Poor Parking Outcomes in Champaign

Like all of its peer cities, Champaign regulates parking primarily through minimum parking requirements. The zoning ordinance sets a base amount of parking spaces which all buildings must provide on site, with few exceptions. In many parts of town, parking conditions conflict with council goals of walkability and sustainability. Unfortunately, current parking policies are directly responsible for some of these and are powerless to prevent others from occurring.

Parking minimums may as well not exist on the fringe of town. Walmart was required to provide 677 parking spaces but built over 1,000, creating a vast (and mostly unused) impermeable surface.

Campus apartments are forced to shoehorn parking into every available space, resulting in a degraded urban environment.

The larger a project, the greater the costs imposed by parking requirements. This building could only find room for its required parking underground. Construction cost? $20,000+ per space.

Champaign is currently updating its zoning ordinance, providing a perfect opportunity to modernize its parking policy. The City should consider both site flexible and district flexible solutions.

Site Flexible Parking Policies
- Reduce or eliminate minimum parking requirements
- Simplify the 75+ categories of land uses currently regulated
- Allow property owners to pay a fee in lieu of providing parking
- Grant waivers from minimum parking requirements when a property’s use changes or expands
- Allow property owners to share parking or provide it off-site
- Consider localized non-automobile transportation characteristics (transit, etc.)
- Consider localized population makeup (e.g. students, elderly)
- Regulate the siting of parking more stringently in walkable districts
- Provide public parking facilities to reduce on-site parking demand
- Impose maximum parking limits in areas where parking is consistently overbuilt

District Flexible Parking Policies
- Site flexible policies give property owners choice in determining their own parking needs. District flexible policies consider the particular circumstances of individual neighborhoods.