



Public On-Street Parking Policy

Final Draft Version, February, 2013

Overview

On-street parking is an integral part of the Bloomington transportation system. Well managed on-street parking contributes to Bloomington's economic vitality, livability, safety, and sense of well being for residents and businesses.

On-street parking occurs within right-of-way that has been dedicated to the public, and is managed for the benefit to the community as a whole. While public parking contributes to the greater good of Bloomington, it is recognized that excessive demand for parking over long periods of time can have a negative effect on neighborhoods and businesses in the City. In an effort to ensure a well-balanced transportation system, and to provide maximum benefit to the public, the Bloomington City Council has adopted this policy in order to best manage the use of on-street parking in the City.

This policy shall be re-evaluated and amended from time to time as indicated by the City Council.

Purpose

Chapter 8 of the Bloomington Municipal Code regulates vehicles and traffic in the City, including public parking. The purpose of this policy is to provide staff, citizens, citizen commissions, and the City Council with a uniform set of policies and procedures by which to manage public parking. This policy document includes general background information on parking principles, as well as specific policy statements and procedures that shall be adhered to when adding, removing, or modifying on-street parking. Additional parking regulations are provided in Chapter 8 of the code, and Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 169.

Parking Map

The Public Works Department of the City of Bloomington maintains an official map of parking restrictions and zones for streets in the City. This map is available for review upon request by contacting the Public Works Department at 952-563-4915.

The official map is updated and adopted by the City Council at a hearing as needed. Parking restrictions and no parking zones are presumed enforceable whenever official signs are erected by the City, whether or not the specific zone has been adopted per the official map (Bloomington City Code, Chapter 8, SEC. 8.41).

Policy: The official parking map will be reviewed and adopted by the City Council at a public hearing as needed, or as requested by Council per the appeals process outlined in this policy.

Section 1 – Parking and Land Use

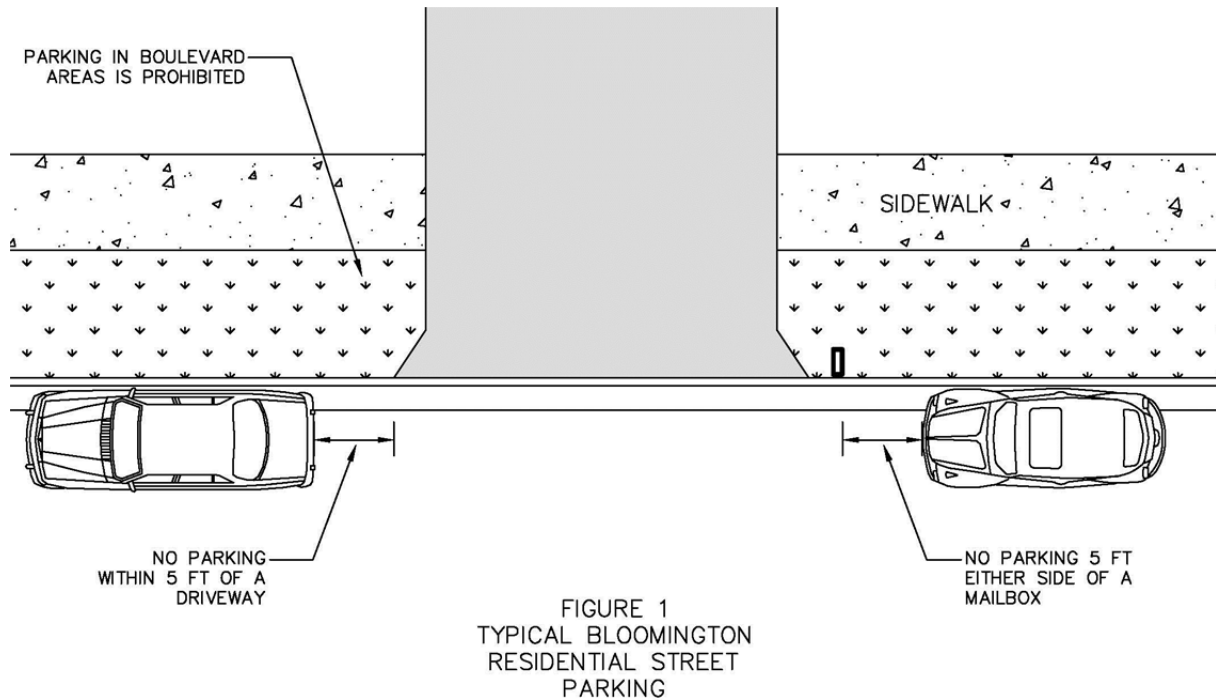
The code that regulates land development in Bloomington has been designed to ensure that most property owners (homes, businesses, schools, public facilities, etc.) provide adequate on-site parking to accommodate the parking demand generated by day-to-day use at that particular location, whether the use is a single-family home, apartment complex, place of assembly, retail, or dining establishment. This keeps parking demand on the surrounding streets to a minimum. Special events often occur for all these types of uses that generate parking in excess of what can be managed on-site for a short time. This might include special shopping days, weddings, funerals, parties, religious holiday celebrations, seasonal sporting events, and so on. The short term use of nearby, on-street parking for these events does not typically create a burden for the community, and the availability of nearby overflow parking to accommodate such events is a community asset – relieving the property owner from having to construct expensive accommodations for parking that would go unused a majority of the time. However, when demand for on-street parking is high, and persists for long periods of time, the neighborhood livability for adjacent residents may be diminished. If poorly managed, this use begins to affect resident’s quiet use and enjoyment of their property or can reduce the economic viability of adjacent businesses.

