



APPLICATION FOR ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENT

Planning & Zoning Commission
Thibodaux, Louisiana

Phone: (985) 446-7208

Application No.: 182

The undersigned requests an amendment to the City of Thibodaux's Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance. Should this application be approved, it is understood that it shall only authorize that particular use described in this application and any conditions or safeguards required by the Commission. This request will require final approval by City Council prior to any action taking place by the applicant.

1. Name of Applicant: Joseph Doiron

Mailing Address: 216 Rienzi Dr

Phone Number: Home: 985-227-2752 Business: _____ Cell: _____

2. Proposed Zoning Amendment: _____

1. A request to amend & re-enact Article 7, Section 704 of the City of Thibodaux's Comprehensive Zoning

Ordinance as follows: _____

"A. The off-street parking spaces required for each use permitted by this Ordinance shall not be less
more than that found in Table 7.1. For uses not mentioned in the Section, the Zoning Administrator or his/her
designee shall determine the requirements for off-street parking. Off-street vehicle parking may be provided
at the discretion of the property owner or developer. Where parking is provided, it shall comply with
applicable design, accessibility, drainage, landscaping, circulation, and safety requirements of this Article.
The determination shall be based upon the most comparable use listed, AASHTO or ITE standards, and/or the
specific needs of the development as determined by the City.

2. A request to amend & re-enact Article 7, Section 704.E of the City of Thibodaux's Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance
as follows: _____

"b. The shared parking facility is located within three hundred feet (300') of each use a reasonable walking
distance of 1 quarter (1/4) mile or one thousand three hundred twenty (1320) feet of each use, and is
accessible by a dedicated pedestrian route. The Zoning Administrator may consider the quality and safety
of the pedestrian connection when evaluating whether a shared parking arrangement serves the intended
use."

Date: _____

Applicant: _____

1. Amend & Re-enact Section 704.A as follows:

The off-street parking spaces required for each use permitted by this Ordinance shall not be ~~less~~ **more** than that found in Table 7.1. For uses not mentioned in this Section, the Zoning Administrator or his/her designee shall determine the requirements for off-street parking. **Off-street vehicle parking may be provided at the discretion of the property owner or developer. Where parking is provided, it shall comply with the applicable design, accessibility, drainage, landscaping, circulation, and safety requirements of this Article.** The determination shall be based upon the most comparable use listed, AASHTO or ITE standards, and/or the specific needs of the development ~~as determined by the City.~~

2. Amend & Re-enact Section 704.E as follows:

E. JOINT USE OF REQUIRED PARKING SPACES

Two (2) or more nonresidential uses may jointly provide and use off-street parking facilities as long as the following specifications are met:

- a. None of the uses require the parking facilities at the same time.
- b. The shared parking facility is located within ~~three hundred feet (300')~~ **use a reasonable walking distance of 1 quarter (1/4) mile or one thousand three hundred twenty (1320) feet of each use, and is accessible by a dedicated pedestrian route. The Zoning Administrator may consider the quality and safety of the pedestrian connection when evaluating whether a shared parking arrangement serves the intended use.**
- c. All other location and design requirements of this Section are met.

Amendment to Article 7

Summary

I'm requesting that the Planning and Zoning Commission consider an amendment to Article 7 of the City of Thibodaux Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance to reform the City's minimum off-street motor-vehicle parking requirements and provide greater flexibility in how parking demand is accommodated. The proposed policy change is to eliminate mandatory minimum off-street motor-vehicle parking ratios citywide while retaining appropriate regulations governing parking safety, accessibility, design, drainage, and other legitimate public impacts. This amendment aligns with the [2024 SCPDC Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan](#) that recommends removing parking minimums. In addition to removing these minimum parking ratios, the proposal would facilitate and encourage shared-parking agreements, allowing for more efficient use of existing and underutilized off-street parking facilities, such as The Foundry on the Bayou's underutilized parking lot as an example.

Goals

The broad goal of this reform is to reduce regulatory incentives for automobile-oriented, low-density development; support more compact and walkable development; improve conditions for walking and bicycling; and reduce unnecessary costs and land requirements that can disproportionately burden small businesses. The current purpose for Article 7, Section 701 for the City of Thibodaux Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance states:

The off-street vehicle parking, bicycle parking and loading regulations of this Ordinance are intended to provide accessible, attractive, secure and well-maintained off-street parking and loading areas, provide the appropriate number of spaces in proportion to the demands of the

proposed use, increase public safety by reducing congestions of public streets, and encourage the use of alternative modes of transportation.

The current stated goal is to not necessarily require *more* parking but instead provide the *appropriate* number of off-street parking spaces based on actual demand. The current fixed city-wide off-street parking ratios are based on square footage alone, and research has shown this is a poor predictor for parking demand. For example, one analysis of restaurant parking data found that floor area explained only approximately 4% of the variation in observed parking demand. Therefore, they conflict with the stated goals above. If the purpose of the ordinance is to provide the appropriate number of spaces in proportion to the demands of the proposed use, then the City's regulations should allow parking supply to respond to actual demand rather than requiring the same minimum ratio for similar uses regardless of location. Businesses and property owners are generally better positioned than a citywide zoning ratio to determine how much off-street parking a particular use requires, and the city is best positioned to manage public curb space and address parking-related impacts on public streets, sidewalks, and other public infrastructure. The city should not require every private development to provide enough off-street parking to eliminate all possible demand for public curb parking. Further, another purpose for Section 701 is to "encourage the use of alternative modes of transportation." As previously stated, these fixed ratios can require more parking than is needed for a particular use or location, while failing to account for differences in actual demand. In practice, it often causes an oversupply of off-street asphalt parking, creating urban environments that actively discourage alternative modes of transportation such as walking or biking. The current code contradicts the stated purpose. Therefore, I'm proposing this amendment so the stated code can more appropriately reflect the current purpose and broad goals above.

