



CITY OF KIRKLAND  
Planning & Community Development  
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## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Kurt Triplett, City Manager

**From:** Jon Regala, Senior Planner  
Jeremy McMahan, Planning Manager  
Eric Shields, AICP, Planning Director

**Date:** June 25, 2015

**File No.:** CAM13-02032

**Subject:** AMENDMENTS TO MULTI-FAMILY PARKING REQUIREMENTS

## **RECOMMENDATION**

The City Council considers the following questions in regards to the Planning Commission recommended changes to the City's multi-family parking requirements and provides final direction to staff. Staff will then return to the July 21 Council meeting with an ordinance for final adoption.

1. Does the Council support the Planning Commission recommendation to regulate parking citywide based on the number of bedrooms in a unit, rather than the current approach of having a single standard (1.7 stalls/unit) regardless of the number of bedrooms in each unit? The Commission's recommended parking requirements are:
  - 1.2 stalls/studio unit
  - 1.3 stalls/1-bedroom unit
  - 1.6 stalls/2-bedroom unit
  - 1.8 stalls/3-bedroom unit

Staff recommendation: Adopt the new standards for all zones except as discussed in item 2 below.

2. Should the new parking requirements above be applied to the YBD 1 zone (Transit Oriented Development site at South Kirkland Park & Ride) and zones in the North Rose Hill and Totem Lake Business Districts where multi-family parking is currently based on a parking demand study funded by the applicant? Background on Urban Center parking is on page 4 below.

Staff recommendation: Neutral. Since the Totem Lake Business District is an Urban Center designated to be served by transit, if the Council wishes to establish a standard, staff suggests also considering the parking standards used by Bellevue and Redmond in their Urban Centers (1 stall/unit). In addition, guest parking could be required at a rate of up to 0.25 stalls/unit which is what Redmond requires in its Urban Centers (Redmond Downtown and Overlake). A less parking intensive approach would be to require no guest parking, similar to Bellevue's approach.

The parking standard decided upon for Totem Lake could apply to the North Rose Hill Business District (NRHBD) since it is adjacent to the Totem Lake Urban Center. If the Council used Urban Center standards for Totem Lake, another option for NRHBD could be to apply the standards in subsection 1 above since it is not technically within the Urban Center boundary.

Staff recommends that the YBD 1 parking standard remain unchanged since the property has been recently developed (TOD at South Kirkland Park & Ride).

3. Does Council support increasing the base minimum parking requirement by 10% and requiring these stalls be set aside for visitor parking?

Staff recommendation: Staff recommends this visitor parking be required.

4. Should visitor parking be required of smaller multi-family developments (see Public Input section below and Fred Romano letter, Attachment 1)?

Staff recommendation: Staff recommends not requiring visitor parking for smaller multi-family developments. If Council agrees with this, a way to do it would be to eliminate the rule that requires the rounding up of fractions of stalls if less than one visitor parking stall is required. For example, the visitor parking for a 6-unit development consisting of all two-bedroom units would be calculated as 0.96 stalls. Current regulations would require that the fraction be rounded up to the next whole number, which in this example would be one parking stall. A change to the draft code could be made so that a visitor stall would not be required in this instance.

5. Does Council support providing an option to reduce required parking for multi-family developments by 15% if located within ½ mile of the Downtown Kirkland Transit Center with an approved parking covenant that includes a transit subsidy? If a parking standard is adopted in the Totem Lake Business District, should this option be made available for properties located near the Totem Lake Transit Center as well?

Staff Recommendation: During the code amendment process, staff had recommended this parking reduction option apply only to apartments. Originally, condominiums were not included in the amendments given the complexity surrounding the application of the transit subsidy component to a home owner association. The Planning Commission eventually recommended applying the parking reduction option to both residential types. Their reasoning was that required language in the home owner association documents will state that the home owners association is responsible for funding and managing the transit subsidy. Staff recommends providing this parking reduction option to Downtown and to properties located near the Totem Lake Transit Center. Adoption of this change supports the City's policies related to compact development and multi-modal transportation. In addition, the 15% reduction would essentially remove the 'buffer' recommended by the Planning Commission and bring parking supply more in line with the RSP model results. Council has raised the concern about the need to identify minimum transit service levels necessary to make this parking reduction successful.

