

## WINTER PARKING RESTRICTIONS LEAVE STUDENTS STRUGGLING FOR PARKING

While winter parking restrictions aren't a new thing for Logan car-owners, new high-density student apartments are leaving more and more students without a place to park their cars this winter

By: Megan Nielsen



*The city does not allow cars to park on the streets between midnight and 6 a.m., from Nov. 15 to March 15. Parking officials have been giving cars in violation of the ordinance "Warning notices" since Nov. 15, but will now be ticketing until the middle of March. Photo by Megan Nielsen.*

LOGAN, Utah -- Logan residents have been left stranded with nowhere to park due to winter parking restrictions and lack of off-street parking stall availability.

From Nov. 15 to March 15 no vehicle can be parked on any street or city owned parking lot in Logan between midnight and 6 a.m., according to the Logan Municipal Code.

Logan police Lieutenant Jeff Simmons said overnight parking is prohibited so the city can remove snow. "It's city council mandated," he said. "We just enforce it."

Logan gets an average of 53 inches of snowfall per year, according to the National Weather Service. The average U.S. city gets 26 inches of snowfall per year.

According to the National Weather and Climate Center, this winter all basins experienced below to much below normal monthly snowpack conditions from November through February, but March was a typical normal snowpack month.

Simmons said to get the roads and major arteries cleared the cars need to be off the sides of the roads.

Eve Ivie, the division secretary for Logan's street maintenance crews, said, "The plows go out as the storm comes. It totally depends on weather but our plows are out a lot at night."

"Obstructions on the road are a huge problem," she said.

Ivie said cars are the biggest of those issues.

Three incidents were reported by snow plows during the 2016-2017 winter, costing the city \$1,803, according to Brody Parker, Logan's risk manager.

Parker said no incidents were reported in the winter of 2017-2018. The 2016-2017 winter was a lot more severe and the plows put in a lot more hours than this winter, he said.

"Roads need to be cleared of snow so people can go to work and to the things they need to do to generate economic activity," Simmons said.

Ivie said the city's winter parking restriction is extremely helpful to the snow removal crew.

The hours of the law were modified in 2015 but it's been in place for at least 20 years, Simmons said.

According to Logan City Parking Laws and Ordinances, winter parking permits may be purchased by property owners of legally existing nonconforming residential properties built prior to 1968, if said properties cannot physically accommodate legal onsite parking.

Simmons said if granted an overnight permit, the cost is \$75 for the winter. Winter parking permits are not available to any other Logan residents.

The city isn't the only one enforcing winter parking restrictions.

"There is no overnight parking on-campus without a permit," James Nye, executive director of parking and transportation at Utah State University, said.

Permits are only granted to on-campus residents and special exceptions for those with overnight jobs, Nye said.

Simmons reported 1,134 overnight parking tickets were issued on Logan's streets from Nov. 15, 2017 to March 15, 2018.

Nye reported 60 tickets were issued in that same time frame to cars parked on campus overnight without a permit.

"We've had some discussions about ticketing only on nights it snows but the fact of the matter is the years we decide we're not going to ticket when there's no snow and we leave it to them to decide to move their vehicle on the nights of a storm, it doesn't get done," Simmons said.

"It's a blanket law," Simmons said, "and we decided we just need to enforce it all the time. If we leave it to people, we have big problems when the storms do come."

Simmons said he gets calls all the time but there isn't much he can do. The city doesn't have jurisdiction over private parking lots.

City council member Herm Olsen said he is concerned how Logan will accommodate parking with its predicted population growth.

Cache Valley is predicted to grow at a rate of 1.7 percent yearly over the next 50 years, according to the Kern C. Gardner Policy Institute 2015-2065 State and County Projections. In 2015, Cache Valley's population was 112,656. In 2016, it's predicted to be 223,154.

"That's double the people we have now," Olsen said. "We either have to expand out into our mountains and open space or expand up," he said.

While the city has its concerns over handling population growth, parking is not on their list.

"The city is not obligated to provide parking to people. Our job is to keep the roads clear to facilitate movement of people and products," Simmons said. "It needs to be worked out with the landlords."

According to Logan City Parking Laws and Ordinances, "There exist certain entities within the city, such as university complexes and other large buildings, which attract commuters seeking parking in nearby areas which are predominantly residential and business in nature. The increased demand often exacerbates the severe shortage of on-street parking for residents and businesses in such areas."

"The reason this parking issue has come about is you have apartment complexes that have underbuilt parking for profit," Nye said. "You make more money building complexes than parking."

Deborah Miller, member of the Logan preservation council, said she has been protesting a change in zoning from "town center" to "high-density" that would allow 90-foot high apartment buildings to go up on Main Street, 100 West and 200 West.

While Miller said all high-rise apartments in Cache Valley raise a concern, "This is out of character with our community," she said.

“This isn’t Salt Lake City,” Miller said, “These building would obstruct our view of the mountains and to me, that’s heartbreaking.”

Loreen Flanary, Logan resident, said she lives near Ellis Elementary school and hasn’t had any issues with winter parking restrictions. “It’s far from the University and we don’t have students living in our neighborhood,” she said.

Most houses are single family homes and the garage offers as many spots as most families have cars, Flanary said.

The main area of concern for winter parking violations in Logan are the three blocks east of Lars Hansen Drive, according to Simmons. 37 percent of parking tickets from September 2017 to February 2018 were given to cars parked in that area.