Proposed Amendment

Based on the goals above, the proposed amendment would revise Article 7 of the City of Thibodaux Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance. *The amendment would remove minimum off-street motor-vehicle parking ratios but would not eliminate regulations*

governing the design, safety, accessibility, drainage, circulation, or maintenance of parking facilities. Specifically it would:

1. Section 704(A)

- a. Delete Table 7.1 and the provisions requiring a specific number of parking spaces based on land use. The city should allow parking supply to respond to the demands of individual uses and the characteristics of the surrounding area.
- b. Retain design and safety regulations. For example, this amendment isn't proposing to remove regulations for space dimensions, accessibility parking, driveway access, drainage, etc.
- c. Remove language allowing the Zoning Administrator to determine parking requirements for unlisted uses.
- d. Update the language for the section to contain language such as:

Off-street vehicle parking may be provided at the discretion of the property owner or developer. Where parking is provided, it shall comply with the applicable design, accessibility, drainage, landscaping, circulation, and safety requirements of this Article.

2. Section 704(D)

Since parking minimums will be removed, the 125% of the minimum will need to be updated.

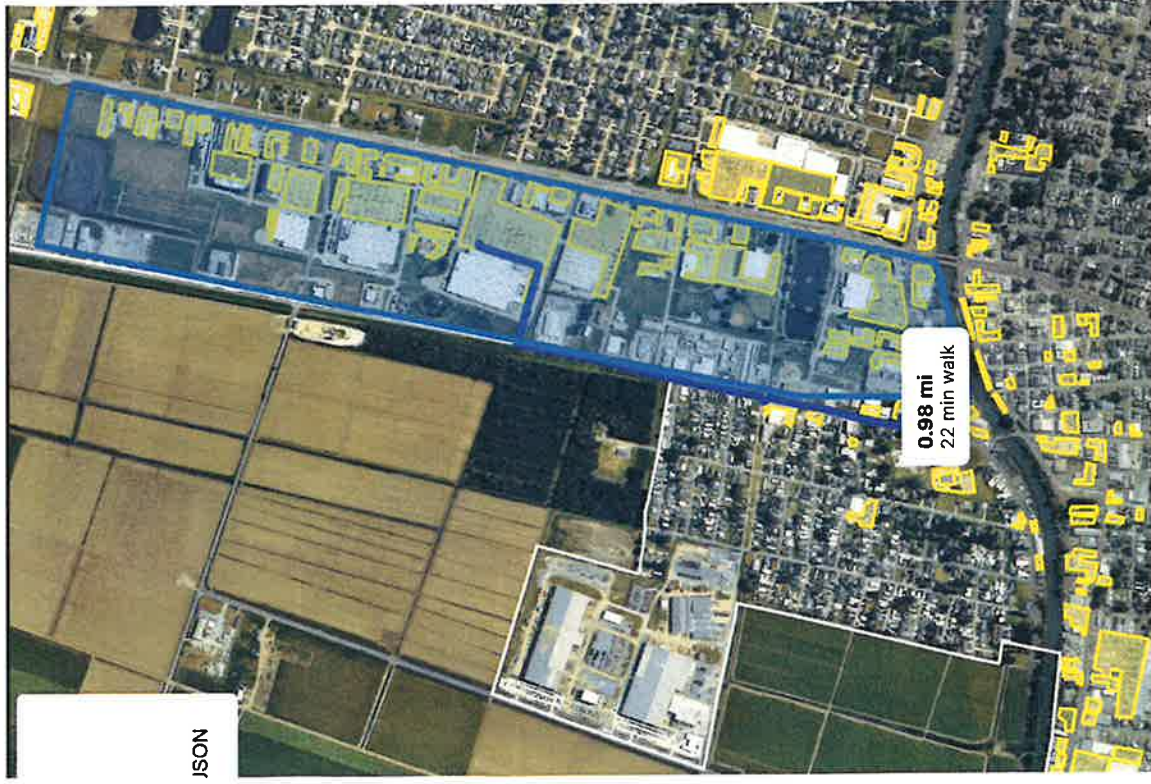
3. Section 704(E)

This section currently exists to allow businesses to satisfy the minimum parking ratios. Since the goal of this proposed amendment is to encourage property owners to voluntarily share parking facilities where doing so improves land efficiency, reduces unnecessary pavement, and minimizes stormwater runoff, the proposed amendment to this section would be:

- Remove the 300-foot limit for parking agreements, replacing it with something such as:

Shared parking facilities should be connected to participating uses by a safe, continuous pedestrian route. The Zoning Administrator may consider the quality and safety of the pedestrian connection when evaluating whether a shared parking arrangement serves the intended use.

- Allow for off-street parking facilities to be shared among two or more uses through a voluntary written agreement between the participating property owners.
- Update the language to encourage shared parking agreements where it reduces unnecessary impervious surface, promotes more efficient use of existing parking resources, and supports compact, walkable development.
- Update the language to make sure where shared parking is provided, the parking area is connected to each participating use by a safe and reasonably direct pedestrian route.