6. Does the Council wish to consider eliminating the parking modifications process? If not, there are several policy issues below to be considered.
7. For parking modifications, the Planning Commission recommended the resulting parking rate be increased by 15% to be consistent with the 15% 'buffer' added to the Right Size Parking calculator base parking rate. Does the Council support revising the criteria for multi-family parking modifications to reflect the approach used in developing the parking requirements in item #1 above?

Staff Recommendation: Staff supports this change. Adopting this amendment should reduce the number of multi-family parking modification requests since the application of this approach would yield parking rates similar to the results of the proposed parking requirements (see Attachment 2). Staff would like to note however, that adoption of this approach would most likely result in higher parking standards if applied in the Totem Lake Urban Center and Downtown Kirkland, when compared to the parking requirements for Bellevue and Redmond's Urban Centers, assuming the Council does not set standards in Totem Lake. (See pg. 4)

8. Does the Council want to consider other potential changes to the parking modification process, such as counting on-street parking towards parking demand for the subject property?
9. Are there any other policy questions the Council wishes to consider related to multi-family parking requirements? For example, anecdotal information suggests that properties that charge for parking separate from rent have a higher parking vacancy rate because tenants

can park for free on the street. Should the City get involved with on-site parking management by assuring that on-site parking is made available?

10. Does the Council need any additional information or analysis?

11. Is there anything else that the Council wishes to consider in the ordinance?

### **BACKGROUND DISCUSSION**

At the February 3, 2015 Council study session, the City Council reviewed the Planning Commission recommended changes to the City's multi-family parking requirements. The recommended changes are summarized as follows:

- Change the base multi-family parking requirement Citywide to the following unit-type based approach:
  - 1.2 stalls/studio unit
  - 1.3 stalls/1-bedroom unit
  - 1.6 stalls/2-bedroom unit
  - 1.8 stalls/3-bedroom unit

These changes would not apply in the YBD 1 zone (Transit Oriented Development site at South Kirkland Park & Ride) and zones in the North Rose Hill Business District and Totem Lake Business District where multi-family parking is currently determined on a case-by-case basis.

- Increase the base minimum parking requirement by 10% and require these stalls be set aside for visitor parking.
- Provide an option to reduce required parking for multi-family developments by 15% if located within ½ mile of the Downtown Kirkland Transit Center with an approved parking covenant (includes a transit subsidy).
- Revise the criteria for multi-family parking modifications to reflect the parking approach with this project.

At the study session, Chris Breiland, transportation consultant with Fehr & Peers, presented and answered questions regarding the parking data and methodology. The staff memo dated January 22, 2015, which contains detailed background information including all feedback from the public received during the code amendment process, can be found at the following link:

[http://www.kirklandwa.gov/Assets/City+Council/Council+Packets/020315/3a\\_StudySession.pdf](http://www.kirklandwa.gov/Assets/City+Council/Council+Packets/020315/3a_StudySession.pdf)

#### Parking Rate Approach

The proposed parking requirements reflect a conservative approach. A 15% 'buffer' was added to the baseline RSP calculator model in calculating parking supply. An additional 10% 'buffer' is also being proposed to be set aside for visitor parking. Below are additional staff observations regarding the proposed changes to multi-family parking requirements.

The County's Right Size Parking (RSP) calculator, which was developed using countywide parking data, was validated with Kirkland specific multi-family parking data. The RSP calculator was found to be fairly accurate with the majority (18 of 24) of the Kirkland studied sites by calculating parking demand to within +/- 15% of Kirkland parking data.

Six of 24 sites were found to be outside the 15% margin of error. The RSP calculator under-predicted parking for only two of these six sites (Affinity condos: short by 19% relative to RSP calculator and Tiara de Lago condos: short by 23% relative to RSP calculator) with the other four sites calculated to have a greater parking supply than the observed parking demand. For more information, see the Fehr & Peers report in Attachment 1, Tables 1-3 in the [January 22, 2015 staff memo](#).

