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A look at Dallas' largest buildings and their park(ing) dilemmas



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Jake Dean

Bank of America Plaza: 1.8 million SF, 1,827 parking spaces (1,439 garage and 388 spaces of building owned surface lots), or 1 parking space per 1,000 square feet of office space



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As downtown Dallas begins to reap the fruits of its struggle to urbanize the city's inner core, there's a debate going on between urban planners and property owners: Does Dallas' central business district need more parks or more parking?

We took a look at the numbers and issues behind the conversation in [this past week's story about green spaces or parking places](#).

During the boom in downtown Dallas in the 1970s and 1980s, developers only built the number of parking spaces needed at the time. A typical office of that period would have more than 500 square feet per employee, and developers built just one or two parking spaces for every 1,000 square feet of office space.

However, gone are the days of spacious offices with generous elbow room for employees. Today's offices pack people in more tightly, with about 250 square feet of office space per person and a corresponding need for four spaces for every 1,000 square feet.

[Mike Ablon](#) ran into this head-on when his Dallas-based PegasusAblon partnered with Houston-based [The Lionstone Group](#) on the October 2012 acquisition of the 1.1 million-square-foot Ross Tower, formerly known as Lincoln Plaza. The building had just 1,544 parking spaces, a ratio of 1.25 per 1,000 square feet.

“To have a large building and saying parking doesn't matter would be the same thing as not having fiber cable in your building and saying the Internet doesn't matter,” Ablon said. “It's part of the infrastructure of an office building.”

To cope, the partners bought a neighboring building, 411 N. Akard St., and its 788 parking spaces with the ability to convert the office building into more parking. In all, the renovation and expansion project cost \$25 million.

Ross Tower now offers three parking spaces per 1,000 square feet of office space, which Ablon says means it can compete with comparatively newer areas, such as Uptown, Las Colinas and Preston Center.

Take a look at our slideshow to see how other towers in downtown Dallas measure up.