spaces)
Crescent Lot (252 Bridge St)	PUD	2024	1.05 (including offsite parking spaces)
El Centro (73 Lafayette St)	PUD	2024	0.38
38 Norman St	PUD	2022	1.25
132 Canal St	PUD	2022	1.16
Former St Joeseph's Site (129 Lafayette St)	PUD	2020	1.38
Former St James School (160 Federal St)	MRR	2020	1.27
Former Immaculate Conception School (13 Hawthorne Blvd)	MRR	2020	1.25 (including offsite parking spaces)
Hampton Inn (217 Washington, 11 Dodge)	PUD	2018	1.11 (residential ratio only, excludes additional parking provided for commercial and hotel use)
Brix (65 Washington St)	PUD	2018	1.01

# Why getting parking right matters

- Parking minimums increase the cost of housing – more required parking means fewer and more expensive housing units.
- Lower-income and rental households have fewer cars and may pay for parking that they do not need or want.
- Parking minimums dictate design, prioritizing limited land for parking spaces that may sit empty over housing and other uses.
- Parking minimums encourage car-dependency, contributing to driving, congestion, and traffic.
- Parking, particularly surface parking, has negative environmental impacts, including contributing to urban heat effects and polluting stormwater runoff.



*Image of overnight parking counts, September 2024, showing vacancy at Loring Towers.*

# Community Engagement

- ★ **December 17, 2024** Community Open House #1 at City Hall Annex

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- ★ **February 12, 2025** Community Open House #2 at Saltonstall Middle School

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- ★ **March 31, 2025** Presentation at Point Neighborhood Association

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- Spring 2025** Analysis of community engagement data

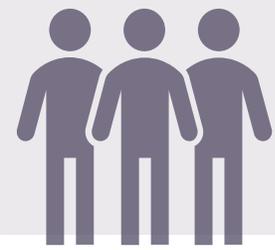
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- ★ **June 2025** Committee of the Whole Meeting

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- ★ **August 2025 and beyond** Public hearings during City Council zoning amendment process

Materials were made available in English and Spanish, and all community meetings included a Spanish-language interpreter. Continual project updates were made available on [www.ImagineSalem.com](http://www.ImagineSalem.com).



# Who We Heard From:

**60+ total residents engaged in this effort, 45+ residents attended our Open Houses.**

**Age:** 22% (age 18-34), 61% (35-64), 17% (65+)

**Gender:** 40% (male), 56% (female), 5% (nonbinary)

**Ethnicity:** 16% (Hispanic), 84% (non-Hispanic)

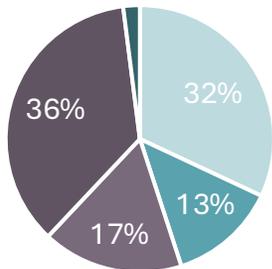
**Race:** 86% (white alone), 5% (Black/African-American), 9% (two+ races)

**Time in Salem:** 7% (<1 year), 26% (1-5 yrs), 24% (6-10 yrs), 43% (10+ yrs)

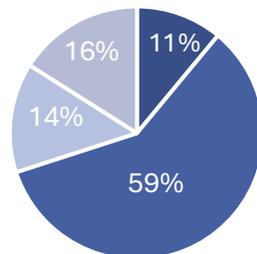
**Housing status:** 66% (homeowner), 30% (renter), 4% (other)

**Parent or caretaker:** 24% (yes), 76% (no)

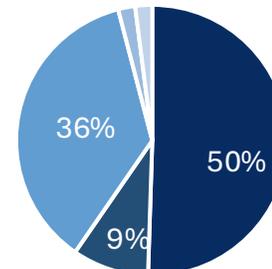
**Where do you park?** 38% (street), 44% (dedicated space at home), 5% (parking pass at another location), 14% (don't have a car/don't park)



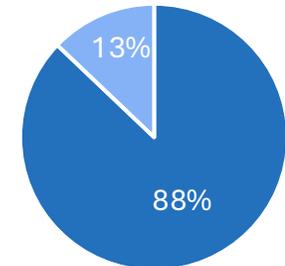
53% reported living in multifamily housing with 3 or more units



70% reported having one or no cars



Over half reported walking, biking, or scooter as their primary travel mode within the City



100% reported that it took fewer than 5 minutes to move between their parking and home



# What We Heard:

- Concerns about parking for home healthcare workers and visitors.
- Concerns about street parking and possible spillover effect.
- Support for maximizing housing affordability, open space, walkability, infill development, and/or small businesses.
- Support for reducing car dependence and traffic congestion.
- Desire to see improvements to bikeability, walkability, and transit options.
- Parking reform as a form of historic preservation because it prioritizes pedestrian spaces.



# What We Heard:

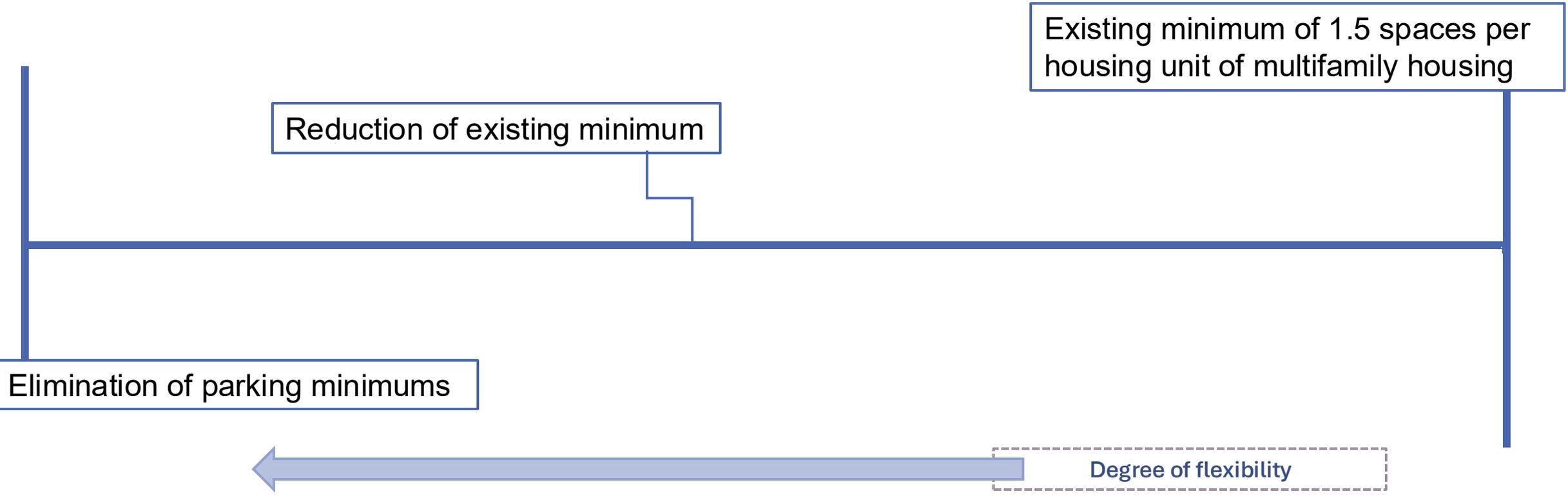
Of the 60+ residents who offered input, there was significant support expressed for parking reform in Salem:

*"As a historian, I think Salem should plan to highlight its pedestrian heritage, parking reform is a good start."*

*"Our building was built in 1914 and has no dedicated parking. I moved there and eventually bought my unit because it was more affordable than other properties I considered. I do not have a car and actually sold my car about 5 years after moving to Salem because I didn't use it and street/snow parking is a hassle."*

# Policy options offered to City Council

**Findings:** Salem data suggests multifamily stock, in aggregate, is being built under 1.5 spaces/housing unit currently required by the ordinance and still vacancy is observed. Model indicates supply positively correlated with demand. To support housing growth in Salem while limiting growth in parking and traffic, **we should reform our parking minimums** for multifamily housing to enable more car-lite and car-free housing development.



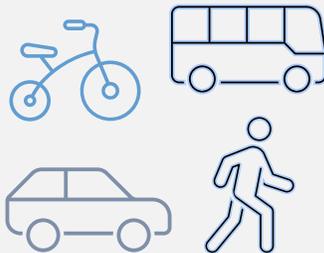
# Overview of Adopted Zoning Amendment



Eliminate parking minimums for all *new* multifamily housing (3 units and above).



Create a uniform affordability expectation in Inclusionary Housing ordinance of 10% of units affordable at 60% AMI for eligible projects.