When evaluating a parking problem, the first step is to determine what is driving the demand in the area. Some overlap between public parking and private uses will always exist. However, parking on private property is governed and enforced through the land use code; whereas, on-street parking must be managed through the public process. Because of the time and effort involved in the public process to modify parking, it’s important that extensive time and resources are not brought to bear on what might essentially be a limited problem related to a specific use.

Policy Statement: If a particular use is generating demand for parking in excess of what can be accommodated on-site, and this demand persists for an extended period of time, the City will first work with the property owner or agency directly through the land use code and with the Environmental Health Division before moving to modify or restrict on-street parking in the surrounding community.

Parking Problems

Municipalities often receive complaints about undesirable side effects of people parking within neighborhoods including litter, destruction of plantings, cars blocking driveways and mailboxes, or parking in otherwise restricted areas. While these problems should not be disregarded, they do not, in and of themselves, constitute justification for blanket parking restrictions. Instead, managing these problems through public outreach, as well as police enforcement where needed is usually the most effective solution.



Section 2 - Parking Duration

One of the first aspects that will be evaluated when the City is asked to look at a parking issue is the duration of the problem. The following section discusses special events, seasonal uses, and when a problem becomes persistent enough to warrant action.

Special Events

There are numerous special events occurring throughout the year in Bloomington that create short-term demand for parking in neighborhoods, which might last for an evening or a few days. In general, the organizers of those events are responsible for coordinating suitable traffic control and manpower to adequately police and manage the event. Parking restrictions for such circumstances are limited to those needed for public safety and conveyance. Widespread neighborhood parking restrictions are not warranted, and in fact most such events rely on the availability of nearby on-street parking to be successful.

Policy Statement: Adding or lifting parking restrictions will be made on a case-by-case basis for safety and accommodation for event participants. No permanent restrictions will be added or lifted in response to special events.

Seasonal Demand

Bloomington residents enjoy a broad range of parks, trails, and recreational opportunities, from small neighborhood parks to regional facilities including the Dred Scott Playfields and the National Wildlife Refuge. A notable characteristic of most of these uses is the seasonal variation in demand. This includes

not only increased use of trails and parks in the summer, but also frequent use of ski trails and skating facilities in the winter. Key to the use and enjoyment of these amenities is the availability of nearby parking.