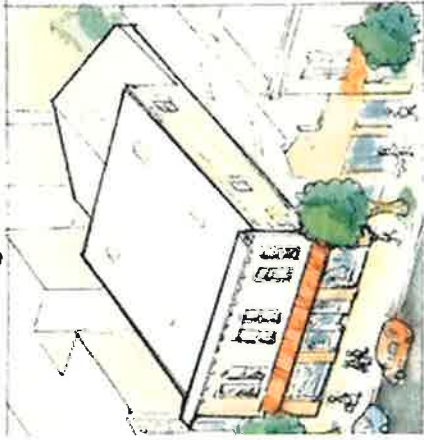


Proposed Amendment to Remove Mandatory Off-Street Parking Minimums

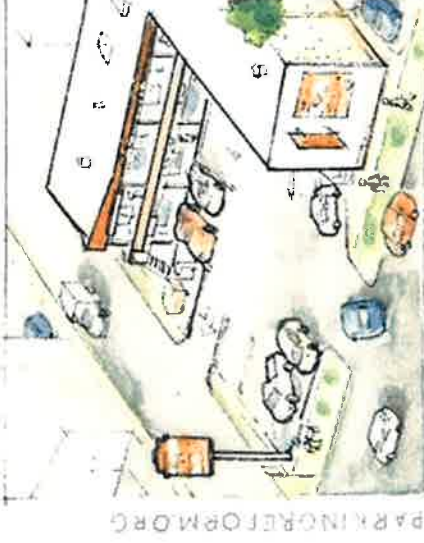
Allow property owners to determine how much parking their property actually needs—while maintaining city regulations for safety, accessibility, drainage, design, and circulation.

10/7/26 Thibodaux Planning and Zoning Meeting

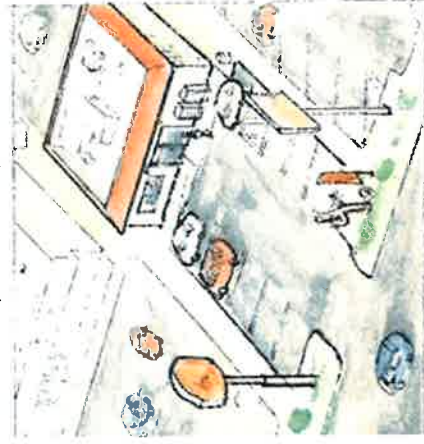
No Parking Required



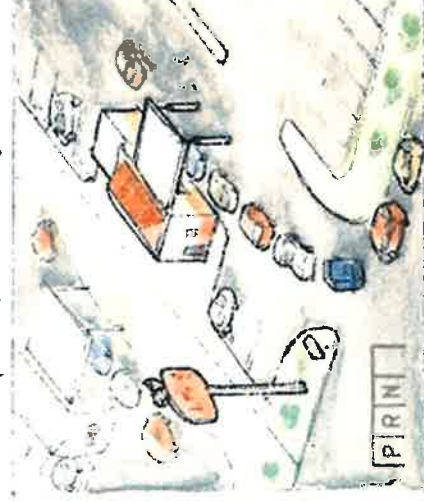
1 Space per 500 Square Feet



1 Space per 250 square feet



1 Space per 100 square feet

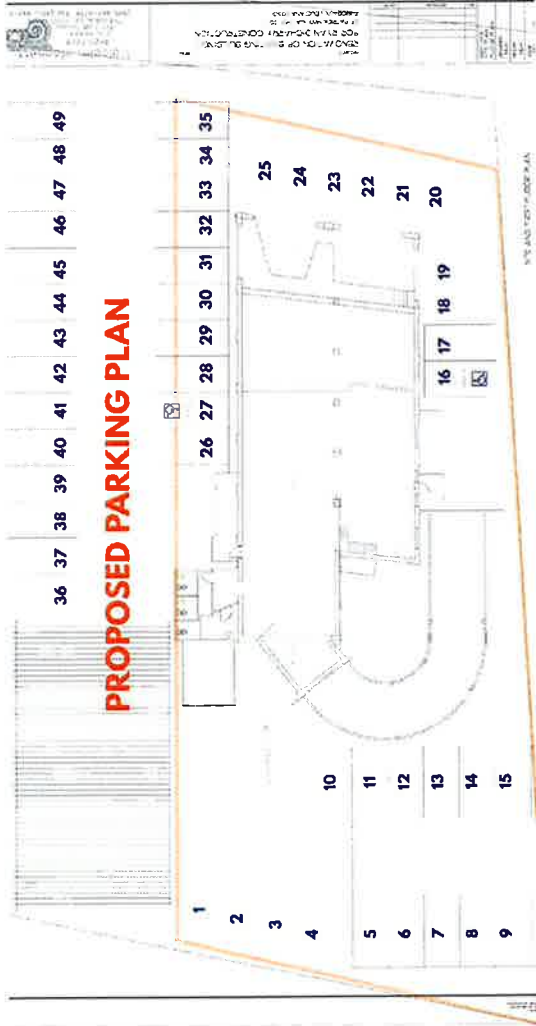


What are Parking Minimums?

Parking minimums are local zoning rules that require property owners and developers to provide a set number of off-street parking spaces based on the type and size of a development.

A Local Example: The Ice House

The listing says “the property offers ample on-site parking. with areas along the front, side, and rear of the building.”



FOR SALE

\$680,000

\$74.63/SF

Building Size	9,112 SF
Lot Size	0.33 ac
Parish	Lafourche
Days on Market	346
Listed	10/15/2025
Updated	05/05/2026

<https://lacdb.com/listings/1ce4e0bb-700-st-patrick-st/>

The Ice House math

Is 49 spaces enough?