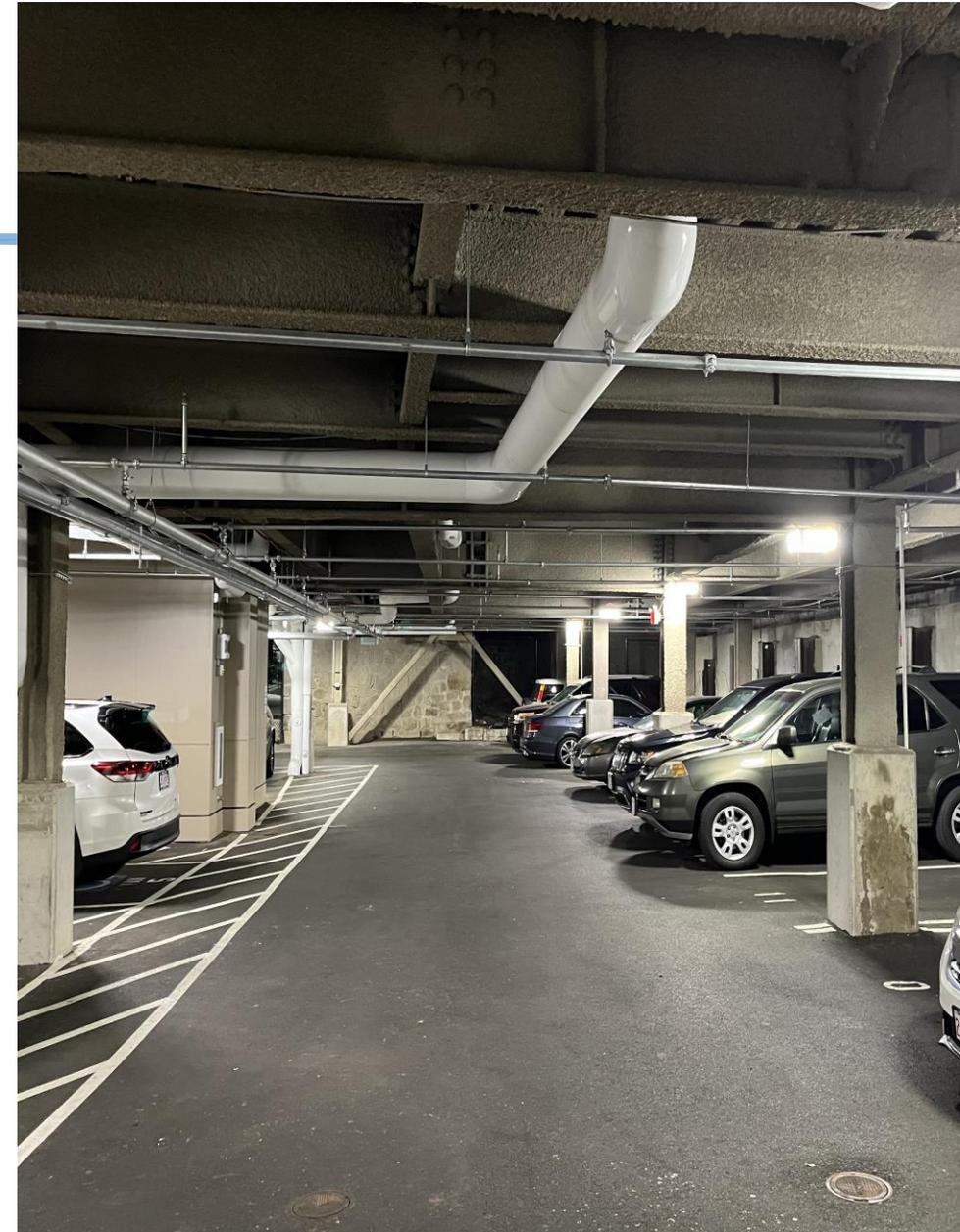
Require multifamily projects receiving Site Plan Review to identify how they will control transportation needs via submittal of Transportation Demand Management plans.

# Window of Opportunity

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We were able to advance this amendment because of a confluence of the following factors:

- State support signaled via [Unlocking Housing Production Commission](#)
- Large and growing body of [national parking reform efforts](#) (connected with peer communities)
- Local need and alignment with community goals (Housing Roadmap)
- Local support
  - Working Group
  - Mayor
  - Local pro-housing groups
- MAPC's Perfect Fit and [Technical Assistance Program](#)
  - Built upon the existing methodology & body of work
  - Salem data demonstrated mismatch between existing minimum and built supply; mismatch between existing minimum and demand





# MAPC'S Perfect Fit

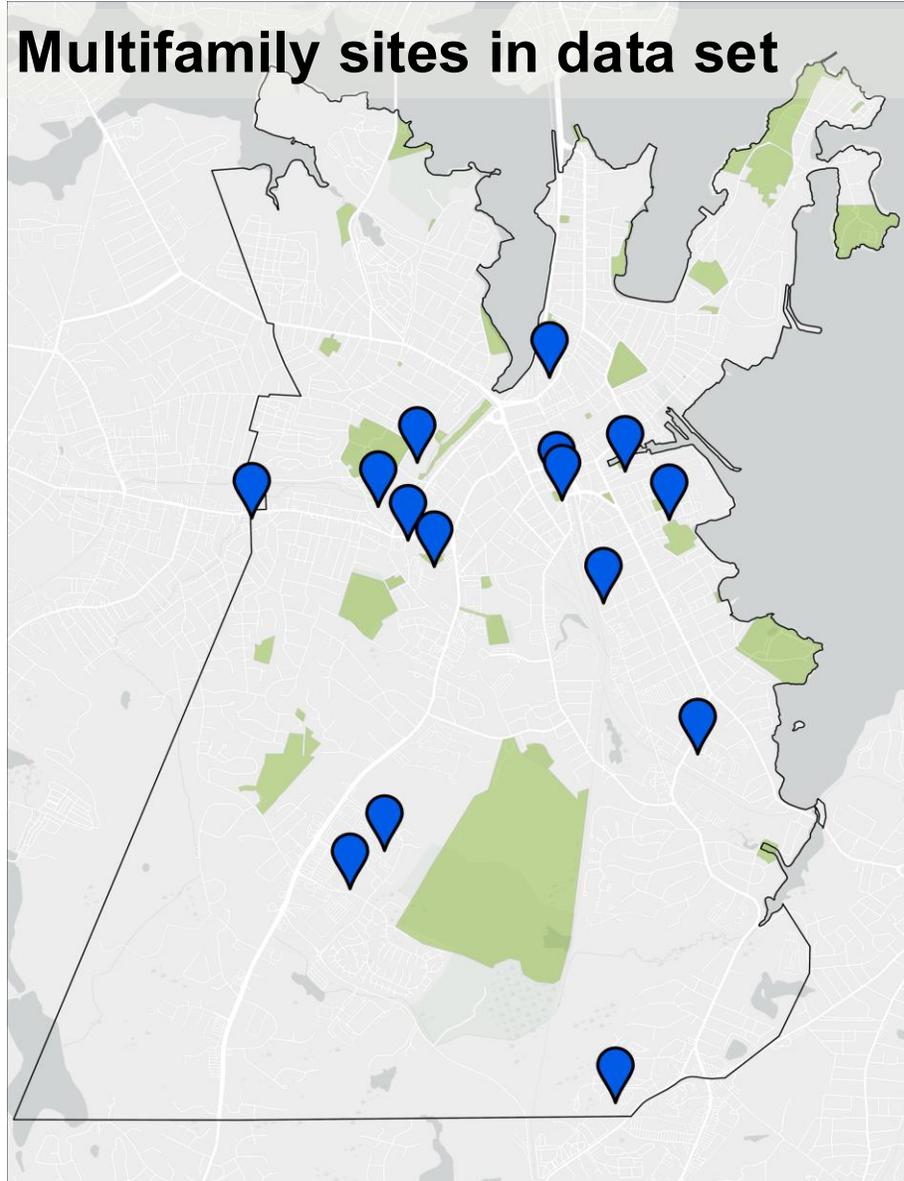


- **Goal:** Understand regional parking supply, demand, and utilization at multifamily housing sites and identify what factors most strongly influence parking demand.
- **Findings:** Top factor that influences parking demand is parking supply and **parking is overbuilt and underutilized** in the Greater Boston region.

Phase	Region	Number of Sites	Parking Supply (total spaces / total units)	Parking Demand (occupied spaces / occupied units)	Parking Utilization (occupied spaces / total spaces)
Phase 1 & 2 (2015-2019)	Boston Inner Core	189	1.00 spaces/unit	0.73 spaces/unit	70%
Phase 3 (2019-2020)	North Shore	20	1.25 spaces/unit	0.95 spaces/unit	76%
Phase 4 (2022-2023)	WestMetro HOME Consortium	37	1.45 spaces/unit	0.92 spaces/unit	62%

# Salem Project Methodology

Multifamily sites in data set



This project replicates MAPC's Perfect Fit methodology.