Policy Statement: The City will not restrict on-street parking based on a seasonal demand unless the use creates parking that is invasive to neighborhoods and persists for four (4) months or more.

Assembly Uses

Bloomington is home to a diverse population with a wide variety of interests and faith observances. Assembly uses in the City sometimes generate short term parking demand in excess of what can be handled on-site as a result of special events, including weddings, funerals and observance of religious holidays. The availability of nearby on-street parking for such events is a benefit for these types of gatherings so long as the demand and frequency of the over flow parking is limited and well managed.

Policy Statement: The City will not restrict on-street parking based on intermittent demand generated from Assembly uses for special events, including weddings, funerals and observance of religious holidays.

Nothing in this section is intended to absolve these facilities and organizers of the responsibility for the orderly management of traffic and parking in conjunction with such events.

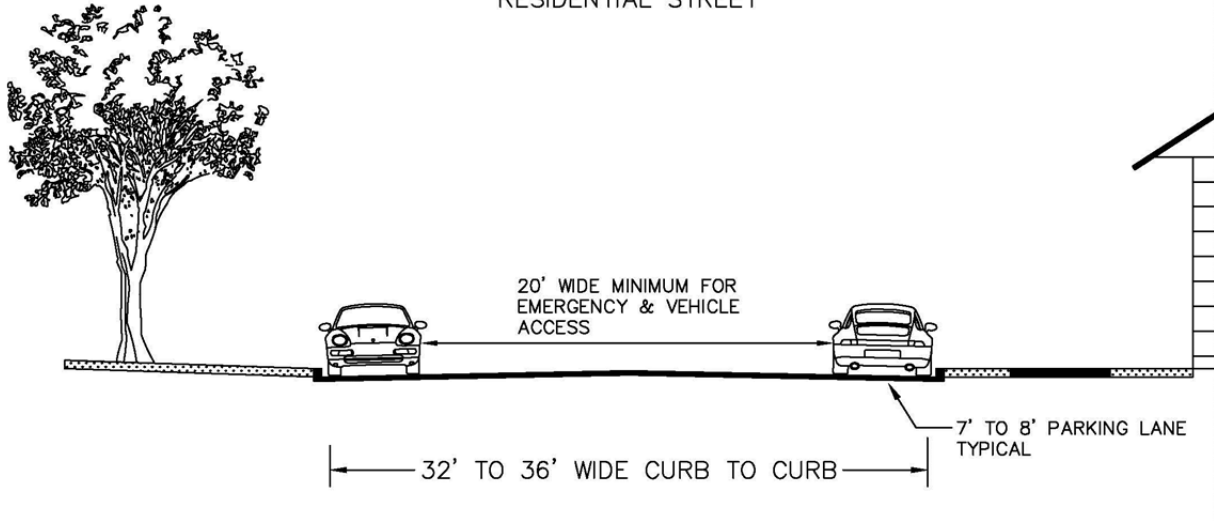
Section 3 - Geometrics

On-street parking is one aspect of a well-balanced transportation system, and must be considered in conjunction with roadway capacity, driver and pedestrian safety, and community livability.