“The growth in that area has been pretty substantial,” said Russ Holley, a senior planner in Logan’s planning and zoning department. “About 20 years ago the city made a concerted effort to strategically place high density areas adjacent to the University so that new development and redevelopment in the form of student housing could be located there.”

“We’ve had a huge explosion of apartment complexes in Logan that do not provide enough parking for their tenants,” Nye said. “Since USU is a public institution we cannot assist private development with their parking problems.”

“When I bought my contract for my apartment they told me that I wasn’t going to have a spot in the underground parking garage because it was already full,” said Bobbee Russell, a Logan resident and USU student.

Nye said parking complexes who don’t have enough spots for all their tenants should market to students not bringing a vehicle.

“There’s a lot of misinformation out there right now because you’ve got apartment complexes not knowing what to do,” Nye said.

Simmons said landlords leave it to the students too often. "I feel sorry for the students," he said, "They leave it to the students to just fend for themselves and that's not fair."

"Sometimes you'll get students coming in late and they'll have sold out of all the parking stalls and the students aren't adequately informed that winter parking isn't allowed," Holley said.

Macaley Nelson, Logan resident and student at USU, said when she first moved up to Logan her apartment complex had already sold out of parking passes.

Nelson said she parked on the street until the winter parking regulations kicked in. "Then I had to find a new place to park," she said, "and it ended up being a far walk."

"Right now, we have a lot of apartment complexes that aren't being straight up," Nye said. "They're just pushing the problems off on to the city and hoping that the University will assist them but we can't help and the city can't either."

Looking to next winter, Simmons said, "I don't anticipate changing the winter parking restrictions at all."

"The rules will stay the same," he said. "We simply will keep enforcing the law."

"My suggestion to students is be very wary about what contract you sign," Nye said. "I don't think a lot of complexes are being up front with their students."

Nelson said parking had a big impact on her decision for housing next year. "I've been trying to find places that actually have parking spaces available for residents and don't overcharge for it," she said.

## **PARKING REDUCTIONS APPROVED FOR NEW HIGH-DENSITY STUDENT APARTMENTS**

LOGAN, Utah -- Growth to student housing and exceptions made to parking requirements have made off-street parking near Utah State University limited and expensive.

Current zoning laws say projects in a campus residential zone must provide one parking spot for every one occupant, according to Russ Holley, senior planner in Logan's planning and zoning department.

"Past rules and ordinances have allowed a reduction to the parking ratio on-site, if alternative parking is procured," Holley said.

The Factory and Millennial Towers, both zoned campus residential, were approved by the planning and zoning department with reductions in the number of parking stalls being built on-site, Holley said.

Millennial Towers will open in the fall. The complex is located at 650 E. 1000 N., in the area Logan police Lieutenant Jeff Simmons said is the biggest problem for parking.

"The opening could cause a lot of problems," Simmons said.

Reductions were approved because of the complexes proximity to campus, proximity to a bus stop and arrangements made with the university.

"Those university arrangements will soon be rescinded," Holley said. "The hard part now is they already have those building permits. The Factory is already built and Millennial Towers is almost done, so at this point where do you get parking stalls?"

James Nye, executive director of parking and transportation at USU, said for the past two years, and for one more year, USU has agreed to help apartment complexes in the city meet the Logan city ordinance by allowing them to park in the east stadium parking lot with a permit.

The planning commission approved Millennial Towers with a parking reduction of 75 percent as many stalls as total occupancy, according to Holley. 15 percent of that parking is off-site, meaning Millennial Towers will only offer about 60 percent as many on-site parking spots as occupants.

The Factory was approved to build 75 percent as many parking spots as occupants.

The Factory first opened spring semester of 2016. Sterling Hawkes, office assistant at The Factory, said when permits sold out for The Factory's parking garage they didn't have any alternative options for students.

"They were granted an exception and the city and the complexes will bear the burden of trying to find places for the students to park," Nye said.

A parking permit for the school year at The Factory is \$300 for a regular pass and \$500 for a reserved spot.

A parking permit at Millennial Towers is \$500 for a standard spot and \$400 for a double parked stall.

Jody Robins, property manager for Millennial Towers, said the parking is expensive because they want students to really consider not bringing a car.

"The planning commission doesn't get involved in private personal contracts," Holley said. "We make sure that the building is built as the building permit details. We're basically out of it at that point."

Dax Meyers, office assistant at The Factory, said the complex has plans to expand its parking garage. "We're extending on the east side of the parking garage and I think it should open in 2019," he said.

Millennial Towers will have 108 units, can house 684 students and has 400 parking spots on-site.

Robins said the reductions were approved about five years ago. "It was a push to go green," Robins said.

Millennial Towers is close to campus and Logan has great public transit, Robins said.

Aggie Shuttles and the Cache Valley Transit District service Logan. Both buses are free to the public. Aggie Shuttles have five day routes running Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and one evening route running Monday through Friday from 5:30 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Cache Valley Transit District operates Monday through Saturday and has 16 different routes running through Cache Valley.

"We thought by advertising to students without cars we could help minimize the carbon footprint of the university," Robins said.

Robins said they had not sold out of parking passes but will lease land nearby to provide more parking if necessary.

"Unfortunately, parking is becoming a large issue and these students need to be aware that the solution may be not bringing a car," Nye said.