

ELIMINATE PARKING MINIMUMS

Ending Parking Minimums

Parking minimums are local laws that require private businesses and residences to provide at least a certain number of off-street parking spaces. These requirements are one of the most significant factors shaping how our cities are built and laid out. At Strong Towns, we believe that every community with mandatory parking minimums on its books should seek to abolish them. These rules are not only unnecessary: they are destructive of our communities' financial strength and resilience.

It's time to put an end to parking minimum laws and allow our cities to become productive places again.



Prepared by: Streets Alive Yarra Inc.

streets-alive-yarra.org

Foreword

Streets Alive Yarra is a non-profit, volunteer, resident and ratepayer action group with a [vision](#) for more trees, wider footpaths and vibrant businesses in thriving [neighbourhoods](#). We see our streets being used by people from [all ages](#), irrespective of whether they walk, roll on a wheelchair, cycle, use public transport or drive. Residents and shoppers should be able to move safely, comfortably, and conveniently around Yarra; and park near shops.



Image credit: OCULUS Landscape Architecture and Urban Design

Streets Alive Yarra was founded in 2017 and now has over 2,600 likes on Facebook. A network of local champions develops concepts and proposals for how to improve their local street or precinct. Streets Alive Yarra is also Yarra's Walkability Action Group (WAG) representative for Victoria Walks.

Further information is available at: streets-alive-yarra.org/about.

Summary

This report recommends that the state government require local government councils to remove parking minimums from their planning schemes, for sites located within Melbourne's [Principle Public Transport Network](#), or for sites within a walking catchment area of each train station and tram stop.

Parking minimums

At present, many local government councils mandate minimum parking requirements for new construction, which leads to negative outcomes.

Minimum parking requirements subsidise cars, increase traffic congestion, pollute the air, encourage sprawl, increase housing costs, degrade urban design, prevent walkability, damage the economy, and penalise people who cannot afford a car.

Donald Shoup (UCLA Professor of Urban Planning)

Melbourne doesn't need parking minimums, especially for properties located in the Principle Public Transport Network, [as explained by MRCagney](#), urban planning consultants:



Image credit: MR Cagney

Most places, whether at a national, state, or local level, have strategic outcomes related to encouraging public transport, improving environmental outcomes, increasing density in areas with good transport connections, and making housing more affordable. Minimum parking requirements work in direct conflict to these outcomes.

MRCagney White Paper

...removing minimum parking requirements can quickly unlock the development potential creating dense vibrant neighbourhoods with more affordable housing.

MRCagney White Paper

Cities will find it difficult to achieve lofty transport mode shift goals when excessive parking is being required in new developments. Creating dense, walkable, and vibrant urban neighbourhoods where people can easily live with reduced car ownership is a worthwhile ambition, but minimum parking requirements are holding back progress on this. Removing these parking requirements and leaving parking provision to the market is a more effective strategy to reduce vehicle dependency, improve housing affordability, and create better urban form. A denser city that is easier to get around using sustainable transport options also has significant environmental benefits and helps to reduce carbon emissions.

MRCagney White Paper

Social justice

Removing parking minimums isn't just about reducing traffic congestion or air pollution, it's also a matter of social justice for people on low incomes. Constructing off-street parking costs a lot of money, e.g. \$50k per parking bay, and this increases the cost of housing, negatively impacting people on low incomes. To help deliver social justice for Victorians, parking minimums should be removed.

The state government needs to act

The state government needs to accept that this issue affects the whole of greater Melbourne, and that local government councils lack the resources to effectively prosecute the case for their planning schemes to be amended. Instead of each council spending ratepayers' money to develop, consult on, and defend the necessary changes; the state government should take the lead and require local government councils to amend their planning schemes. Properties that would no longer require minimum parking could be defined as those within the Principle Public Transport Network, or within a walkable catchment area of each train station or tram stop.

State government policy

The state government has [released a pledge to decrease emissions](#) from transport, including a commitment to improving integrated transport and land use planning.

- Better integrated land use and transport planning that will enable and encourage more people to choose active transport, such as walking and cycling, thereby reducing the need for household car ownership and travel

Image source: [DoT](#)

A key component of integrated transport and land use planning is to eliminate parking minimums, because the presence of off-street parking induces driving trips to those parking bays, which increases transport emissions.

Best practice policy

An example of 'top down' best practice policy can be found in New Zealand, where the government has recently required councils to remove minimum parking rate requirements, via the [National Policy Statement on Urban Development](#).

