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## Shared Parking Reduces Development Costs and Environmental Impacts

Shared parking is not a new concept, but it is receiving renewed attention with the recent emphasis on sustainable development. A shared parking analysis can help land developers minimize both costs and environmental impacts, making it a handy tool for mixed-use projects of all sizes.

Shared parking works because the time and day of peak parking demand varies across land uses. An office building, for example, experiences peak demand from 9:00 to 5:00 on weekdays. When paired with a use that peaks at another time—say a movie theater—the parking lot that would otherwise be empty on nights and weekends is better utilized. Moreover, this pairing eliminates the need to provide a second field of independent parking.

On larger multi-use sites, the concept of “captive” uses can also come into play. A common example is a restaurant inside an office building. At lunchtime, many of the restaurant’s patrons will be employees of the office building. They can visit the restaurant without creating the demand for additional parking stalls. Other examples of captive uses include an amusement park at a mall or a coffee shop inside a library.

While larger, multi-use sites have inherent advantages that work to reduce parking counts, they have a disadvantage as well. While a patron may park at a post office for only as long as needed to mail a package, that same patron may park for a much longer time at a post office connected to a community center with a library, fitness center, and coffee shop. The tendency to park for longer periods at certain multi-use sites creates an overlap of visitors. This overlap can somewhat lessen the potential for shared use reductions.

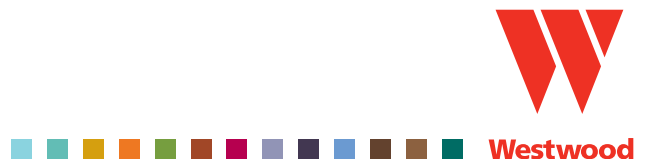
Base parking demand, peak parking characteristics, captive uses, and average parking duration must all be considered in gauging the appropriate parking supply in shared parking situations. Carefully assessing these factors will most often lead to a reduction in parking requirements.



The required parking for this multi-use development, now under construction in Eden Prairie, Minnesota, was reduced by 18% through a shared parking analysis. The developer of this office/retail/restaurant complex saved \$1.8 million as a result.

The reduced area of paved surfaces made possible by shared parking provides environmental benefits. Land can be used more efficiently, and water quality improves from the decrease in stormwater runoff. The U.S. Green Building Council has recognized these benefits by including credit for reducing a site's parking footprint in its LEED® Rating Systems.

Project developers will also find financial benefits. Recent estimates put the cost of a single parking stall in a suburban location at \$2,500 for a surface stall to more than \$15,000 per stall in a parking structure. The cost savings that can be realized by eliminating just a few stalls can more than offset the expense of engaging a team of traffic professionals who have the experience and judgment to determine how shared parking can benefit your next project.



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