Taking a conservative approach, the Planning Commission recommended that the RSP model parking rate be increased by 15% to reflect the high end of observed parking utilization for the majority of the studied sites. The proposed parking rates (includes the 15% buffer), when applied to the Kirkland studied sites, would provide adequate parking supply for 23 of 24 sites when compared to the observed parking demand. The only site that would not have adequate parking

supply based on observed utilization would be Tiara de Lago (short by 0.29 stalls/unit and only short 0.12 stalls/unit if the proposed visitor parking requirement is applied). For the 24 studied sites, the proposed parking requirements would result in an average supply of 1.52 stalls/unit (not including visitor parking). Including the visitor parking requirement would result in an average of 1.67 stalls/unit for the studied sites.

### Street Parking

In response to the concern that street parking was not included in the analysis, the project team further analyzed five of the studied sites that did not have any available street parking (Villagio apts., Totem Lake apts., Forbes Creek apts., Wild Glenn condos, and Affinity condos). These sites represent a conservative parking scenario since all parking must be contained onsite due to the lack of street parking. These sites had a 1.41 stall/unit average observed parking utilization. Applying the proposed parking requirements to these sites would require an average of 1.72 stalls/unit (includes visitor parking). On average, the proposed parking requirement would provide 0.31 stalls/unit more parking than what was observed. Based on this additional analysis, the project team concluded that the proposed rates provide more than enough parking than needed to meet actual parking demand.

### Parking in an Urban Center

As part of its review of Comprehensive Plan updates, the Puget Sound Regional Council has a checklist that asks jurisdictions to address certain components of their plans as well as recommended strategies (see Attachments 3 and 4). Recently, it has come to our attention that for jurisdictions with designated Urban Centers one of the items on the checklist pertains to parking requirements. The expectations about parking are not entirely clear but the principle is that Urban Centers are expected to have a greater proportion of their trips handled by modes other than single occupant vehicles and consequently should have lower parking requirements than elsewhere. There should also be a greater emphasis on shared and managed parking. According to Kirkland's Transportation Engineer, it is commonly accepted that reduced parking requirements are one of the most effective ways to discourage SOV travel.

By way of comparison, Seattle has eliminated parking requirements in many areas of the city, including downtown, which is also an Urban Center. Bellevue and Redmond, which between them have three Urban Centers, each require only one parking stall per unit in their Urban Centers, with Redmond also requiring a small amount of guest parking (see Table 2 on the following page).

For the Totem Lake Business District, which is also a designated Urban Center, the Zoning Code currently specifies that parking for all uses shall be determined on a case by case basis. The same provision was adopted for several of the North Rose Hill zones that abut and serve as an extension of the Totem Lake Business District. This was enacted many years ago with the intent of allowing developers to demonstrate, through parking studies, what the true need for parking is – which would presumably be less than elsewhere. While this allows flexibility, we have also been criticized that it doesn't provide a clear standard, which some property owners/developers would prefer. Consequently, as part of the Comprehensive Plan update, staff has discussed adding parking standards for the Totem Lake zones, while still allowing/encouraging developers to propose parking modifications which allow further reduction of required parking. If this approach is to be used, it still begs the question of what the base parking standards should be. For multi-family uses, three obvious options would be:

1. Use the same standards as elsewhere in the City (reflecting the Council decision on whether or not to adopt the proposed new standards);
2. Use the results of the RSP Calculator without adding a 15% buffer to the base rate or providing 10% visitor parking; or
3. Adopt a lower standard, such as those adopted by Bellevue and Redmond.

Preliminarily, staff would prefer the last approach, as it would show a greater commitment to achieving the densities and mode splits expected in an Urban Center.