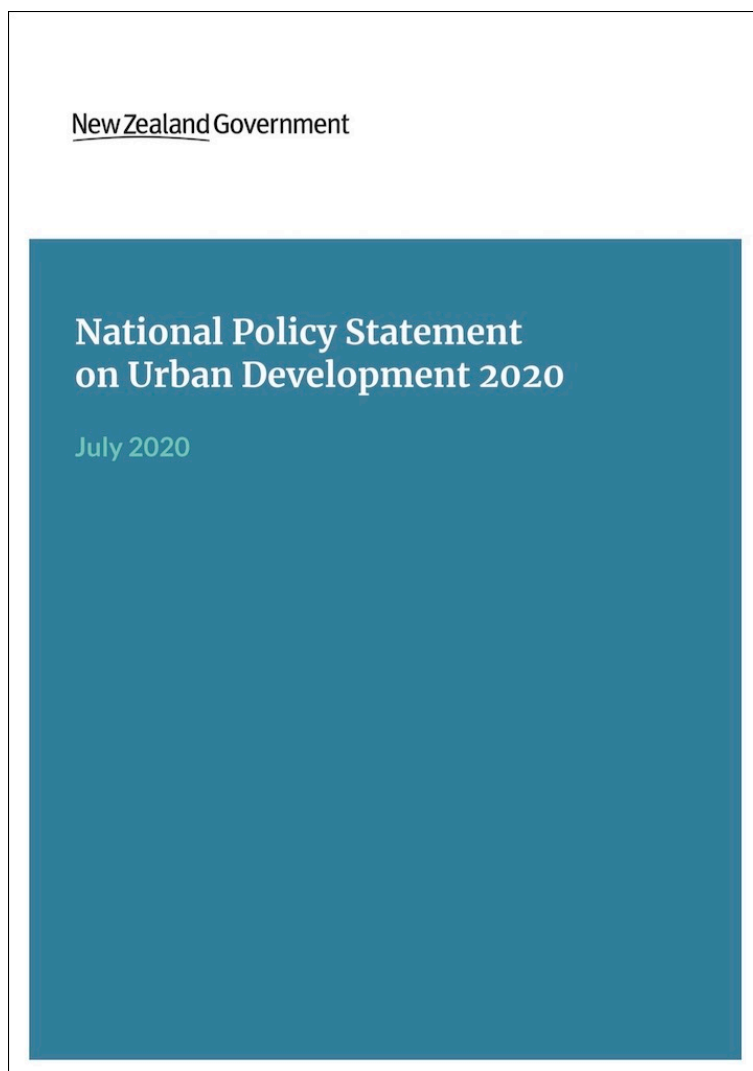
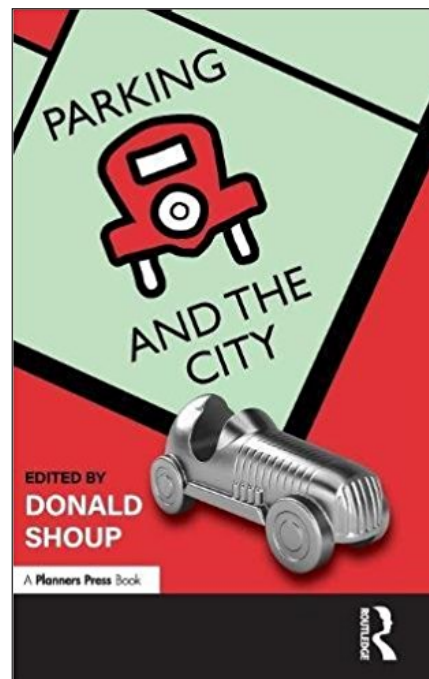
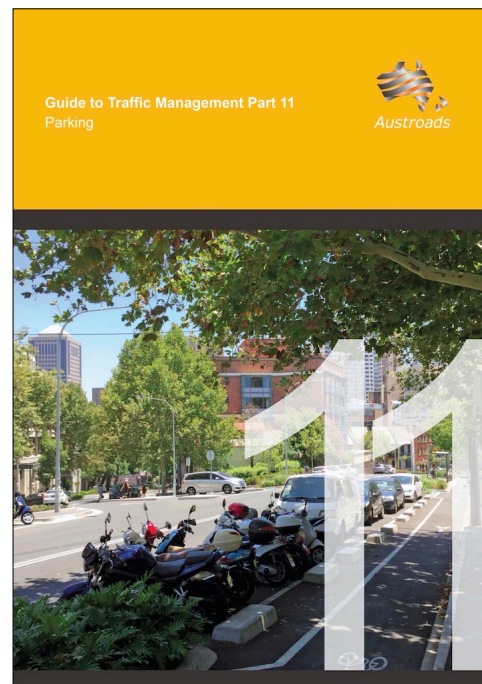
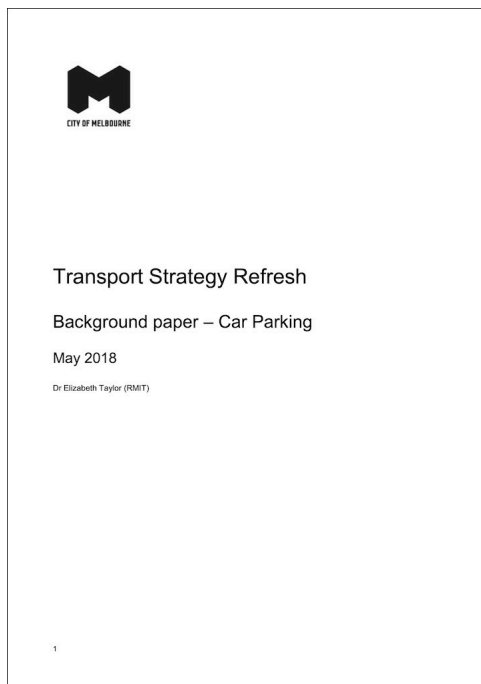