COMMERCIAL	
Adult Use	3 spaces/1,000 sf GFA
Art Gallery	2 spaces/1,000 sf GFA
Art Studio	4 spaces/1,000 sf of public use area
Automobile Vehicle Dealership	2 spaces/1,000 sf of indoor sales area
Automotive Repair	2 spaces/service bay
Automobile Vehicle Dealership	2 spaces/1,000 sf of indoor sales area
Automobile Vehicle Rental	2 spaces/1,000 sf of office and public waiti
Bar	1 spaces/100 sf GFA
Caterer	1 space/1,000 sf GFA

THE MATH

9,112

SQ FT

÷

100

SQ FT PER SPACE

=

91.12

SPACES NEEDED

(MINIMUM)

Thibodaux's Parking Minimums

Golf Course	4 spaces/hole
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- FORE parking spaces per hole. Coincidence?
- 18 holes = 72 parking spaces. Apparently parking demand is measured in holes.



Why Do Parking Minimums Exist?

Without enough parking	City response	The tradeoff
Parking spills onto: • Public streets • Nearby properties • Sidewalks • Driveways	Require every property to provide a minimum number of spaces via fixed-sized formulas	Every property must provide a set number of off-street parking spaces — even when its actual demand is lower.

Spillover parking is a legitimate concern.

The policy question is whether every property should bear the cost of preventing a problem that only some properties may create.

Thibodaux Has Already Recognized the Problem

“Sometimes the required parking is too much and at other times it is too little.”

City of Thibodaux / SCP & Development Commission –
2010 Zoning Review

Why does demand vary?

- Type and number of doctors
- Location
- Patient characteristics
- Other characteristics of the specific use

A fixed formula cannot perfectly predict demand at every property.

2010 board conversation and how it relates to this amendment

City of Thibodaux

The Thibodaux administrative staff has encountered several questions and issues regarding parking as required in the zoning ordinance. In particular, they noted that sometimes the required parking is too much and at other times it is too little. The staff used the case of a medical clinic that has met the parking requirements as delineated in the city's zoning ordinance; however, the tremendous number of patients visiting the clinic has far exceeded the allotted parking space. The administration is concerned that the required parking for a medical clinic may not be enough for future development. Section 701.1 of the Thibodaux's zoning ordinance states the following:

City of Pineville

Article 4.02. Off-street parking
The following off-street parking spaces shall be provided:

- (b) For places of public assembly (5) For hospitals (6) For nursing homes (c) For the following uses:

Manage the Risk, Don't Mandate the Cost

Don't make every property pay for a problem that only some properties may create.

1. Manage public parking	2. Address problem properties	3. Let the market respond
• Enforce existing parking restrictions • Time limits • Residential parking restrictions where warranted • Paid parking in high-demand areas and times • Enforce illegal/obstructive parking	• Require compliance with existing safety/accessibility rules • Address blocked driveways, fire lanes, sidewalks, etc. • Respond to demonstrated parking problems rather than hypothetical ones	• Businesses can add parking • Property owners can lease nearby spaces • Shared parking can be arranged • Developers can provide more parking where demand justifies it

No Parking Minimums ≠ No Parking

- Thibodaux's Code doesn't require every fast-food restaurant to have a drive-through. Yet fast-food restaurants routinely provide them because they believe customers want them.
- Parking works the same way. **Property owners can provide the amount of parking they believe their customers, employees, and tenants actually need—without the city imposing a one-size-fits-all minimum.**



How Much Land Does Thibodaux Already Devote to Parking?

How much off-street parking does Thibodaux have?

- Thibodaux has **~162 acres of off-street parking**.
- ~4% of the entire City's land use is off-street parking, **including undeveloped land and residential only zones**.
- The North Canal C-1 zone is **~20% off-street parking**.
- Doing basic math shows that there's **~1.4 off-street parking spaces for every man, woman, and child in the City**.



Estimates based on mapped off-street parking areas. See methodology at [jdoiro3.github.io/thibodaux-parking](https://github.com/jdoiro3.github.io/thibodaux-parking).

What Does Mandatory Parking Cost?

What are the costs associated with mandatory parking requirements?

1. City

Land devoted to parking can't be used for other taxable or productive purposes.

- Less development potential
- More impervious surface
- Greater drainage burden
- Infrastructure costs associated with dispersed development

2. Businesses

- Increased construction costs.

~\$5,000 per surface level parking space.

- Land costs
- Higher development costs
- Higher barriers for small businesses
- Less flexibility for adaptive reuse

3. Community

More land devoted to cars means less land available for other uses.

- Green space
- Housing
- Walkable development
- Pedestrian infrastructure
- Productive commercial space

Land devoted to parking cannot simultaneously be used for housing, businesses, green space, or other productive purposes.

The Dansereau House Faces Multiple Regulatory Hurdles

- Hal Callais bought the house in 2025 and wants to **invest** into the future of the house.
- A historic house this size – that has been part of the historic registry since 1978 – **requires substantial funds to maintain and operate.**
- Maintaining and operating a historic property of this size requires a sustainable economic model.
- Revenue-producing uses can help fund its preservation.



New owner of the Dansereau House ‘constructing’ detailed community collaboration and curated experiences

Hal Callais, the new owner of the historical Dansereau House located at 506 St. Philip Street in Downtown Thibodaux, has claimed residency of the third floor where he now sits