- **Goal:** Determine if our current parking requirements adequately meet community needs, advance our shared priorities, and represent our vision for Salem's future.
- Multifamily properties selected included a variety of locations, size, tenure type (ownership vs. rental), and affordability.
- Key milestones:
  - Outreach included a survey detailing parking and housing provided onsite completed by owners and operators.
  - Overnight parking counts and informational surveys were conducted at selected sites in Sept, Nov, and Dec 2024.
  - Data verification in May 2025.

93 Canal Street	72 Flint Street
7 High Street	10-16 Rainbow Terrace
20 Endicott St	45 Traders Way
34 Peabody St	1000 Loring Ave
47 Leavitt St	10-12 First St
179 Boston St and 43 Boston St	190 Bridge Street
28 Goodhue Street	12 Pope Street

# Salem Findings

- Findings are consistent with previous Perfect Fit research - **off-street parking is overbuilt and underutilized.**
- Findings vary based on types of housing (affordability, building size) - following slide shows breakdown by segments.

## In aggregate:

- Average parking supply (total spaces / total units): **1.18 parking spaces built per unit of housing.**
- Average parking utilization (occupied spaces / total spaces): **0.62**, meaning 62% of those spaces were observed to be occupied, ***with 38% of parking spaces sitting empty.***
- Average parking demand (occupied spaces / occupied units): **0.85 parking spaces per unit of housing** – this is the appetite for parking per household living in multifamily housing.

# FINDINGS

Segments	# of Sites	Parking Supply <small>(total spaces/total units), total physical spaces</small>	Maximum Potential Parking Demand <small>(occupied spaces/occupied units), unobserved spaces at full occupancy</small>	Maximum Potential Parking Utilization <small>(occupied spaces/total spaces), unobserved spaces at full occupancy</small>
<b>All Sites</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>1.18 spaces/unit</b>	<b>0.85 spaces/unit</b>	<b>62%</b>
By Affordability				
<b>Market Rate</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1.79</b>	<b>1.25</b>	<b>70%</b>
<b>Mixed Affordability</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1.10</b>	<b>0.90</b>	<b>80%</b>
<b>Deeply Subsidized</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0.53</b>	<b>0.30</b>	<b>31%</b>
By Development Size				
<b>Buildings 6 to 20 units</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0.81</b>	<b>0.47</b>	<b>39%</b>
<b>Buildings 21 to 45 units</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1.20</b>	<b>0.82</b>	<b>55%</b>
<b>Buildings 45 and up</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1.39</b>	<b>1.14</b>	<b>81%</b>

# Salem Statistical Model Findings

- MAPC ran a statistical model to determine factors that correlate with parking demand (occupied spaces / occupied units) for Salem sites.
- **Findings:**
  - Increase in parking supply by 1 space per unit is associated with an increase in the demand for parking by 0.68 vehicles per occupied housing unit.
  - Increase in the walking distance to the commuter rail of 1 mile is associated with an increase in the demand for parking by 0.14 vehicles per occupied housing unit.

These findings are consistent with previous Perfect Fit research, which found **increased parking supply to be the single biggest factor associated with increased parking demand.**

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# Snapshot of Shared Materials

Future slides show project materials used to share and gather information during community outreach and City Council zoning amendment process.

# What are parking minimums?

## Parking minimums:

The lowest number of **off-street** parking spaces required based on the type of activity on a site, codified in Zoning Ordinance or bylaw. Parking minimums often rely on estimates from the ITE Parking Generation Manual, which in the late 20th century, produced findings that relied heavily on data from suburban environments.

**Minimums are sometimes called parking mandates**, as they create a required baseline.

*“Eliminate mandatory minimum parking requirements – This elimination will not only give people more say over how they live their lives and use their property, but it’s also an important step in developing affordable housing.”*

- Bruce Belmore, President, Institute of Transportation Engineers



# What are parking minimums?

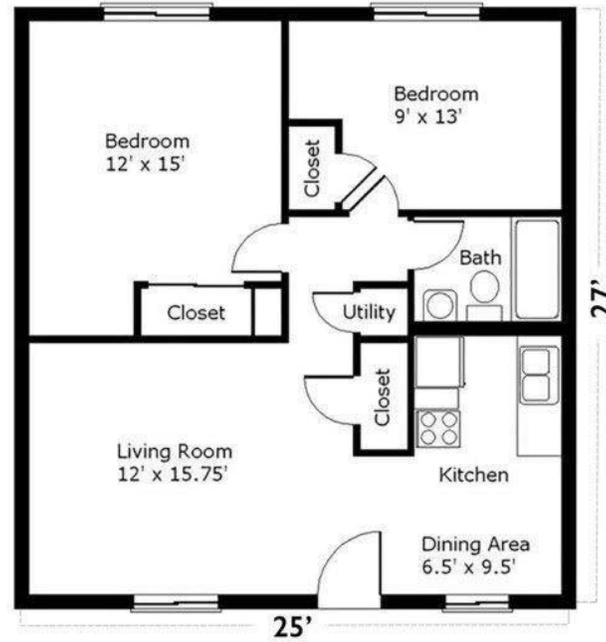
Table of Required Parking Spaces

Use	Required Parking:
Dwellings (RC, R1, R2, R3) rooming houses, tourist homes, home occupations	One and one-half (1½) spaces per dwelling unit, with a minimum of two (2) spaces, plus one (1) space for each home occupation
Historic buildings open to the public, museums, libraries, municipal buildings other than schools	One (1) space for each two (2) employees, plus such additional spaces for visitors as shall be deemed necessary by the board of appeals
Recreation buildings and areas operated by membership clubs	One (1) space for each two (2) employees, plus one (1) space for each four (4) members
Public and private golf courses, golf driving ranges, miniature golf courses	One (1) space for each two (2) employees, plus one (1) space for each hole
Hospitals and sanitarium, nursing and convalescent homes	One (1) space for each doctor accredited to practice therein, plus one (1) space for each two (2) employees, plus (1) space for each four (4) beds, excluding bassinets
Philanthropic and charitable institutions	One (1) space for each two (2) employees, plus such additional spaces for visitors as shall be deemed necessary by the board of appeals
Funeral homes	One (1) space for each four (4) seats, plus one (1) space for each two (2) employees, plus one (1) space for each company vehicle; there shall be a minimum of twelve spaces.
Retail business and service establishments, except eating and drinking places.	One (1) space for each one hundred fifty (150) square feet of gross floor area of the building, excluding storage area.

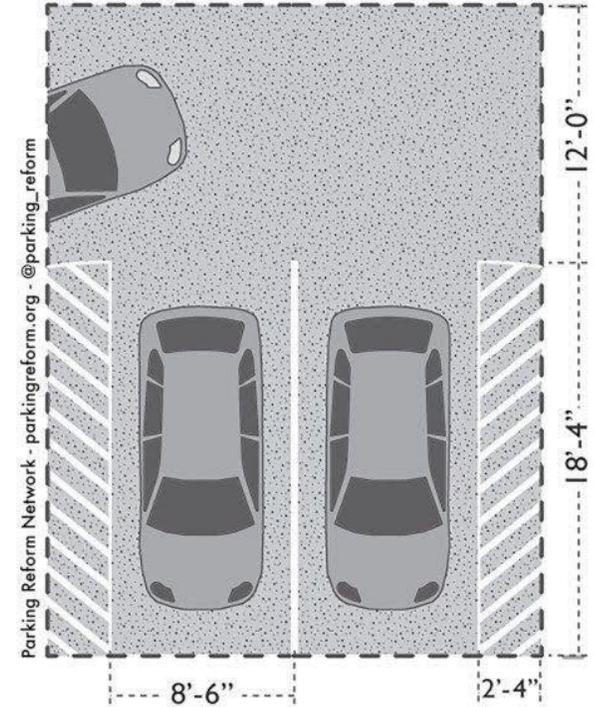
Above: Excerpt of Section 5.1, Off-Street Parking, City of Salem Zoning Ordinance

# Living Space Vs. Parking Space

The connection between housing and parking



size for 2 bedroom apartment: 675 FT<sup>2</sup>



size for 2 parking spaces: 650 FT<sup>2</sup>

Sources: Transportation Cost and Benefit Analysis II – Parking Costs Victoria Transport Policy Institute ([www.vtpi.org](http://www.vtpi.org))

Graphic Adapted from Graphing Parking (<https://graphingparking.com/2013/07/23/parking-across-cascadia/>)

Image compiled by the Parking Reform Network - <https://parkingreform.org/> - @Parking\_Reform



Source: Denver Urbanism

# Defining parking reform

"Parking Reform is the **use of policies and activism to discourage the building of too much parking supply** and encourage more equitable, efficient and sustainable management of existing parking supply."