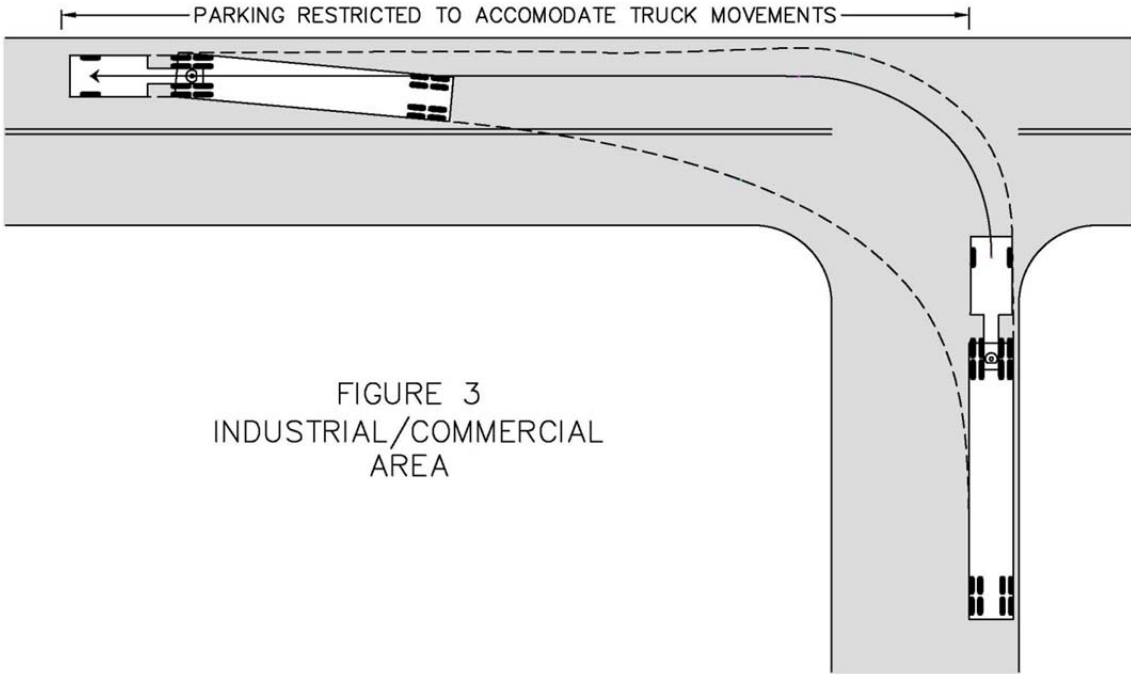
Most residential roadways in Bloomington were designed to accommodate on-street parking on both sides, while maintaining adequate clearance for emergency access as well as larger vehicles that can be expected to use the road periodically. As shown in Figure 1, regardless of the width of the road, a 20-foot wide access should be maintained on all streets to provide for emergency access, and to accommodate things like deliveries and refuse pick-up.

Policy Statement: No modifications to on-street parking will be made under this policy that result in less than a 20-foot wide clear area unless an engineering study is performed which indicates that such parking can be accommodated safely, and such zones are limited in length.

FIGURE 2
TYPICAL BLOOMINGTON
RESIDENTIAL STREET



There are some commercial and industrial areas of the City where no on-street parking is allowed in order to accommodate the large turning movements needed by the over-the-road trucks that may be the primary road users in these districts. Maintaining such restrictions ensures the free and convenient movement of people and goods in these areas.



While some accommodations can be made for limited or time-restricted, on-street parking in commercial and industrial areas, this parking needs to be done in such a way as to not reduce the economic vitality of those areas that rely on ease of access to do business.

Policy Statement: Parking modifications in commercial and industrial areas of the City will ensure the free and unencumbered movement of vehicles in those zones.

Section 4 – Process

To ensure that requests are handled in a uniform, efficient and equitable manner, the following processes have been adopted to help guide the City’s response to parking modification requests.

Initiated from Resident/Property Owner starts with Step 1

Step 1: Resident contacts staff with problem

Step 2: Staff establish “affected area” with map & standard petition form for resident. Resident collects signatures from 50% of addresses in affected area to initiate study

Initiated from City starts with Step 3

Step 3: Staff develops recommendation based on **adopted policy** & conducts direct mail survey of neighborhood

Step 4: Mail ballots are tallied. > 50% Agree?

No: Study terminates. Residents are notified by mail.	Yes: Residents notified by mail. Signs are posted; map updated next update cycle
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Appeal Process (by Resident)

Residents shall have 15 days to appeal study outcome. Process then moves to Council

Step 1, Resident Contact: In this initial step, the resident, business, or organization contacts Public Works staff to discuss the particular issues encountered. If the issue deals with a special event, or problems with littering or illegal parking, staff will refer the issue to the appropriate department for action, including Public Works, Planning, Fire, Police, or Environmental Health personnel. If the problem is amenable to a parking modification, then movement to step two is warranted.