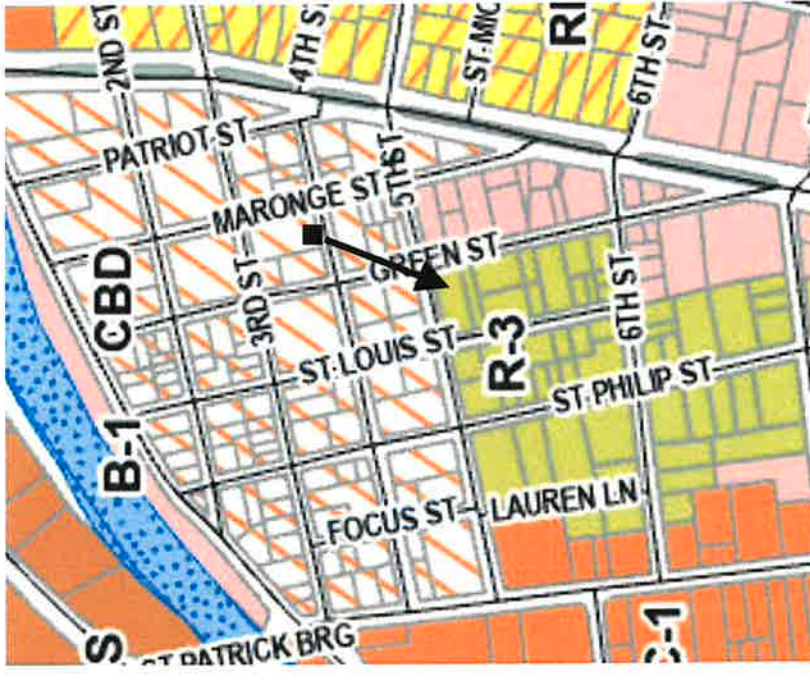
 The Laborer's Gazette

“We want to be a collaborator and key partner in the community. We want to work with the city and promote walkability and downtown.”

HAL CALLAIS

The Dansereau House Faces Multiple Regulatory Hurdles

- The house is currently in a **R-3** district.
- It's right outside the CBD. CBD is exempt from parking minimums.
- "Catering Services" isn't listed as a special exception for **R-3** zones, so Hal has to get an amendment through just to give him a legal pathway to request a special exception.
- Once that's done, Hal will apply for a special exception just for his parcel.
- **Parking is one additional hurdle in the process.**



The Problems With Euclidean Zoning
Since the 1926 landmark Supreme Court case, *Village of Euclid v. Ambler Realty Co.*, 272 U.S. 365, it has been
commonly used.

Example: Dansereau House

- **Event Venue requirements are 1/300 sq. ft.**
- The house is **8,681 square feet**.
- Without a variance Hal is required to acquire or build 29 off-street parking spaces.
- Those spaces don't necessarily have to be constructed on the Dansereau property
- Current shared-parking rules may limit which nearby spaces can count toward the requirement.



Proposed Amendment

[detailed proposed amendment document can be found here](#)

Remove	Retain	Allow / Encourage
• Required number of spaces based solely on land use • Minimum ratios in the parking table • Other provisions that depend on those minimum ratios	• Safety • Accessibility • Drainage • Design • Landscaping • Circulation • Fire access • Other legitimate public-impact regulations	• Shared parking • Leasing nearby spaces • Private parking arrangements • Parking based on actual demand

Requested action: Recommend the proposed amendment to the City Council.¹⁵

2010 Thibodaux Zoning Review

Off-Street Parking Requirements — Historical Discussion Relevant to the Current Review

The following is a cleaned and formatted dialogue from the 2010 Thibodaux Zoning Review. The wording is based on the uploaded transcript text; OCR and page-break artifacts have been removed for readability. Selected passages are highlighted because they address issues directly relevant to the current review of mandatory minimum off-street motor-vehicle parking requirements.

Off-Street Parking Requirements

Mr. Breaud: All right, Number 11 — Off Street Parking Requirements — Mr. Harang.

Mr. Ben Harang: Do you want to hear me say it again?

Mr. Breaud: I cut you off a little bit, so come back and tell us.

Ms. Erwin: Do you have any recommendations?

Mr. Harang: It is a tough one. I don't know if you can come up with one, with a cookie cutter to require them, but it just seems like you get into situations that it is just so unreasonable and then people give up because they don't want to go through the bureaucracy of doing architectural drawings to get somebody's opinion on whether they can or can't do what they want, and they're spending money, wasting time to get it done.

Mr. Harang: It restricts commerce and business in the City.

Ms. Erwin: So do you think that you actually look at every single different business out there and put a different requirement?

Mr. Harang: It does.

Mr. Breaud: We've heard the arguments on both sides that **we're being too restrictive with the parking and some think it is not enough.**

We even brought up some situations, you know, with the little Wing Stop over there. You can't find a parking spot when you try to get in that place, and then you've got some other places that have all kind of parking area.

So I think Simone and South Central Planning's recommendation is that those areas would have to be investigated individually with some kind of recommendation.

The problem with counting unused square footage

Mr. Harang: We used the entire square footage of a two-story building, with the upstairs being used as storage, climate-controlled storage, and there was no way to get around going to the Board of Adjustments. They got frustrated at the process and stopped, you know, instead of—

Ms. Erwin: But do you believe the Board of Adjustments would have granted that variance?

Mr. Harang: Probably not. I don't think they would have. I don't have anything to base that on, but I don't think they would have, so **it is a problem.**

Mr. Kearns: So you're saying, if I'm understanding you correctly, what you're saying is, look, **you shouldn't throw that storage into the mix when you're figuring out the parking area.**

Mr. Harang: That is a solution to this particular problem.

Mr. Kearns: Use the square footage of where people are going to be and not where boxes are kept.

Mr. Harang: Or maybe based on the number of employees, because employees and customers are the ones that need the parking, not the square footage.

The fundamental problem: square footage does not necessarily equal parking demand

Ms. Erwin: But then you take something like North Canal, I don't remember what store you used, but there is never any parking there because they only have two employees, but that place is packed.