- *Parking Reform Network*

Parking reform can look like:

- adjustment of existing parking minimums;
- elimination of parking minimums; and
- adoption of parking maximums, among other interventions.



Parking reform is **not** a ban on parking. Instead, it creates **flexibility** for *new* projects to provide parking that meets their needs.



Image depicts vacant parking space, November 2024, at Salem Dolce Condominium.

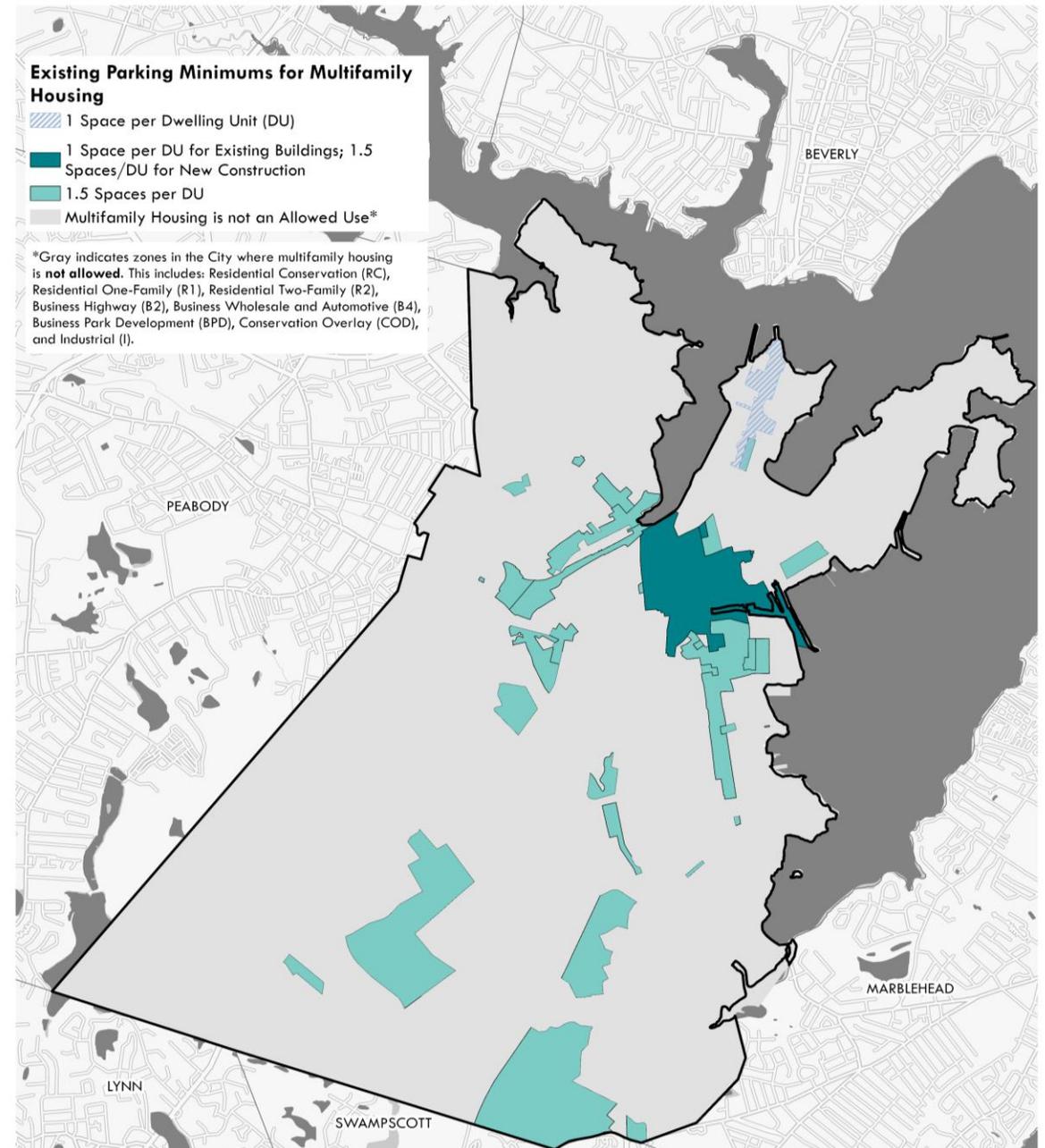
# Multifamily in Salem

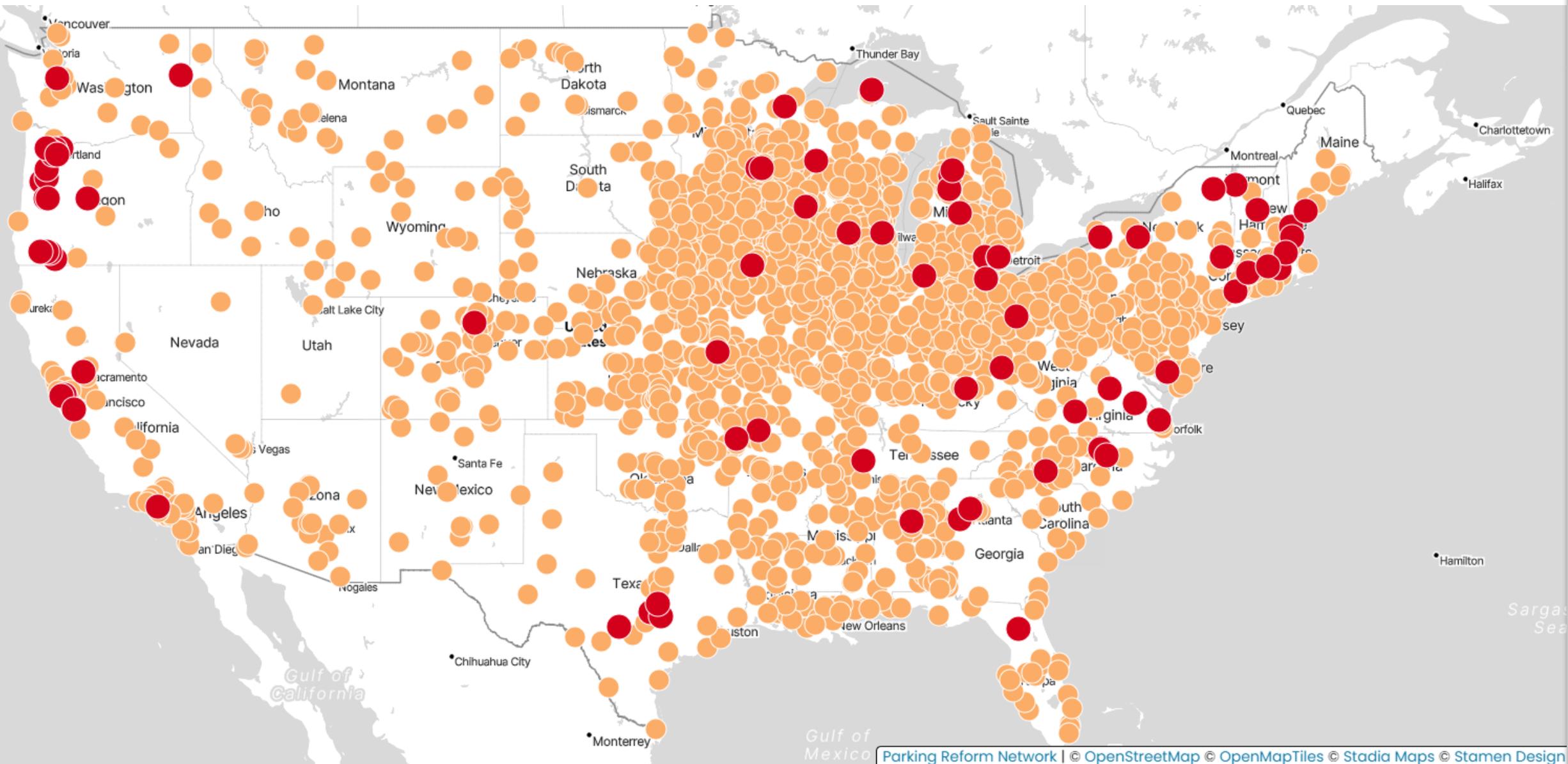
- There are **five zoning districts in City that allow multifamily housing**, and two of the five only by special permit.
- These five zoning districts comprise approximately 12% of Salem's land area, meaning **multifamily housing is only allowed in less than one fifth of the City**.
- Across those five districts, there are **three** different minimum parking requirements for the use.

