



Truck Loading Zones (TLZ)

Truck loading zones (TLZ) allow for the efficient delivery of freight to businesses, and effective TLZ management is necessary to ensure that businesses are able to receive on-time deliveries and operate effectively in constrained urban environments. The physical design of urban streets poses a number of challenges for accommodating a broad range of transportation modes and a diversity of street users. Many of these challenges are a consequence of competing demands and desires within the street and a need to balance the needs of diverse ground floor uses, such as retail and dining, with upper floor office and residential uses.

Portland currently reviews TLZ requests by businesses on-demand. There is no formal process to inform how or where TLZs are created. Businesses, delivery companies, and the parking public are left to navigate a disconnected, piecemeal system. Currently there are 44 separate signage designations for TLZs, no default standard advising where on a blockface to locate a TLZ, and a lack of usage data for existing TLZs. The lack of default guidance to implement TLZs has led to an inefficient use of public right-of-way with multiple conflicts between users in the limited curbside environment.

The guidelines provided below are intended to provide a framework for making informed decisions leading to durable, flexible, and effective TLZ management.

POLICY FRAMEWORK

The policy and best practices considered in this report align with the overall goals identified in the broader Performance Based Parking Management Manual and TLZ Final Report. Policy goals for TLZ management would include:

- Enhance mobility, accessibility, and safety in business districts; prioritizing an engaging and attractive pedestrian experience.
- Reinforce an area's identity, unique sense of place, and balance of diverse access needs.
- Strengthen commerce and economic vitality.
- Create streets that are well planned, managed, adaptable, and readily maintained.

DESIRED OUTCOMES: ADEQUATE LOADING ZONES, PARKING, AND ENFORCEMENT

Freight carriers rely on loading zones and parking to support loading and unloading of goods at freight facilities. In urban environments with few loading docks or off-street loading zones, loading and unloading activities tend to occur curbside. Commercial loading zones tend to be located in front of commercial buildings with designated signage for the loading zone. Curbside loading zones may be enforceable during certain periods of the day, corresponding with business hours or off-peak delivery periods. Some key outcomes for managing urban loading areas include:



- **Establish loading zones in areas that are as close to the receiving areas of shipping/receiving businesses as possible** to reduce delivery/pick-up time and disruptions to pedestrian and vehicular traffic that could result from moving goods to and from the truck.
- **Designate commercial loading zones to balance the various user demands.** Depending upon the other land uses present in the district, there may be competing demands for curbside space (i.e., shoppers and business patrons may need on-street parking during business hours, while residents may demand on-street parking overnight). Commercial loading zones should be established to meet freight needs while being sensitive to other demands for curbside space.
- **Consider greater use of “combination zones” to maximize the efficiency of loading zones to meet demand and capture capacity in periods of low or non-use for freight delivery.** Any parking stall is not efficient if it is restricted from use when it is not needed. Combination zones allow spaces to serve TLZ functions during designated periods and to be used as timed zones for visitor or residential uses at other times of the day. This increases overall efficiency of TLZs and helps to mitigate conflicts between competing users.
- **Enforcement of parking and loading rules should be rigorous.** To ensure that curbside truck loading space is used effectively without impacts to traffic operations and safety, enforcement of parking and loading rules is critical. Enforcement of time limits and vehicle types allowed to park in the loading zones discourages parking by passenger vehicles in these loading zones during designated TLZ hours. When trucks are unable to find an appropriate place to load or unload, they may find alternative means of making their deliveries or pickups by double-parking, blocking travel lanes or driveways, or parking in other configurations that disrupt traffic flows and could present unsafe conditions for passing traffic.

RECOMMENDED IMPLEMENTATION ELEMENTS

The City desires to simplify the current system associated with TLZs while ensuring that the process recognizes that there is no one-size-fits-all solution given the diversity of needs related to loading zones. To that end, the following elements for managing and providing TLZs are recommended:

1. Establish 3 to 5 Standard Loading Zone Sign options

There are currently 44 different signage designations for loading zones. This proves confusing for customers and cumbersome to manage effectively. Based on the Policy Framework and Desired Outcomes, the ideal is to ensure that loading demand is fully accommodated but allow use of such spaces for other uses when loading access is not needed. **Table 1** provides a summary of a more limited signage allowance.



2. Maximize use of combination zones for both TLZ and customer/visitor use

The demand for parking in business districts is growing significantly. The ability to use TLZs as paid combination zones (for customer/visitor use) will maximize the overall capacity of parking on-street while providing TLZ access for delivery vehicles. This is most effective in districts with active ground floor uses.

Table 1: Recommended TLZ Signage Options

TLZ Designation	Combination Zone Option	Comments
7AM – 7PM MON – SAT	Not likely	Open for any use 7PM – 7AM.
7AM – 11AM MON – SAT	Yes	Combination Zone option 11AM – 7PM. Unregulated SUN.
7AM – 2PM MON – FRI	Yes	Combination Zone option 2PM – 7PM. Unregulated SAT/SUN.
10 PM – 7AM ALL DAYS	Yes	Combination Zone option 7AM – 7PM.

3. Establish preferred location on block

Clearly sign and mark loading zones to discourage use or encroachment by private vehicles. Locate loading zones near corners to facilitate maneuvering trucks in and out of curbside spaces. Locating TLZs on the far side of the block is the preferred approach when feasible. Additional information on this element can be found in the City’s *2015 Truck and Loading Zone Study*.

4. Maintain current 30-minute time limits in truck loading zones (during TLZ designated hours)

Time limit loading zones (30 minutes) to encourage use only while actively loading or unloading and discourage commercial vehicles from occupying loading zones for extended periods.

5. Limit TLZs on certain types of streets

The City has adopted a new street character system that designates type of street use. A map illustrating the designated uses for streets in the Central City is included in the **Appendix** to this report. The map shows street designations by color: red (retail/commercial), blue (boulevard) and green (flexible). TLZs will default to the following standards associated with the street character map.

Table 2: TLZ Street Restrictions

TLZ Designation	Allowed Streets	Not Allowed
7AM – 7PM MON – SAT	Blue – Boulevard / Undesignated	Green - Flexible
7AM – 11AM MON – SAT	Blue – Boulevard / Undesignated	Green - Flexible
7AM – 2PM MON – FRI	Blue – Boulevard / Undesignated	Green - Flexible
10 PM – 7AM ALL DAYS	Red – Retail/Commercial	Green - Flexible



6. Initiate an annual review process to confirm on-going need for TLZs

Often, businesses that request TLZs move or turnover, leaving previously approved TLZs underutilized or unnecessary. The City will initiate an annual review of loading zones to ensure that they are in use and serving business needs. This is a housekeeping exercise that will keep better data on the number of TLZs, their use and benefit to area businesses. Such a review ensures that the number of TLZs is appropriate and business needs are being effectively served for both loading and customer/visitor demand. Key metrics to collect as part of the review should include TLZ occupancy, turnover, duration of stay, violation rates, and peak hour of use.

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APPENDIX