Mr. Harang: Well, if you go back on that center, and my speculation is with the parking requirements, if you go back and get the uses and the square footage of those buildings, **I would venture to guess that the parking does not meet the requirements on that particular location.**

Mr. Breaud: You see, one thing we want to avoid—we don't want to get too lenient on it because the worst situation you can have, if we don't have enough parking spaces at businesses, then we start getting parking on the public rights-of-way and we're blocking vision and we're having safety problems and everything else.

So you don't want to get too lenient on the parking because then you create yourself some serious problems, you know.

That may have to be looked at on an individual basis, and Simone, we need you to look at that a little bit more, I guess.

I'd love to say we've got 500 square feet, go down to 250 square feet and everybody is going to be happy, **but when we go and we end up with 4 parking spaces and we get 10 cars parked on the side of the road, then nobody is going to be happy.**

Mr. Harang: And that is based on the use and the employee and customer volume.

Mr. Breaud: And we don't know what kind of business and how popular that business is going to be going in.

Mr. Harang: But a professional business, if you have two attorneys in an office, you're probably not going to have more than two or three clients at a time talking to, you know.

Ms. Erwin: Correct, but if you have six doctors in a building, you may have 50 people in that parking lot.

Mr. Harang: But you can't take that and apply it to attorneys or apply it to—it is almost use specific.

Ms. Erwin: Yes, which gets cumbersome.

The consultant's warning about changing the rules based on individual examples

Mr. Breaud: I know you made some comparisons, Simone, but if you can look at other use parking.

Ms. Caesar: Within the document there is a table and there is the information, but the other communities are on page 59, I think it starts on page 58. Their ordinance regarding off street parking is basically copied and pasted and put into the document, so you can kind of see how they devise ways to deal with the parking.

It is difficult to say if we're sitting here and just talking hypothetical. Zoning kind of doesn't work that way. It could be this, it could be a lot of things.

The issue is **zoning is supposed to protect and provide for the majority.**

If there is a big issue with parking, which is the point I made with the medical clinic, was that this is one medical clinic. **Are all the medical clinics having problems, or are we changing off-street parking because of the one medical clinic?**

Then there is no balance there.

But if we're saying, wow, many of the doctors have been coming in, they've been having a problem with this, then this is an issue you need to look into.

But it is hard for me to gauge. Again, and I guess going back to the purpose of the review, **we were not asked to do a study or go out and do detailed land uses.**

And I'm not from Thibodaux, so it is difficult for me to sit here and say, oh yes, just do this.

Without doing the technical work, it is difficult for me to know the answers, which is why we present options.

These are what other cities are doing, but without actually doing the study, the required study for many of these issues, it is difficult.

A lot of these things—I mean, it took over 30-something years to get here. You're not going to resolve it in a week, a month. You know, it is going to take some time to kind of straighten some of these things out.

But it takes in-depth analysis; it is not just something you can just sit here and just write up.

Existing buildings vs. new construction

Mr. Harang: And the parking issue is more of a problem in the **older established areas**, obviously, than the outlying areas with the new construction because they can build according to those requirements.

That is a lot less onerous than having to retrofit something that, in the people's minds that are doing it, is an absurd requirement.

Because in the case I cited, it was—they just said, **if we've got to deal with this, we're not coming.**

What else is behind the next stone that is going to cause a problem if we have to get a variance to go from **16 to 18 parking spaces where we really need 6 and we can provide 6 easily?**

We can't provide 16 easily.

Ms. Caesar: I understand what you are saying, and like I said, it was the point I was making with the medical clinic. If we're changing parking because of one clinic, then it will be too much parking for some clinics and not enough for others.

So you can't base zoning decisions on how it is impacting just one entity.

Should medical clinics have the same requirements as other professional offices?

Mr. Harang: Right. And just a suggestion, I would take medical clinics out of all of the other professions because they run them through multiple people within the hour.

I don't know any other profession that sees so many people during the course of a day.

So if a medical clinic needs a certain number of spaces, **I don't think engineers, architects, realtors, insurance agents, CPAs, lawyers need the same thing that a medical clinic needs**, because that is more one-on-one over time without people backed up with a waiting room.

Ms. Caesar: And like I said, I guess that could depend on the type of doctor, the number of doctors at the clinic. I mean, there are so many variables that would determine how many patients they are seeing.

I would imagine that an OBGYN might have them back-to-back, especially if you have several of them in that one clinic.

Maybe a doctor specializing in gerontology might not need as many spaces. I don't know without studying it. **I don't know.**

Mr. Breaud: There are many different classifications of a medical clinic. I mean, you could take medical clinics and put it by itself, but there are many different—

Mr. Harang: And you still have issues with that, but that causes issues for the other professions outside of the medical field if you put their requirements on everybody.

Mr. Breaud: Well, we can look at separating that. You know, we went through this, I guess it has been about a year ago, with these classifications and parking, and this is the last thing that we had done that got adopted by the Council—

Mr. Price: No, that is when they were doing the study and they didn't do anything with it.

Mr. Breaud: About nine months ago, we went through each one of these categories and tried to identify so many parking spaces or square foot per parking spaces, and **that never did get adopted.**

And I guess we're at that point right now where we need to do something.

We may want to look at putting medical clinics in at least a category by itself and maybe even separating that category possibly because it sounds like—

we're talking about future development right here, we're not talking about existing stuff because they are grandfathered in.

If we are having parking problems in establishments right now, we basically have to live with it because they are grandfathered in.

What we are trying to stop is any future problems of allowing a guy to come in, he only says he needs 6 parking spaces, but the first thing you turn around, he's got 12 cars parked at his establishment and 6 of them are in the public right-of-way.

So that is the kind of stuff we've got to watch.

The existing-building problem comes up again

Mr. Jeff Donnes: Simone, your recommendation is to go to 250 square feet, one car for every 250 or 200?