*\*This does not include PUDs, which have other dimensional and use requirements.\**

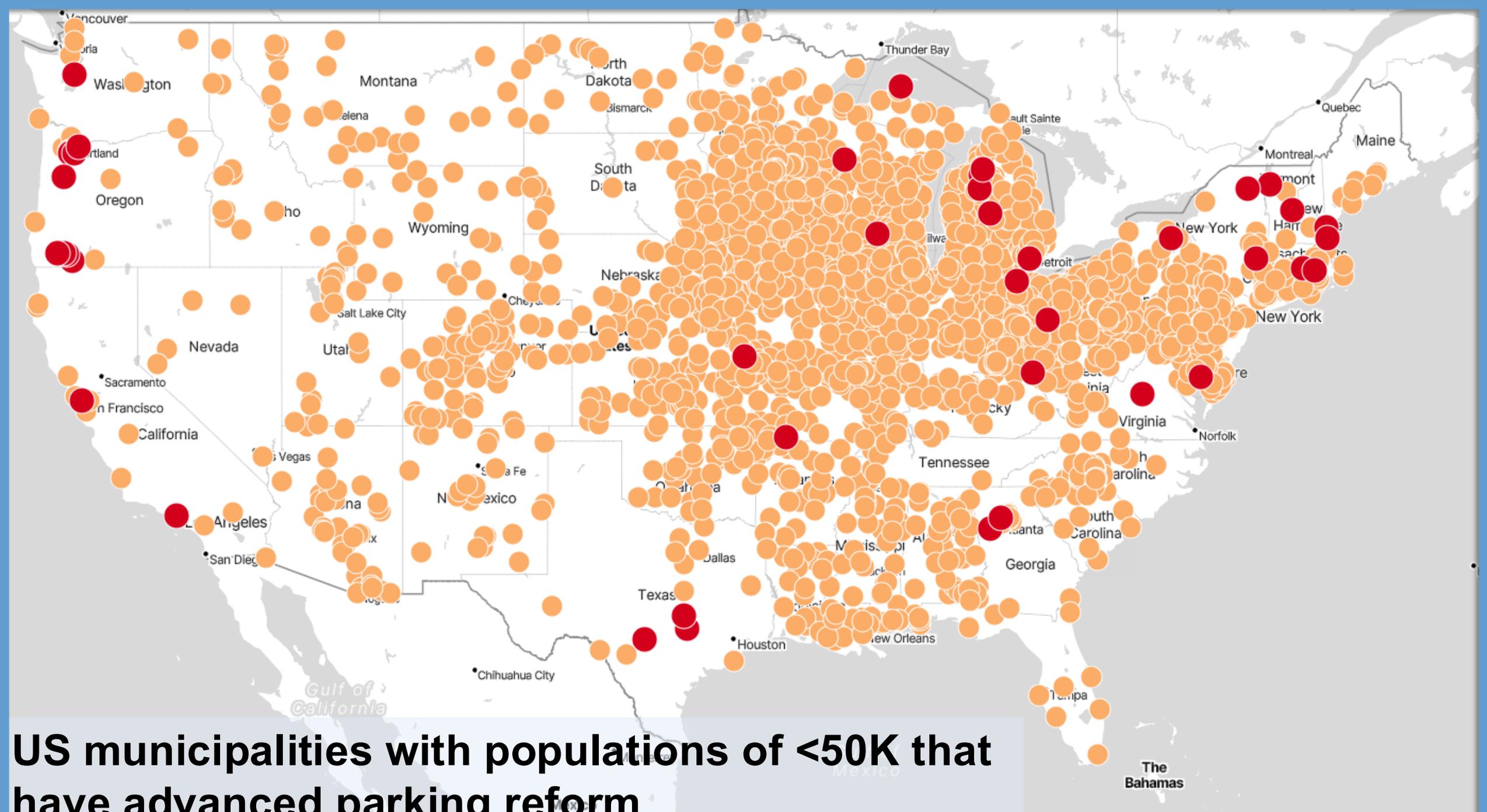
## Existing Parking Minimums in Multifamily Districts

City of Salem



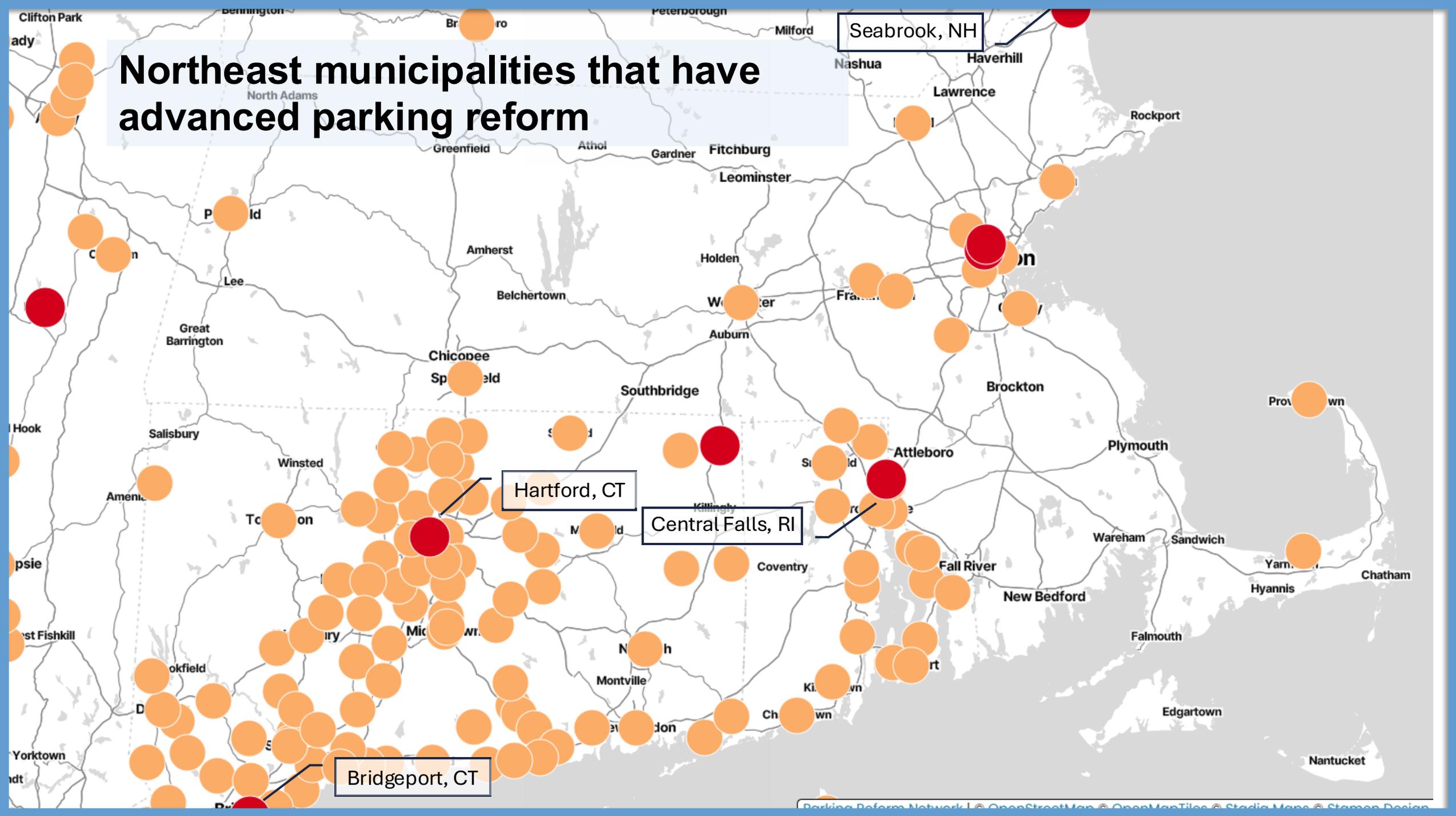


**All contiguous US jurisdictions that have advanced parking reform**



**US municipalities with populations of <50K that have advanced parking reform**

# Northeast municipalities that have advanced parking reform



# Since COW meeting in June 2025, the following jurisdictions have advanced parking reform:

Jurisdiction	Nature of parking reform
Bothell, WA <i>Population: 48,161</i>	Elimination of all parking minimums.
Denver, CO <i>Population: 713,734</i>	Elimination of all parking minimums.
Chicago, IL <i>Population: 2.6 million</i>	Eliminated parking minimums in transit-rich areas for residential uses; this includes areas within 1/4 mile of a frequent bus route, or 1/2 mile of a rail station.
North Carolina <i>Population: 10.4 million</i>	North Carolina State House unanimously approved House Bill 369, the Parking Lot Reform and Modernization Act. If approved by the Senate & signed by the Governor, bill will eliminate all mandatory parking minimums statewide.
Maine <i>Population: 1.3 million</i>	As part of a legislative package to support housing production, Maine disallowed parking minimums for all new development.

