

Is your city mostly parking?

Ever feel like many U.S. cities are overflowing with parking lots?

It's not just your imagination.

[In an analysis of U.S. metros](#) with 1M+ people, 22% of downtown land was dedicated to surface parking lots.

Let's take a look.

What's happening

A new [tool from the Parking Reform Network](#) shows that surface parking dominates the downtown centers of many large US cities.

Downtown Cleveland? 26% surface parking.

Kansas City and Detroit? 29% and 31% parking lots, respectively.

Leading the pack are Arlington and San Bernardino, whose city centers are 42% and 45% dedicated to hosting empty cars.

Why does it matter?

There are copious economic, environmental, and social reasons for city planners to re-think their downtowns' excessive surface parking lots.

Here are a handful of reasons:

- More parking lots are connected to [more expensive housing and decreased housing production](#).
- More parking lots lead to an [increase in pollution](#) and reduce oxygen-supplying green space.
- Parking lots also contribute to the urban heat island effect, [causing hotter cities and worse flooding](#).
- More parking also [incentivizes car use and disincentivizes the use of public transit](#).

Zoom in: Tampa

In Tampa, roughly [a third of the city's downtown](#) is parking. In Tampa, roughly [a third of the city's downtown](#) is parking and 2x as much land is used for parking as greenspace, according to the Tampa Downtown Partnership.

On top of that, much of the city's surface parking is far underused.

A survey of the city's central and business districts shows 6,000 of the 24,000 available parking spots were unused during peak hours.

“But where will I park?”

Reform advocates say that the answer to that question lies in creating fewer parking options.

“Our research indicates that the percentage of land taken up by parking decreases as the percentage of individuals who opt for public transportation, walking, or biking as their primary commuting methods increases,” the Parking Reform Network writes. “This revelation underscores a clear truth: to foster densely walkable cities, we must prioritize accessibility over excessive parking.”

Learn more

At SOFi, we're addressing the world's plastic problem differently. Learn more about [our mission and durable paper straws here](#).

In the news

- There are [118 new emojis](#) en route to your keyboard. A few to expect are a lime wedge, a phoenix, and smiley faces shaking their heads.
- General Motors is launching a somewhat budget-friendly electric vehicle. [The Chevy Equinox EV will start at \\$35,000](#) and have a range of 319 miles of range. The car will also be eligible for the \$7,500 federal EV tax credit.
- The 2024 El Niño may bring the [most rain to the U.S. since 2019](#) — particularly in the central and southern plains and southeastern regions. That might help drought-stricken regions but also might mean flooding elsewhere.
- As their popularity grows, artificial intelligence and crypto are becoming [even larger energy drains](#). Some estimates see energy needs for data centers tripling by 2030 — which would account for 7.5% of U.S. energy consumption.