Ms. Caesar: No, I didn't make that recommendation. I presented those options—the comparable cities that I presented. That was what they required for medical clinics.

Mr. Donnes: And my suggestion might be to leave existing structures at 500 square feet per car when you're going into an existing structure rather than those smaller units.

When you're building something, you can do it.

When you're going in and you have small offices, small insurance offices, health insurance or life insurance office, I've got a 1,500-square-foot office. **You can't—you don't have the spaces to go into these areas on Canal Boulevard, on Bayou Road or wherever to give me 200 square feet per car. There is no way I can do it.**

Mr. Breaud: And you're talking about non-conforming uses, you're talking about rehabbing an existing development and trying to create something out of it.

Mr. Donnes: Yes.

And again, you look at the thoroughfares. I'm going into non-conforming uses. However, I've got 9,000 cars a day passing in front of my area.

Now, if I'm in an R-1 area, it is not a single-family subdivision if I've got 9,000 cars a day passing in front of my house. It is not, you know.

The regular subdivisions might have 400 or 500 cars maybe on a busy street. They don't have 9,000.

Canal Boulevard is sitting over there with 15,000 cars a day. That is not residential. That is not—LA 1, Highway 308, they are probably pushing—I think on 308, North Canal Boulevard, they're pushing 22,000 cars a day.

That is not residential.

Ms. Erwin: Well, it is residential. It's got homes. It is mixed use but it is residential. It may not be a neighborhood.

Mr. Donnes: It is not a subdivision.

Ms. Erwin: It is not a subdivision, but it is definitely residential.

Mr. Breaud: You know one thing, and it is part of the planning process, is that we should not have a driveway access to a main artery in a subdivision.

You know, subdivisions are created but you've got a street off it. You're stuck with a lot of them, but that is part of the planning process that we need to try to eliminate in the future.

Mr. Donnes: But anyway, I would hope that you would address **new facilities as compared to existing facilities in reference to parking.**

The variance process itself becomes part of the discussion

Mr. Gary Palmer: My only question—and maybe this is not the right place to ask the question—but it seems like I've got a new understanding of what you guys are trying to do.

You're trying to make the right decisions, and the variance, which is a separate committee, can kind of do opposite of what you guys are trying to do.

So I don't know why that committee would be—or why wouldn't you be making the adjustments, since you know the laws, you've made sure they accommodate, and it seems like you guys would be the best ones to make the adjustments, not a whole other commission.

Does that make sense?

Mr. Breaud: Simone, do you want to address this? That is based upon State law, I think.

Mr. Palmer: They're required to have a separate variance committee.

Mr. Breaud: In fact, they've got more power than—I know you're running for City Council—that Board has got more power than the City Council has got, and it is based upon State law.

Mr. Palmer: That is what I am saying. They can kind of do whatever they want even though you guys are working hard to try and make it—

Mr. Breaud: And that is based upon some State laws that established the legislative powers that they have.

Ms. Erwin: But it is not whatever they want, Gary. I mean—

Mr. Palmer: I'm just saying that you guys are trying to make it right and the work you're doing could be thrown out by an opposite decision made.

Ms. Erwin: Except that is one of the reasons for this: **there were misinterpretations in our zoning ordinance, and that is where we're hoping that this gets even better—to where anyone should be able to pick up the zoning ordinance and it not be interpreted so differently and so widely.**

Mr. Breaud: Thank you. Does anybody else have any comments on off street parking requirements?

[No further comments.]

Relevance to the Current Review of Off-Street Parking Requirements

The 2010 discussion is relevant to the current review because it documents concerns raised at the time about the practical effects and limitations of mandatory parking ratios. The following observations summarize those portions of the discussion without characterizing them as conclusions reached by the 2010 review.

1. Concern that parking requirements can restrict commerce and business.

Mr. Harang stated that the existing requirements could become unreasonable and cause people to abandon proposed projects because of the cost and bureaucracy associated with demonstrating compliance or obtaining a variance.

2. Recognition that square footage may not correspond to parking demand.

During the discussion, participants questioned whether storage space should count toward a parking calculation and suggested that employees, customers, and actual use may be more relevant measures of demand than total building square footage.

3. Recognition that parking demand varies substantially by use.

The discussion contrasted professional offices and medical clinics and acknowledged that different businesses can generate substantially different parking demand even when their building areas are similar.

4. The difficulty of creating a ratio that works for every use.

Participants discussed the possibility of creating separate categories and ratios, while also acknowledging that additional categories introduce complexity and that actual demand can vary within the same general use.

5. Existing buildings present different constraints from new construction.

Several participants noted that older established areas can make it difficult or impossible to provide the number of spaces required by newer standards. The discussion included an example in which six spaces could be provided but a substantially larger number could not.

6. The 2010 review identified the need for technical analysis.

South Central Planning's representative stated that the review had not included a detailed study of land uses or parking demand and that, without such technical work, it was difficult to determine the appropriate answer for many individual parking questions.

7. Public safety and right-of-way impacts were identified as concerns.

Mr. Breaud expressed concern that insufficient parking could result in vehicles parking in public rights-of-way, creating visibility and safety problems. These concerns are distinct from the question of whether a fixed minimum ratio is the appropriate regulatory tool for preventing such impacts.

8. The discussion also addressed the variance process and ordinance interpretation.

Participants discussed situations in which applicants were required to seek relief from the Board of Adjustments. Ms. Erwin stated that one purpose of the review was to improve the ordinance so that it would be less susceptible to differing or overly broad interpretations.