*"I will be another voice to supporting the removal of outdated, unscientific, kind of like throwing darts at a dart board parking minimums..."*

- Bothell Councilmember Jenne Alderks

# Parking reform as housing policy in Massachusetts

**Unlocking Housing Production Commission**, convened by Governor Healey and tasked with finding strategies to support housing production in the Commonwealth, recommended several zoning changes, including the below:

***The Commonwealth should eliminate parking minimums statewide for any residential use.***

**Metro Boston:** Several communities in the inner core have advanced parking reform in recent years, often through the elimination of parking minimums.

- Somerville
- Boston
- Cambridge
- Everett

**Beyond Boston:** Communities outside of Boston are also advancing forms of parking reform:

- Acton
- Lowell
- Framingham
- Salem

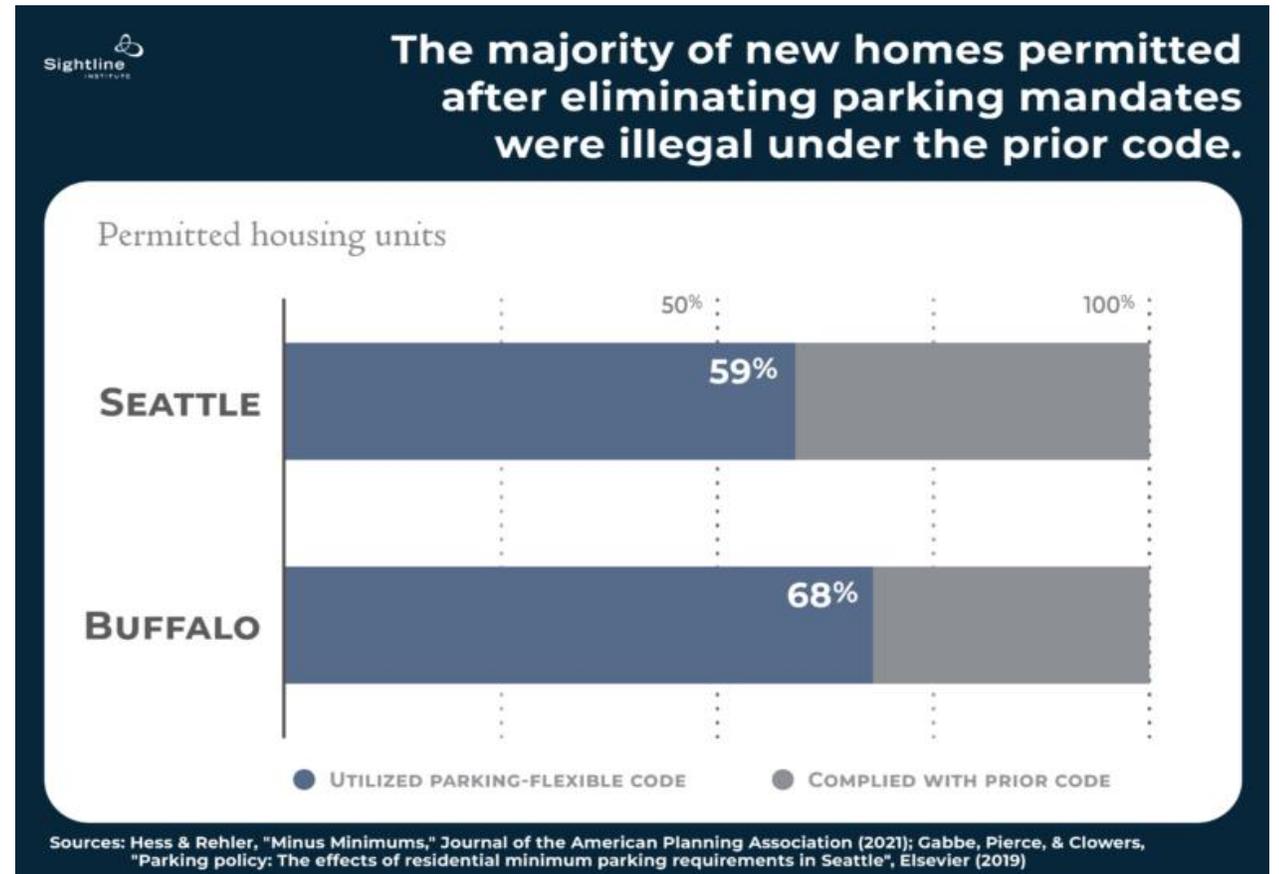
**Public sentiment:** In a recent poll conducted by Abundant Housing, 800+ Massachusetts voters were asked how they would feel about a law giving property owners flexibility to determine how much paved parking area is on their property – **71% of respondents said they would strongly or somewhat support such a law.**

# What are the benefits of parking reform?

More housing units, lower housing costs, growth with limited congestion and air pollution, improved walkability, favorable consideration for state and federal grants, and more.

Seattle, WA, from 2012-2017, reduced or eliminated parking requirements in its urban core and transit-oriented areas.

These reforms enabled **new housing units to be built**, increasing supply. Developers built **40% fewer parking spaces** than would have been required absent reform.



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[Minneapolis, MN](#), eliminated all off-street parking requirements in 2021 after incremental changes starting in 2009, leading to a 30% reduction in parking as of 2024. Typical rents of studio apartments **fell 17%** in buildings without parking.

*“No single legislative action did more to contribute to housing creation than the **elimination of parking minimums.**”*

- Minneapolis Director of City Planning



Source: [Solstice Northeast](#)

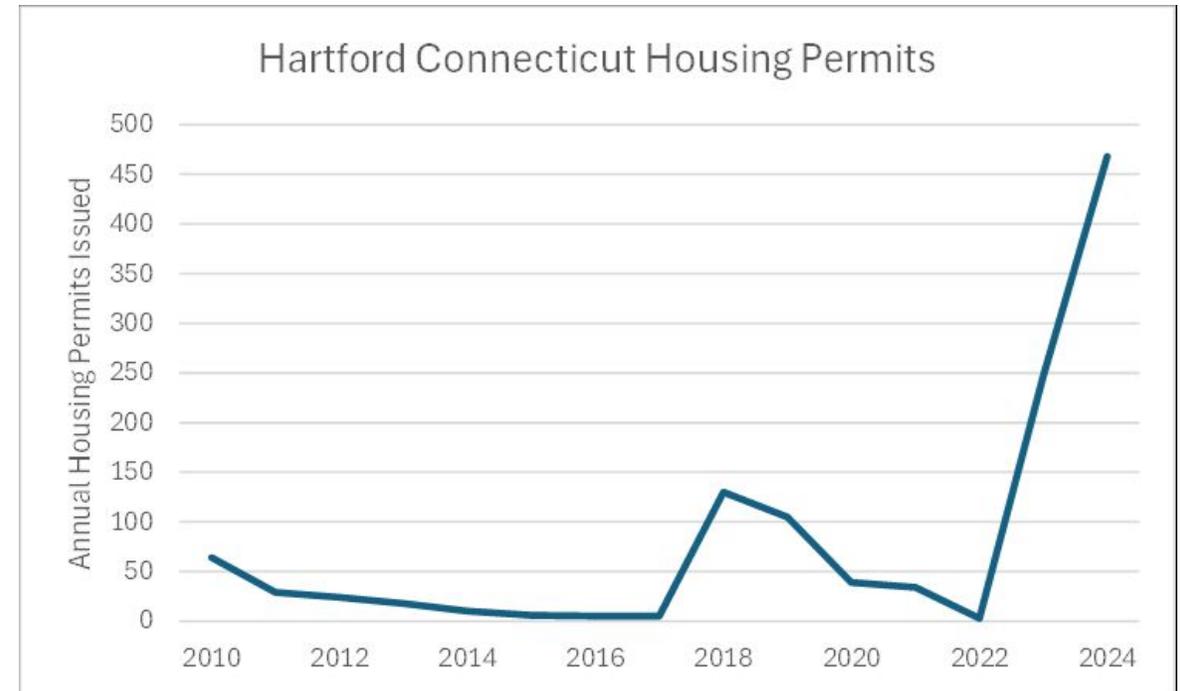
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Both [Bridgeport](#) and [Hartford, CT](#), eliminated parking minimums for all uses. In 2024, 3 years post-elimination, **Bridgeport permitted more housing units than the previous 8 years combined.**