If the Council is interested in establishing the Downtown as an Urban Center in the future, similar consideration should be given to parking requirements there. However, staff recognizes that this would be a difficult time to propose a substantially lower parking standard for the Downtown and such a proposal would require additional public process as well as identifying minimum transit service levels necessary. If Council wishes to approximate Urban Center standards for Downtown it should adopt the proposed parking standards along with the proposal to reduce the required parking by 15% within ½ mile of the Kirkland Transit Center or to allow parking modifications without increasing the results by 15%. Table 1 below compares the varying standards relative to the observed parking utilization for a number of downtown projects.

**TABLE 1. CBD PARKING (includes visitor parking)**

Development	Current Code (stalls/unit)	Proposed Code (converted to stalls/unit)	RSP Calculator	Observed Utilization
Waterview	1.81	1.66	1.29	1.31
Brezza	1.83	1.75	1.39	1.27
Portsmith	1.90	1.66	1.34	1.17
Plaza on State	1.59	1.56	1.26	1.24
Tiara De Lago	2.23	1.79	1.47	1.92
Kirkland Central	1.43	1.53	1.17	1.23
Watermark	2.02	1.71	1.27	1.30
<i>Average</i>	1.83	1.67	1.31	1.38

Comparison to other Cities

Table 2 below provides a parking comparison with neighboring jurisdictions and Kirkland’s proposed requirements. Also included in the table are the parking requirements for the neighboring city’s downtown, other high-density areas, or urban center.

**TABLE 2. MULTI-FAMILY PARKING REQUIREMENT COMPARISON**

Jurisdiction	MF Parking Requirement	MF Visitor Parking Requirement	Parking Reductions Allowed?
<b>Bellevue</b>			
General	1.2 stalls/studio & one-bedroom 1.6 stalls/two-bedroom 1.8 stalls/three-bedroom	No requirement	Yes - based on parking demand study.
Downtown*	1 stall/unit		
Bel-Red	0.75 stalls/unit		
<b>Redmond</b>			
General	1.2 stalls/studio 1.5 stalls/one-bedroom 1.8 stalls/two-bedroom 2 stalls/three-bedroom	No requirement	Yes - based on parking demand study and/or approved Transportation Demand Program
Downtown*	1 stall/unit		
Overlake*	1 stall/unit		
<b>Bothell</b>			
General	2 stalls/unit	1 stall/ 5 units	Yes – through shared parking provisions
Downtown	0.75 stalls/unit	No requirement	
<b>Kirkland</b> (proposed for all zones)	1.2 stalls/studio 1.3 stalls/1-bedroom 1.6 stalls/2-bedroom 1.8 stalls/3-bedroom	Increase base parking requirement by 10% and set aside for visitor parking	Yes - Take results of the parking demand study and increase it by 15%. The visitor parking requirement would still apply.
* Urban Center			

Additional Background

The recent Planning magazine (The Magazine of the American Planning Association - May 2015) contains several articles that address the topics of reduced parking standards and setting parking maximums. They have been included as Attachments 5 and 6.

**PUBLIC INPUT**

A summary of the public comment received as part of the code amendment process can be found on page 11 of the [January 22, 2015 staff memo](#). All of the submitted public comment emails/letters can be found in Attachment 9 of the same memo.

Fred Romano, owner of the property located at 200 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue South, has resubmitted several comment letters along with additional drawings and parking scenarios for his property (see Attachment 1). His primary concern regarding the proposed parking regulations is that the visitor parking requirement is onerous on smaller properties and could potentially result in a density reduction where high-density residential uses are encouraged. Mr. Romano is proposing that the visitor parking requirement not apply to multi-family developments with 8 or fewer units. Bellevue and Redmond do not require additional visitor parking (see Table 2). The Planning Commission acknowledged Mr. Romano’s concerns but did not make a recommendation on the topic.

**ATTACHMENTS**

1. Fred Romano comment letters
2. Parking Modification Comparison Table
3. PSRC Parking Management Plan Checklist
4. Strategy 9 – Growing Transit Communities
5. May 2015 Planning Magazine article: Releasing the Parking Brake on Economic Development
6. May 2015 Planning Magazine article: Putting a Cap on Parking Requirements

June 25, 2014

Dear Commissioners:

I am writing about your current discussion regarding Zoning Code Amendment to Multi-Family Parking Requirements, File CAM13-02032.

