

MEMO



TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Dylan Edwards, Assistant Planner
James Kramvik, Community Development Director

DATE: March 15, 2023

RE: Review of the Community Development Department's 2022 Parking Study

Introduction:

In 2022, the Community Development Department commissioned a survey from its in-office intern to collect data on off-street parking requirements in Brainerd.

The resulting data looks at the zoning districts of select properties in the City, along with the number of parking spaces required for the property uses, the number present, and the building's area. The data was divided regionally into nine sections of the city:

1. East Brainerd Mall Area
2. Washington St/210 Corridor (5th Ave NE to Mississippi)
3. Washington St/210 Corridor (Mississippi to Baxter)
4. Downtown Area & S 6th St (To Ind Park Rd)
5. North Brainerd
6. Northeast- Mill Ave Section
7. South Brainerd
8. Southeast Brainerd
9. Industrial Areas (Not previous Incl.)

In the findings of the parking study, there are significant regional variations in the parking present versus the parking required.

Findings:

To evaluate the state of off-street parking spaces, staff produced a numerical value; the percentage of spaces present versus the required spaces by code for each building in the survey and then for each region. This allowed staff to observe areas where adjustments to parking requirements may need to increase or decrease.

The following is each region's score:

Region of Brainerd	Total Spaces Required	Total Spaces Present	% Present of Spaces Required
East Brainerd Mall Area	1727	1623	93.98%
Washington St/210 Corridor (5th Ave NE to Mississippi)	1829	1230	67.25%
Washington St/210 Corridor (Mississippi to Baxter)	2474	2563	103.60%
Downtown Area & S 6th St (To Ind Park Rd)	6588	4481	68.02%
North Brainerd	1021	773	75.71%
Northeast- Mill Ave Section	664	692	104.22%
South Brainerd	1350	594	44.00%
Southeast Brainerd	1669	1429	85.62%
Industrial Areas (Not previous Incl.)	1639	1435	87.55%
Totals	18961	14820	78.16%

Zoning District	Spaces Required	Spaces Present	% Present of Required
GC	4955	4205	88.46%
CC	1248	827	66.27%
TN-2	1096	871	79.47%
GI	2431	2086	85.85%
PSP	3522	2556	72.57%
MS	737	476	64.59%
TC	3582	1827	51.01%
ME	373	182	48.79%

The data shows the City is currently underbuilt for parking to the code's standards by approximately 22%; however, this does not track utilization of parking spaces.

Parking Lot Usage Observations:

The prevailing opinion of the Community Development Department is that the City has an overabundance of parking. To test this, we took a sampling of the off-site parking locales tracked in the 2022 Survey and did field observations of their percentage of present spaces used. These observations will shed light on the state of the parking economy in Brainerd.

They are as follows:

Property	Parked Cars present	Spaces present	Percentage of utilization
30 randomly selected Parking Areas	1573	3472	45.31%

This demonstrates that despite having 78.16% of the required parking present city wide, the existing parking is only 45.31% used. These findings make it clear the City has room to lower the amount of required parking spaces needed for different property uses.

The City has a shortage of 4,139 off-street parking spaces from the numbers required in the zoning code, but based on utilization data, staff determined the City faces shortage but, in many areas, has an excessive amount of unused parking capacity. This study does not consider the tourist increases to traffic and parking in the summer season or weekend retail shopping, as this affects decision-making about the year-round parking infrastructure present.

Questions to consider:

- Revision of the Off-Street Parking Ordinance to institute lower parking minimums?
- The creation of parking maximums, specifically zoning districts with dense development.
- Utilizing a tiered approach to make residential parking areas more efficient and reduce the burden on developers?
- Parking in rear properties on unimproved surfaces?