## Bridgeport, CT – Post-parking reform

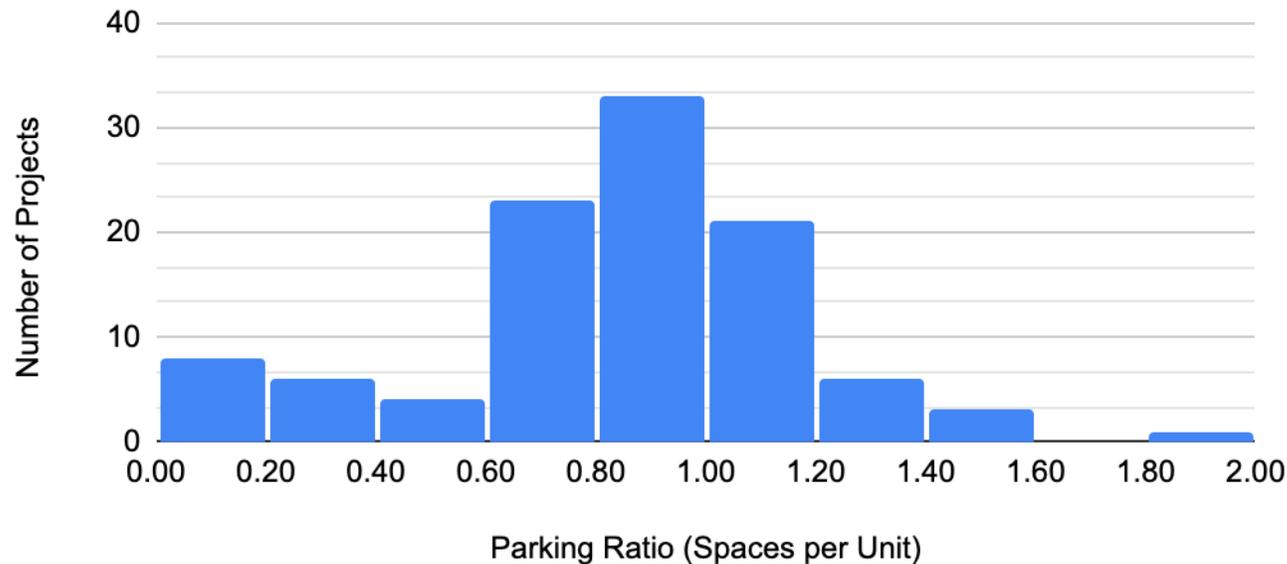
<b>Total Multifamily Units Built 2022-2023</b>	23 projects, totaling 281 units
<b>Properties Built Without Parking</b>	6 properties (4 duplexes, 2 triplexes, and 1 six-plex)
<b>Average Parking Supply</b>	1 space per unit



Source: [CT Parking Reform](#)

# Parking supply after parking reform

Cities where parking minimums were eliminated often still see off-street parking produced alongside housing units.



A case study in Denver tracked parking provided at housing development in neighborhoods with no minimums.

- Parking provided at an average of 0.84 spaces per housing unit.
- Range of 0 spaces - 1.9 spaces per unit depending on context.
- Parking supply reduced by 17% or 4,180 spaces.

Source: [Eliminating Parking Mandates](#), SWEEP

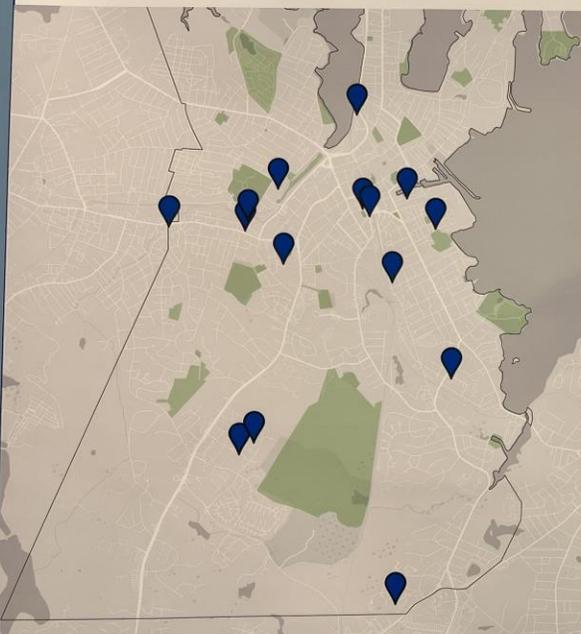
# Open House #1

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## Preliminary Findings



### Project Site Map



#### Properties surveyed and counted

93 Canal Street, Salem, MA	72 Flint Street, Salem MA
7 High Street, Salem MA	10-16 Rainbow Terrace, Salem MA
20 Endicott St, Salem MA	45 Traders Way, Salem MA
34 Peabody St, Salem MA	1000 Loring Ave Salem MA
70 Boston Street, Salem MA	10-12 First St, Salem MA
47 Leavitt St, Salem MA	190 Bridge Street, Salem MA
43 and 179 Boston St., Salem MA	12 Pope Street, Salem MA
28 Goodhue Street, Salem MA	

### Findings

- We found that an average of 1.25 parking spaces are built for each unit of multifamily housing. Across the 15 properties, there is an average parking utilization rate of 62%, **meaning 38% of spaces are vacant overnight.**
- Findings suggest the City requires more parking spaces than needed for each unit of housing at our multifamily developments.
- These findings are consistent with previous Perfect Fit research that parking is overbuilt and underutilized.

Segments	# of Sites	Parking Supply (total spaces/total units)	Parking Demand (occupied spaces/occupied units)	Parking Utilization (occupied spaces/total spaces)
All Sites	15	1.25 spaces/unit	0.88	62% 38% of spaces empty
Affordable	9	0.91 spaces/unit	0.66	56% 44% of spaces empty
Deeply Subsidized	4	0.63 spaces/unit	0.36	30% 70% of spaces empty
Buildings 6 to 20 units	4	0.84 spaces/unit	0.48	39% 61% of spaces empty
Buildings 21 to 45 units	4	1.36 spaces/unit	0.83	52% 48% of spaces empty
Buildings 45 and up*	7	1.42 spaces/unit	1.13	80% 20% of spaces empty

### Share your thoughts on the findings:

Handwritten notes on sticky paper:

- Parking minimums require more need to be eliminated
- Instead of focusing on whether or not parking needed or not, Salem should consider more inter-city transit options
- I support removing parking minimums
- Can unused parking be used during tourist times? For tourists or visitors?
- Can you share about occupancy at sites surveyed?
- How many County were taken?
- Were residents of these sites surveyed to see if parking meets their needs?
- I support removing parking minimums
- I am a homeowner in a multifamily building. I am \$100 for eliminating the parking minimum. More parking = more traffic and higher parking costs. Thank you for the survey.
- What was the attendance/attendance for residents of multifamily housing?
- Is this a true picture of the parking use/needs of these developments?

# Open House #1

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## Parking and Travel Habits



### Parking Habits

Where do you park?

I park on the street.	
I have dedicated or reserved parking (garage, driveway, surface lot) at my home.	
I have a parking pass or agreement for space in another location (including municipal lots).	
I don't have a car/I don't park.	
Other, please describe.	

### Do you pay for parking?

Parking is included in my rent.	
I pay separately for off-street parking (not included in rent).	
I own my parking space.	
I park on the street and have a Salem resident parking pass.	
I park on the street and don't need a Salem resident parking pass.	
Other, please describe.	

### Travel Habits

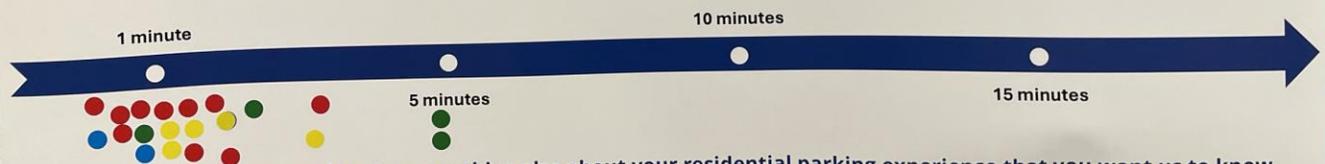
How do you make the majority of your trips **within** the City?

Walk	
Bike/Scooter	
Drive	
Transit (including Salem Skipper, MBTA - Bus, Train, The Ride)	
Car-share	
Other, please describe.	

How do you make the majority of trips to locations **outside** of the City?

Walk	
Bike/Scooter	
Drive	
Transit (including Salem Skipper, MBTA - Bus, Train, The Ride)	
Car-share	
Other, please describe.	

How many minutes does it take you to get from your parking space to your home? Place a dot along the line.



Please use a comment card to share anything else about your residential parking experience that you want us to know.