I am the owner of a 3800 square foot lot (95 by 40 ft.) in CBD-4 at 200 Second Avenue South where I lived for more than 10 years. There are 5 such lots of this size in CBD-4. I believe these are the smallest lots in all of the downtown and represent a unique parking perspective.

Due to the development pattern of the surrounding lots and their location relative to the downtown core, these small lots seem to be most appropriate for smaller multifamily units. I conducted a preliminary architectural study indicating that my site would support up to four, two-bedroom townhome-style units subject to parking requirements. No underground parking is feasible for the site.

The following identifies some unique parking issues associated with the development of smaller multi-family buildings that you might consider.

- The current parking requirement results in smaller developments sharing a larger parking load on a stall per unit basis than larger developments. Current code stipulates that a minimum of two visitor stalls are required regardless of the size of the development, resulting in a larger share on a parking per unit basis by the smaller developments (2.5 stalls per unit for a 2 bedroom four-plex, for example). A shift to parking stalls per unit eliminates this bias.
- Additional visitor requirements for smaller buildings will result in displacing a disproportionate area of the building footprint with the required visitor parking. (Underground parking is not possible on these small lots.) In my case, this will result in one of the four units being eliminated. I doubt this was the intent of the framers of the existing parking requirement. I also do not think this result is in keeping with stated Comprehensive Plan policies regarding growth, density, transportation goals, reduced housing costs, and pedestrian activity, especially in a central business district.
- The current parking scheme rewards units with fewer bedrooms (i.e. 1 bedroom vs. 2, etc.) in terms of parking stall requirements. This too appears to be in conflict with policies of the Comprehensive Plan.
- Current zoning allows single family development in CBD 4 with 2 parking stalls per unit in total. It could be argued in terms of parking demand, that the individual units of a small duplex, triplex or four-plex development are similar to single family units. So why impose a more onerous parking requirement on these uses? I am not however suggesting that 2 parking stalls per unit is appropriate in the CBD zone.

- Few small units if any exist in the City, and the data does not address them. The data presented samples complexes that contain a minimum of 26 stalls.
- The CBD has a unique situation in the city where much of the street parking is not always generated by multifamily units. From my observation when I lived there and at present, the spillover to the neighboring streets is largely due to commercial and retail demand in the downtown.
- Transportation Demand Management is worthwhile for larger developments, but not practical for smaller development. The latter do not have management on the premises or the ability to spread costs across many units. Providing new tenants with information about local alternative transportation choices might be something to consider. I would voluntarily do this as part of my service as a landlord.

In summary, I hope you consider the following during your discussion:

- Shift to a per unit basis parking requirement as presented by Fehr & Peers at most, with no minimum requirement for visitor parking, especially for smaller developments.
- TDM requirement would only be feasible for larger developments that have the space and resources to manage such a program.
- Bicycles and public transit should play into the transportation mix for developments and should be encouraged and rewarded with parking concessions. The ½ mile distance to the transit station in the downtown seems reasonable.
- Consider EV stations on the premises as an option to negate some of the parking requirement and achieve environmental goals.
- Apply street parking management in areas that are affected by overflow on a case-by-case basis.
- Consider the nature of the units, especially those that resemble single family unit size and configuration. Parking requirement should not exceed those for single family for smaller developments that resemble single family development.

