



Accessory Dwelling Units: Parking Requirements

Question: Should off-street parking be required for accessory dwelling units?

Current Olympia Approach: One off-street parking space is required to be provided for an ADU. This is in addition to two off-street parking spaces required to be provided for the primary single-family residence. Off-street parking is required to be a hard surface (porous or non-porous concrete or asphalt), and may be inside a garage or carport.

Current City off-street parking requirements are generally:

- 2 spaces per unit for single-family homes, duplexes, townhomes and manufactured homes
- 1.5 spaces per unit for apartment buildings of three or more units of one bedroom or more
- 1 space per unit for ADUs, cottage housing, studio apartments, and group living facilities

What is current approach intended to accomplish?

Off-street parking requirements are primarily intended to ensure parking demand for individual residences can be met within very close proximity to that home. Auto ownership patterns and residential parking demand in individual neighborhoods are dynamic, and are influenced by many factors, including household size, individual lifestyles, availability of alternative modes of travel, and proximity to services.

On-street parking availability varies throughout Olympia's residential neighborhoods. It may be available on one or both sides of a street, or may not be available at all on some streets. Some City rights-of-way are wide enough for on-street parking, but are only paved to a much narrower width than needed for on-street parking. City staff is working on aggregating data to produce a city-wide map of on-street parking availability.

Alternative Approaches:

Below is a table of some other cities' approaches:

Jurisdiction	Off-Street Parking Spaces Required for ADUs
Lacey	1
Tumwater	1
Thurston County	1
Bremerton	1
Vancouver, WA	1
Vancouver, BC	None
Seattle	1
Portland, OR	None

Some cities that require a parking space for an ADU allow for it to be met by on-street paved parking on the frontage of the lot, if that on-street parking has not already been identified for use by the primary dwelling.



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Alternatives include:

1. Retaining the requirement of one off-street parking space for an ADU.
2. Remove the current requirement for off-street parking for ADUs.
3. Require one parking space for an ADU, but allow it to be met either by off-street or on-street space along the property's frontage.
4. Require one off-street parking space only if no on-street parking is available within a certain distance (e.g., 250 feet).
5. Require one off-street parking space if the property is farther than convenient walking distance (e.g. ¼-mile) from a transit stop, or from a commercial or mixed use zoning district.
6. Require one off-street parking space if the existing or allowed density is greater than the number of on-street parking spaces available within a certain distance (e.g. 250 feet).
7. Require one off-street parking space only if an ADU larger than a studio apartment (i.e., has one or more separate bedrooms).

Analysis:

The factors for consideration discussed by the Missing Middle Work Group are:

- **Affordability**
Providing an off-street parking space may affect affordability, depending on the configuration and existing situation on the property. Low-impact development regulations now emphasize permeable pavement use for driveways in many locations, which may increase the cost of providing a new off-street parking space. It is uncertain what, if any, impact on the rental rate there would be from any additional cost of providing an off-street parking space.
- **Variety of housing types**
Increasing the number of ADUs will increase the variety of housing types in neighborhoods that currently do not have many ADUs. Depending on the configuration of the property, it may be difficult and more expensive to provide an off-street parking space for an ADU. This may affect a decision by a property owner whether to proceed with constructing an ADU. Cities that have removed parking requirements have seen an increase in ADU construction; however, there may be other contributing factors to that increase as well.
- **Ability to accommodate growth**
ADUs will accommodate more households without increasing the overall area of the city. They primarily will provide housing for households of 1-2 persons, which was 70.4% of Olympia's households in 2010 Census (*The Profile*, Thurston Regional Planning Council). If an additional off-street parking space is not required, it may increase the likelihood of additional ADUs being constructed. However, if adequate parking is not available it could affect the ability of residents in the neighborhood or their visitors to find convenient parking close to their residence.