Parking Planning in the Central Puget Sound Region

Why is planning for parking important?
Planning for parking is critical for supporting transportation systems, yet it is often a challenge for many local jurisdictions. Parking requirements have long been set to ensure that there is an adequate supply for every resident, employee, or customer, often leading to oversupply. This can interfere with more efficient land uses, and increase costs of development. As the region continues to add more residents and workers, some local jurisdictions have considered reforming parking policies and regulations to encourage more efficient land use, reduce traffic, reliance on cars, and make their communities more livable.

What are we doing?
The Puget Sound Regional Council is involved in several efforts to better understand and plan for parking on a regional scale, including maintaining an inventory of off-street parking lots in the central business districts of the region’s core cities, regularly updating a database of park-and-ride lots in the region and tracking their usage, and surveying local jurisdictions about parking reductions as part of a survey on housing incentives.
Tacoma has a Reduced Parking Area that eliminated parking minimums for residential and commercial properties in Downtown to spur more activity, optimize land use, and reduce dependence on cars.

Bremerton experiences intense demand for parking due to busy places like the Ferry Terminal and Naval Base Kitsap. The city is overhauling their parking system to make it more user-friendly and better manage demand.

Bellevue, through its Affordable Housing Strategy, is recommending reducing parking requirements near future LINK Light Rail stations to promote production of housing, and affordable housing in particular.

Auburn discovered that parking is in high demand in their downtown. To spur more development and activity, Auburn is looking at a comprehensive set of policy changes to address parking shortages by managing demand.

Seattle is engaged in several efforts to address parking challenges in the city:
- Reducing off-street parking requirements in urban centers and other areas.
- Performance-based parking pricing - Seattle adjusts the price of on-street parking annually in certain busier neighborhoods to better align supply and demand.
- Seattle Center Parking Study - Anticipating more events coming to the Seattle Center in the near future, the city studied Seattle Center’s existing parking conditions and identified ways to accommodate more visitors without expanding parking capacity.

Everett has outlined several measures to reduce reliance on cars in Downtown Everett as part of a comprehensive Regional Center plan, Metro Everett. With goals to make downtown more walkable, denser, and support more economic and cultural activities, the plan outlines measures like eliminating parking minimums and implementing shared parking programs.

Redmond assessed its parking supply in the Downtown and Overlake neighborhoods and found that parking is oversupplied by 30 to 40 percent. The city is currently in the process of creating a strategic plan to better match supply and demand.

King County Metro’s Right Size Parking (RSP) program is a nationally-recognized effort to better align parking supply with demand using demographic and built environment factors. Developed from numerous data analyses and pilots with local jurisdictions and nonprofits, RSP’s objective is to optimize the provision of parking spaces in new multifamily developments in order to reduce housing costs and discourage single-occupancy vehicle travel.

Who is planning for parking?

PSRC is the regional transportation, economic development, and growth planning agency for King, Pierce, Snohomish and Kitsap counties. It serves as a forum for cities, counties, ports, transit agencies, tribes, and the state to work together on important regional issues. PSRC is charged with maintaining the regional growth, economic, and transportation strategy.