Step 2, Resident Petition: Based on the magnitude and extent of the problem expressed, staff will work with the resident to establish a preliminary parking study area, The affected area will be based on the type and extent of the problem that is being described by the resident; and will typically include one or more contiguous city blocks, or may be bounded by features including park and/or school boundaries - past which modifying the parking would cease to address the specific concerns described by the requesting party. Staff will provide the resident with the following:

- a) Aerial map of the affected area, including street addresses
- b) Standard petition form to initiate a parking study

With this information in hand, the requesting resident(s) will collect signatures from 50% of the parcels in the preliminary study area in order to begin the study.

Step 3, Recommendation & Survey: Based on feedback received from the affected area, and consistent with the policies set forth in this document, staff will develop a recommendation for parking modifications in the affected area. The recommendation developed will utilize the least restrictive parking modifications possible that still addresses the safety, mobility and/or neighborhood livability issues cited by the neighborhood. Where ever possible, staff will utilize standard parking restrictions that have been deployed elsewhere in the City. Once a recommendation is developed, staff will then conduct a **direct mail** survey to residents or business owners in the area soliciting feedback on the proposed modifications.

Step 4, Balloting: Staff will tally returned surveys, allowing a return response time no less than 3 calendar weeks for a completed survey. There are two possible outcomes from the balloting:

- a) If greater than 50% of the returned ballots are in favor of the parking modifications, then the proposed parking modifications will move forward to installation. The neighborhood will be notified by mail of the outcome, and shall have 15 calendar days from the date of mailing to appeal the issue.
- b) If 50% or fewer of the returned ballots are in favor of the parking modifications, then no additional work will be done. The parking study will be terminated and the neighborhood will be notified by mail of the outcome. Residents shall have 15 calendar days from the date of mailing to appeal the issue.

Appeals Process

Upon notice of the outcome of the balloting process, residents shall have 15 calendar days to appeal the outcome of a study. Upon receiving a written appeal on the form included in this document, staff will request that the issue be heard by the City Council. Should the Council wish to have a hearing on the issue; it will be scheduled for the next available Council Meeting, with notification to the neighborhood of the date.

Staff will compile a report to the Council that shall detail the following:

- a) the nature of the original complaint or reason for the study
- b) a map of the affected area under study, including how the area was developed
- c) the recommended parking modifications including the supporting policies from this document;
- d) a summary of the responses received

All addresses within the affected area will be notified of the outcome of the public hearing.

Section 4 –Disability Parking

The City strives to accommodate persons with disabilities in its services and programs, including on-street parking. Persons with disabilities may request, and the City may erect, signs on any residential street prohibiting parking except by vehicles displaying a person with a disability plate or temporary or permanent permit issued in accordance with Minnesota State Statute (Section 168.021). The following criteria apply:

The applicant, as part of their request, shall be required to provide the following information:

- a) Address and requestor contact information, sufficient to verify residency;
- b) A copy of a disability permit issued by the State of Minnesota meeting the criteria of Section 168.021 of State Statute; and

Periodic verification of the ongoing need for the accommodation will be requested, typically annually. The restricted parking zone will be removed once the accommodation is no longer necessary, or no reply is received within 3 months to the request for verification.

The following provisions apply:

- 1) A 25-foot long restricted parking or loading zone will be established via regulatory signage provided and installed by the City.
- 2) No other actions will be undertaken by the City in conjunction with creating a disability limited parking zone including, but not limited to, curb cuts, grading, and paving or drainage improvements to public right-of-way or private property, unless such improvements are triggered by other work being conducted by the City on the roadway. Hardscape or other improvements required by the applicant will be the responsibility of the applicant.

- 3) Streets where parking is already prohibited because of other circumstances will not be modified to allow parking as a result of these requests.

Disability limited parking on public streets does not restrict parking to any specific individual, but rather is available for any user who meets the disability permit criteria as outlined above.