Taken together, the 2010 discussion shows that Thibodaux officials, residents, and planning consultants were already considering several issues that remain relevant to the current review: whether square-footage ratios accurately reflect demand, how requirements affect older buildings and redevelopment, how different uses generate different parking needs, and how parking regulations interact with the variance process.

The current proposed amendment approaches these questions differently from the options discussed in 2010. Rather than attempting to establish a more precise mandatory ratio for every possible land use, it would eliminate mandatory minimum off-street motor-vehicle parking ratios while retaining regulations addressing

parking-related public impacts such as safety, accessibility, design, drainage, circulation, and other applicable requirements.

Source and context

Source: Thibodaux Zoning Review 2010, Off Street Parking Requirements discussion, transcript pages 96–97 (PDF pagination), based on the uploaded transcript text. This document presents the discussion for historical and policy context; it does not represent a determination by the 2010 review participants regarding the current proposed amendment.

Amendment to Article 7

Summary

I'm requesting that the Planning and Zoning Commission consider an amendment to Article 7 of the City of Thibodaux Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance to reform the City's minimum off-street motor-vehicle parking requirements and provide greater flexibility in how parking demand is accommodated. The proposed policy change is to eliminate mandatory minimum off-street motor-vehicle parking ratios citywide while retaining appropriate regulations governing parking safety, accessibility, design, drainage, and other legitimate public impacts. This amendment aligns with the [2024 SCPDC Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan](#) that recommends removing parking minimums. In addition to removing these minimum parking ratios, the proposal would facilitate and encourage shared-parking agreements, allowing for more efficient use of existing and underutilized off-street parking facilities, such as The Foundry on the Bayou's underutilized parking lot as an example.

Goals

The broad goal of this reform is to reduce regulatory incentives for automobile-oriented, low-density development; support more compact and walkable development; improve conditions for walking and bicycling; and reduce unnecessary costs and land requirements that can disproportionately burden small businesses. The current purpose for Article 7, Section 701 for the City of Thibodaux Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance states:

The off-street vehicle parking, bicycle parking and loading regulations of this Ordinance are intended to provide accessible, attractive, secure and well-maintained off-street parking and loading areas, provide the appropriate number of spaces in proportion to the demands of the

proposed use, increase public safety by reducing congestions of public streets, and encourage the use of alternative modes of transportation.

The current stated goal is to not necessarily require *more* parking but instead provide the *appropriate* number of off-street parking spaces based on actual demand. The current fixed city-wide off-street parking ratios are based on square footage alone, and research has shown this is a poor predictor for parking demand. For example, one analysis of restaurant parking data found that floor area explained only approximately 4% of the variation in observed parking demand. Therefore, they conflict with the stated goals above. If the purpose of the ordinance is to provide the appropriate number of spaces in proportion to the demands of the proposed use, then the City's regulations should allow parking supply to respond to actual demand rather than requiring the same minimum ratio for similar uses regardless of location. Businesses and property owners are generally better positioned than a citywide zoning ratio to determine how much off-street parking a particular use requires, and the city is best positioned to manage public curb space and address parking-related impacts on public streets, sidewalks, and other public infrastructure. The city should not require every private development to provide enough off-street parking to eliminate all possible demand for public curb parking. Further, another purpose for Section 701 is to "encourage the use of alternative modes of transportation." As previously stated, these fixed ratios can require more parking than is needed for a particular use or location, while failing to account for differences in actual demand. In practice, it often causes an oversupply of off-street asphalt parking, creating urban environments that actively discourage alternative modes of transportation such as walking or biking. The current code contradicts the stated purpose. Therefore, I'm proposing this amendment so the stated code can more appropriately reflect the current purpose and broad goals above.

Proposed Amendment

Based on the goals above, the proposed amendment would revise Article 7 of the City of Thibodaux Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance. *The amendment would remove minimum off-street motor-vehicle parking ratios but would not eliminate regulations*

governing the design, safety, accessibility, drainage, circulation, or maintenance of parking facilities. Specifically it would:

1. Section 704(A)

- a. Delete Table 7.1 and the provisions requiring a specific number of parking spaces based on land use. The city should allow parking supply to respond to the demands of individual uses and the characteristics of the surrounding area.
- b. Retain design and safety regulations. For example, this amendment isn't proposing to remove regulations for space dimensions, accessibility parking, driveway access, drainage, etc.
- c. Remove language allowing the Zoning Administrator to determine parking requirements for unlisted uses.
- d. Update the language for the section to contain language such as:

Off-street vehicle parking may be provided at the discretion of the property owner or developer. Where parking is provided, it shall comply with the applicable design, accessibility, drainage, landscaping, circulation, and safety requirements of this Article.

2. Section 704(D)

Since parking minimums will be removed, the 125% of the minimum will need to be updated.

3. Section 704(E)

This section currently exists to allow businesses to satisfy the minimum parking ratios. Since the goal of this proposed amendment is to encourage property owners to voluntarily share parking facilities where doing so improves land efficiency, reduces unnecessary pavement, and minimizes stormwater runoff, the proposed amendment to this section would be:

- Remove the 300-foot limit for parking agreements, replacing it with something such as:

Shared parking facilities should be connected to participating uses by a safe, continuous pedestrian route. The Zoning Administrator may consider the quality and safety of the pedestrian connection when evaluating whether a shared parking arrangement serves the intended use.

- Allow for off-street parking facilities to be shared among two or more uses through a voluntary written agreement between the participating property owners.
- Update the language to encourage shared parking agreements where it reduces unnecessary impervious surface, promotes more efficient use of existing parking resources, and supports compact, walkable development.
- Update the language to make sure where shared parking is provided, the parking area is connected to each participating use by a safe and reasonably direct pedestrian route.