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Urbanist Coalition of Portland
In Support of LD 427

March 6, 2025

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Senator Curry, Representative Gere, and Honorable Members of the Committee on Housing and Economic Development, I am Jacob Lavarnway, board member of the Urbanist Coalition of Portland, here today to speak in support of LD 427. Parking mandates prevent the State from reaching both its housing production and climate goals by preventing mixed-use, in-fill development within urban areas, whilst also encouraging sprawl into rural ones.

Today, I will be speaking to the poor scientific rigor that was utilized to create parking mandates. But first, some context.

Historically, there have been two methods utilized by municipalities to draft these policies. Firstly, large municipalities would consult texts and data published by the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE), in an honest attempt to build effective policy. Secondly, smaller municipalities that don't have a planner on staff would copy the policies of larger ones, operating under the belief that big cities know what they are doing.[1]

This approach had major flaws. Copying policy also means copying the mistakes within, and the underlying assumptions *of*, that policy. Parking mandates are irreparably flawed because the reasoning, data, and scientific rigor published by the ITE as the bedrock for these policies is irreparably flawed.

The late Dr. Donald Shoup, who worked as a research professor in the Department of Planning at the University of California, Los Angeles, was one of the most outspoken critics of parking minimums. Over the course of his life, he published multiple articles, journals, and books on parking policy and municipal planning, until his passing one month ago.

Dr. Shoup notes irreparable flaws within the process that the ITE had utilized to reach its conclusions.[1,2] These issues include, but are not limited to :

1. Failing to note exactly where, why, or for how long parking studies were performed[1].
2. Implying the permitted use of a lot is the only factor that determines parking demand. In reality, multiple factors contribute to demand.
3. Lacking enough data points to relate a lot's use to parking demand.
   a. Half of the graphs provided by the ITE are based on only four or fewer data points. A quarter are based on only a single data point[2].

1. Shoup, D. C. (1999). The trouble with minimum parking requirements. Transportation Research Part A: Policy and Practice, 33(7–8), 549–574. https://doi.org/10.1016/s0965-8564(99)00007-5
2. Climate Town. (2023, July 17). *Parking Laws Are Strangling America | Climate Town* [Video]. YouTube https://youtu.be/OUNXFHpUhu8?feature=shared&t=871

The flaws in the ITE's reasoning and data are so thorough and numerous that the American Planning Association has stated that "the underlying assumptions used in drafting parking requirements are unknown."[3]

As a result of the discovery and analysis of these issues, then-president of the ITE, Bruce Belmore, recanted the organization's findings in February 2019 and called for the elimination of parking requirements.[4]

Demand for parking is not based upon a single factor, but upon a large conglomeration of factors that shift with each individual lot. As a result, it is not possible to create a policy that accurately reflects demand.

In light of the scientific flaws mentioned and the ITE's recantation, the Urbanist Coalition of Portland asks the Committee to vote Ought To Pass on LD 427.

Thank you for your time,

Jacob Lavarnway
Urbanist Coalition of Portland

3. Quote from periodic AICP Planning Advisory Service surveys (1964-2002) of minimum parking requirements in American cities; quoted in *The High Cost of Free Parking*, Shoup 2011, p.27.
4. Belmore, B. (2019, February 12). Rethinking Parking Minimums. February 22, 2025, https://community.ite.org/blogs/mr-bruce-belmore-peng-ptoe-avs/2019/02/12/rethinking-parking-minimums