

Municipal Resources

Truck Parking Considerations for Municipal Development Regulations

#24



83 Diner offers Truck Parking behind its diner, pizza shop, and travel plaza. Photo: Michelle Brummer

Objective

This technical sheet provides municipalities with guidance on recognizing and addressing truck parking needs through comprehensive planning, zoning, and land development regulations. As freight activity continues to grow and truck parking shortages persist across Pennsylvania, local governments play a critical role in ensuring adequate, safe, and accessible parking facilities that support supply chain operations, improve transportation efficiency, reduce illegal parking, and minimize impacts on surrounding communities and local road networks.

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Economic growth drives increased freight activity, resulting in more frequent and longer truck trips across state and local highway networks. Growth may come from expanded production, new or enlarged facilities, or development that relies on receiving and distributing goods. Each truck trip includes an origin, destination, and route—but also a driver who must comply with federal hours-of-service regulations requiring rest breaks after eight hours and longer off-duty periods after 14 hours.

Because travel conditions—such as congestion, weather, and roadway constraints—are often unpredictable, drivers may need to pause trips to stage or park before reaching their destination. Ideally, parking is available near shipping and receiving locations; however, limited access, security restrictions, and site constraints often require drivers to seek parking elsewhere.

Truck parking is a nationwide issue with a shortage of safe parking options for truck drivers. Public rest areas and private travel plazas and truck stops provide important options along major highways, but they are often located far from final destinations and may not meet drivers' parking needs in urban and suburban areas. A 2007 Pennsylvania Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) study documented the truck parking issues facing Pennsylvania.

More recent work, including the 2023 TAC report *Expanding Truck Parking in Pennsylvania* and the Federal Highway Administration's *Truck Parking Development Handbook* (2026),

In October 2025, PennDOT announced the addition of parking expansion options on lands within its rights-of-way and expects to deliver 1200 additional truck parking spaces in over 130 locations throughout the Commonwealth by the end of 2026.



Truck parking was provided at Rutters #41 in the City of Lebanon.
Photo: PennDOT

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Truck parking was provided at Sunoco along SR 901 in Lavelle, Schuylkill County.
Photo: PennDOT

highlights both the persistent shortage and the complexity of solutions. These efforts emphasize that truck parking is not only a transportation issue—it is also a land use and development challenge. Local zoning and development regulations play a central role in determining where and how truck parking can be provided.

Recognizing truck parking as a necessary land use for industrial supply chains is a critical step. The following guidance helps municipalities incorporate truck parking into comprehensive planning, zoning, and land development regulations.

Truck Parking Considerations for the Comprehensive Plan

The comprehensive plan should address how freight activity interacts with the community today and how those relationships may evolve. This includes planning for supporting infrastructure such as truck routes, loading areas, and truck parking to maintain efficient and compliant freight movement.

Key questions to guide planning include:

- Where are existing and future freight-generating land uses (e.g., industrial parks, manufacturing, intermodal facilities)?
- Which highways carry the highest truck volumes and therefore generate the greatest parking demand?
- Where are existing truck parking facilities, and which operate near or over capacity?

- Where does spillover parking occur, including within nearby municipalities?
- How does current truck parking supply align with freight activity patterns?

Answering these questions helps characterize local freight generation. The use of truck origin destination information can help identify appropriate locations and types of truck parking. A comprehensive plan that clearly defines needs and preferred locations can be implemented more effectively through zoning and development regulations.

Truck Parking Considerations for Zoning and Land Development

Zoning

Zoning regulations can encourage truck parking supply by requiring on-site facilities for freight-generating uses and allowing stand-alone facilities in appropriate locations.

Key considerations include:

- **Definitions:** Define truck parking facilities as designated spaces for temporary parking of commercial vehicles, not for storage or unrelated uses.
- **Permitted locations:** Identify zoning districts where truck parking is allowed by right, special exception, or conditional use. Common locations include industrial districts, highway commercial areas, and interchange zones.

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A Truck Parking Lane for Delivery Staging and Driver Rest along the entrance drive to the Amazon Fulfillment Center in Jackson Township, York County, PA. Photo: Google

- **On-site requirements (staging):**

- o Scale required parking to facility operations (e.g., spaces per loading bays or total floor area).
- o Ensure adequate maneuvering space for safe circulation.
- o Require all parking and maneuvering areas to be located on-site and outside rights-of-way, setbacks, and buffers (unless adjacent to similar uses).

- **Off-site options:** Allow shared or separate truck parking facilities that meet the same standards, potentially developed by municipalities or authorities.

- **Driver amenities:** Provide access to basic amenities such as restrooms and drinking water; additional features such as shower facilities, vending, or Wi-Fi may be encouraged.

Providing adequate zoning for truck parking improves supply chain efficiency, reduces illegal parking, minimizes unnecessary truck circulation, and limits impacts on local roads, infrastructure, and surrounding communities.

Land Development

Traditional traffic impact studies focus on vehicle generation and roadway operations but often overlook truck parking demand. Expanding these requirements can better align development with parking needs.

Municipalities should consider developing and requiring a **truck parking assessment** for larger commercial or industrial developments (e.g., five acres or more), including:

- A. Documentation of truck parking operations (available spaces, peak demand, average daily hours of use) at comparable facilities
- B. Estimated truck parking demand for the proposed facility, based on owner's planned truck operations or comparable facilities
- C. Inventory of nearby truck parking supply; include parking available within 20 miles, at minimum
- D. Identification of any parking shortfall (i.e., parking need = B - C)

These assessments help determine whether sufficient parking is already available locally or if additional facilities are needed. Integrating truck parking into the land development review process ensures that new development addresses its operational impacts comprehensively.

Resources

Expanding Truck Parking in Pennsylvania. Pennsylvania Transportation Advisory Committee. (2023). <https://talkpatransportation.com/perch/resources/documents/tac-truck-parking-12-14-2023-compressed.pdf>

Truck Parking Development Handbook. Federal Highway Administration. (March 2026). https://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/Freight/infrastructure/truck_parking/docs/FHWA_Truck_Parking_Development_Handbook_2026.pdf

2007 TAC study. <https://talkpatransportation.com/perch/resources/documents/truck-parking-in-pennsylvania-december-2007-final-report.pdf>