Image credit: New Zealand Government

The relevant sections of the policy statement are Policy 11 and Implementation 3.38. Policy 11 states that councils do not set minimum car parking requirements, and should manage the supply and demand for parking via comprehensive parking management plans. Implementation 3.38 states that if a council has minimum parking requirements, they must be removed (except for disabled car parking requirements).

Furthermore, the proposal to eliminate parking minimums aligns with numerous best practice guidelines and expert advice, including:

- [Transport Strategy Refresh Background Paper Car Parking](#), City of Melbourne
- [Guide to Traffic Management Part 11](#), Parking, Austroads
- [National Parking Management Guidance](#), New Zealand Transport Agency
- [Parking and the City](#), Donald Shoup



Support from councils

The City of Melbourne, the City of Port Phillip, the City of Bendigo already impose parking maximums in some areas, which is a step further than simply removing parking minimums. The City of Yarra proposes to mandate parking maximums in Cremorne, via amendment [C281yara](#).

Online, numerous lists are available, showing cities around the world that have removed parking minimums:

- <https://doesparkingmatter.com/cities-that-have-eliminated-parking-minimums-focus-on-downtowns-and-transit-corridors/>
- <https://parkingreform.org/2020/09/03/portland-has-eliminated-residential-parking-requirements-your-city-should-be-next/>
- <https://www.strongtowns.org/parking>
- <https://www.parkingreformatlas.org>
- <https://parkingpolicy.com/reduced-requirements/>

Ending Parking Minimums

Parking minimums are local laws that require private businesses and residences to provide at least a certain number of off-street parking spaces. These requirements are one of the most significant factors shaping how our cities are built and laid out. At Strong Towns, we believe that every community with mandatory parking minimums on its books should seek to abolish them. These rules are not only unnecessary: they are destructive of our communities' financial strength and resilience.

It's time to put an end to parking minimum laws and allow our cities to become productive places again.

Image source: [Strong Towns](#)

Managing the supply and demand for parking

A key part of the New Zealand reform is requiring councils to manage the supply and demand for parking via comprehensive parking management plans. This concurrent reform addresses the expected concern that if parking minimums are removed, drivers will park on the street, and demand will exceed supply. Parking management plans seek to address this imbalance by using mechanisms such as demand responsive pricing. Parking expert Donald Shoup writes:

...to distill the 800 pages of “The High Cost of Free Parking” into three bullet points, I recommend three parking reforms that can improve cities, the economy, and the environment:

- *Charge the right prices for on-street parking. The right prices are the lowest prices that will leave one or two open spaces on each block, so there will be no parking shortages. Prices will balance the demand and supply for on-street spaces.*
- *Spend the parking revenue to improve public services on the metered streets. Because everybody will see their meter money at work, the new public services can make parking meters politically popular.*
- *Remove off-street parking requirements. Developers and businesses can then decide how many parking spaces to provide for their customers.*

Donald Shoup, *Parking and the City*

Or, as Todd Litman writes:

Parking management refers to various policies and programs that result in more efficient use of parking resources.

Todd Litman, [Parking Management](#)

Councils have avoided best practice reforms to the management of on-street parking for too long, and the state government should no longer allow it.

Concluding remarks

Victorians would be better off overall if the state government required councils to remove parking minimums from their planning schemes, for properties located within the Principle Public Transport Network area or within a walking catchment area of each train station and tram stop. This policy reform would act to decrease traffic congestion, decrease air pollution, and decrease the cost of new housing. These are all issues of social justice for people who need to drive (traffic congestion), for people who live in Melbourne (air pollution), or for people on low incomes (cost of housing).

Streets Alive Yarra would be delighted to provide further detail or explanation of the themes raised in this document.

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