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# Model Findings and Policy Options



## Modeling Parking Demand

To understand what factors may influence the demand for parking at multifamily housing sites in Salem, MAPC used a statistical model to test the significance of different variables. The variables fell into two categories: site-level data and neighborhood characteristics.

### Site-level data tested included the following:

- Type/cost of parking provided (including number of parking spaces supplied per housing unit)
- Rent/cost of housing units
- Percentage of subsidized housing units
- Building size/age/number of bedrooms per housing unit

### Neighborhood characteristics tested included the following:

- Access to Transit: walking distance to Salem Commuter Rail Station, number of jobs accessible by a 30-minute transit trip
- Census Tract Data: household income, age/race/sex distribution of population, housing tenure (ownership vs. rental), vehicle ownership
- Employment Data: employment density by sector (retail, service, etc.)

## Model Results

The final model found two main variables with a statistically significant relationship to parking demand:

- **An increase in the supply of parking by 1 space is associated with an increase in the demand for parking by 0.68 vehicles per occupied unit, meaning for each parking space provided, parking demand increases by 0.68 vehicles.**
- **An increase in the walking distance to the commuter rail of 1 mile is associated with an increase in the demand for parking by 0.11 vehicles per occupied unit.**

These findings are consistent with previous phases of MAPC's Perfect Fit Parking research, which found **increased parking supply to be the single biggest factor associated with increased parking demand.**

## Policy Options

Data shows excess parking supply at multifamily housing sites. Land and money used for excess parking negatively affects other public goals like providing open space or creating housing units. To find a better balance, the City of Salem is considering three options for parking policy change:



### No change to parking requirements citywide

Please share your comments and questions on this policy option below.



### Elimination of minimum parking requirements citywide

Please share your comments and questions on this policy option below.

Future looking - parking models

Reducing mandates are a complicated half measure. Eliminate altogether + let staff and developers dedicate resources to more imp work.

eliminating requirements will also need progressive code like Salem. Use Salem and maybe even Salem Shaker?

Don't see to see (conclusion) a/ like. Infrastructure improvements

Please eliminate parking minimums! and implement with city for all development if we can change to this then may work

Let's right size at Pickers

Eliminate parking requirements

even supportive increases in density... and more help...



### Reduction in minimum parking requirements citywide

Please share your comments and questions on this policy option below.

The last two options could also enable changes to...

# Right-Sizing Parking for Multifamily Housing

## Background Information

### What are parking minimums?

The Zoning Ordinance establishes the lowest number of parking spaces required based on the type of activity on a site.

**In Salem, for every 1 new housing unit, a minimum of 1.5 parking spaces are required for multifamily housing, with limited exceptions.**

### Why getting parking right matters:

Parking minimums:

- Increase the cost of housing – more required parking means fewer and more expensive housing units.
- Dictate design, prioritizing parking over housing and other uses.
- Encourage car-dependency and contribute to congestion and traffic.

Lower-income and rental households have fewer cars and may pay for parking that they do not need or want.

Surface parking has particularly negative environmental impacts, including contaminating stormwater runoff.

### What is parking reform?

"The use of policies and activism to discourage the building of too much parking supply." – Parking Reform Network

Parking reform is **not** a ban on parking, rather it creates **flexibility** for projects to provide parking that meets their needs.

Vacant surface parking at Loring Towers in September 2024.

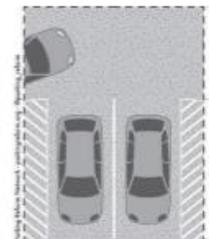


Studying residential parking minimums is **Strategy #16** in the Salem's **Housing Road Map**, as a method of unlocking additional housing supply in the City.

Living space vs. parking space.  
Source: Denver Urbanism



size for 2 bedroom apartment: 675 FP



size for 2 parking spaces: 650 FP

## Project Overview

### What is this project?

- The City partnered with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) to conduct a **Perfect Fit Parking Study** in Salem.
- The goal of this project is to determine if our current parking minimum adequately meets community needs and advances our priorities.
  - We collected data to determine current parking supply, demand, and utilization at existing multifamily housing sites throughout the City
  - We also conducted several community engagement events to hear from residents about their parking and housing experiences.
- As a result of this project, any zoning change to current parking policy would apply to **future multifamily housing**.

### What did we find?

**Overall, we found that parking at multifamily housing developments in Salem is overbuilt and underutilized.** This is consistent with previous Perfect Fit research throughout the Greater Boston area.

More specifically:

- On average, 1.18 parking spaces built per unit of housing.
- Of these spaces built, 62% of them were occupied and 38% were vacant.
- On average, one household living in multifamily housing has an appetite for 0.85 parking spaces.

To support housing growth in Salem and enable more car-lite and car-free living, we should reform our parking minimums.

### Options for Council Consideration

Elimination of parking minimums

Reduction of existing minimum

Existing minimum of 1.5 spaces/dwelling unit of multifamily housing

Degree of flexibility

For more information, please visit [ImagineSalem.com](https://www.imagineSalem.com) or contact Elena Eimert ([eeimert@salem.com](mailto:eeimert@salem.com)) and Robyn Lee ([rllee@salem.com](mailto:rllee@salem.com)).

# Right-Sizing Parking for Multifamily Housing

## Summary of Community Engagement

### Outreach and Promotion Methods:

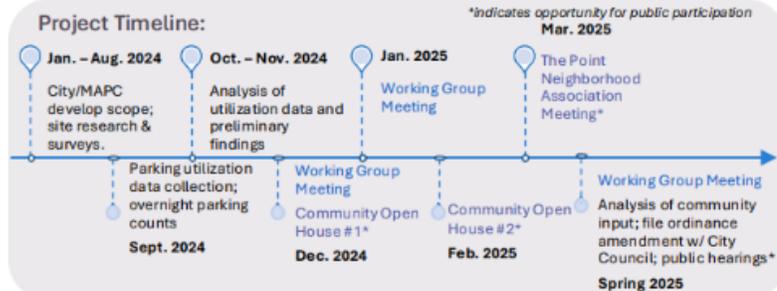


### Engagements Included:

- 2 Open Houses, one at City Hall Annex and Saltonstall Middle School, and 1 presentation at a Point Neighborhood Association meeting.
- 45+ people attended the Open Houses and 60+ total residents engaged in this effort.
- Materials were available in English and Spanish, and all meetings included a Spanish-language interpreter.



### Project Timeline:



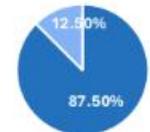
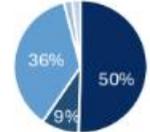
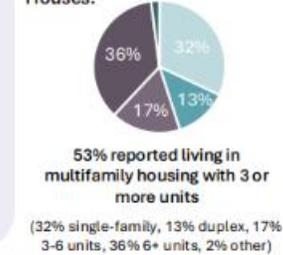
## Summary of Community Engagement



### Who We Heard From:

Residents throughout the City, including Downtown, South Salem, the Point, the Willows, Derby Street, North Salem, and Castle Hill, including some who lived at the multifamily properties surveyed and counted.

### Of those who attended the Open Houses:



### What We Heard:

- Concerns about parking for home healthcare aids and visitors.
- Concerns about impacts on street parking and possible spillover effect.
- Support for maximizing housing affordability, open space, walkability, infill development, and/or small business opportunities.
- Support for reducing car dependence and traffic congestion.
- Desire to see improvements to bikeability, walkability, and transit options in the City.
- Parking reform as a form of historic preservation, as it prioritizes pedestrian movement.



### Notable Comments:

19 written comments received expressly supported parking reform in Salem, namely elimination/reduction of parking requirements citywide.

"It is better for the community to have more livable spaces than empty parking. In conjunction with improved access and infrastructure for public transportation, I think we can help alleviate the housing scarcity and make a more walkable and connected community."

"I do not have a car and sold my car about five years after moving to Salem because I didn't use it, and street/snow parking is a hassle."

For more information, please visit [ImagineSalem.com](https://www.imagineSalem.com) or contact Elena Eimert ([eeimert@salem.com](mailto:eeimert@salem.com)) and Robyn Lee ([rllee@salem.com](mailto:rllee@salem.com)).

# Final Takeaways

- **Know your local context:**  
Situating within ongoing City work, leverage available data on current parking and housing landscape.
- **Crowdsource information:** Contact muni staff in other jurisdictions, most will be happy to help.
- **Leverage window of opportunity:** local support and need, state support, national parking reform efforts, Perfect Fit
  - "Trust but verify" - political support
    - **Housing Choice legislation – simple majority**
  - Pairing quantitative and qualitative data

# Thank you!

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Robyn Lee, Planner

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**Project webpage:**

[https://imaginesalem.org/residential-parking-  
minimums](https://imaginesalem.org/residential-parking-minimums)