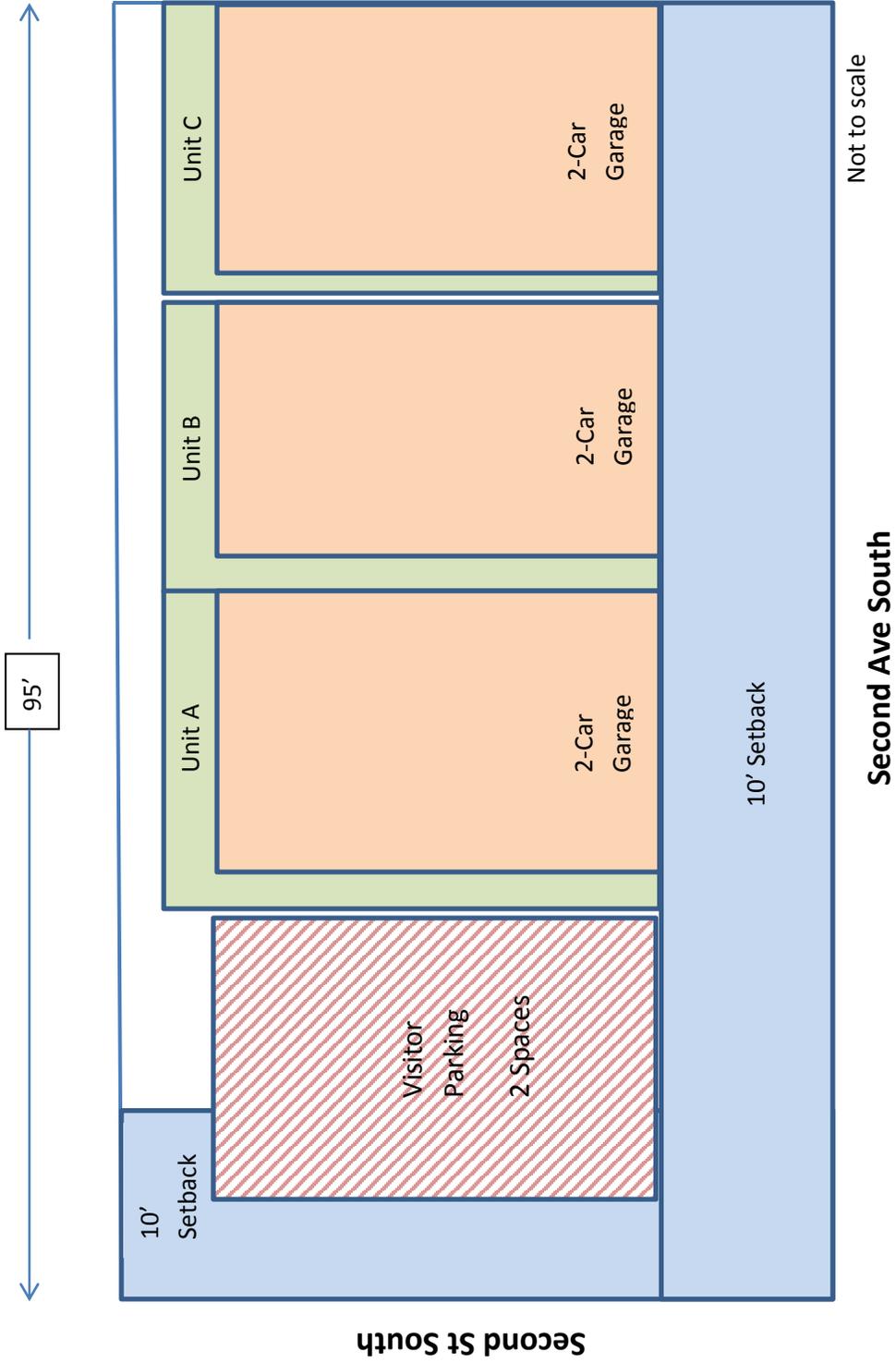
I appreciate your attention to my concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Fred Romano', is written over a light blue rectangular background.

Fred Romano

11617 NE 92<sup>nd</sup> Street  
Kirkland, WA 98033



200 Second Ave South  
3800 SF  
35' Height Limit

Scenario for Existing Zoning  
3 unit, 2 bedroom . Requires a  
minimum of 2 visitor parking spots  
**2.67 parking stalls / unit**

August 27, 2014

RE: CAM13-02032, Right Size Parking

Planning Commissioners:

I am writing to follow up my letter dated June 25, 2014, regarding the Right Size parking requirements. As the owner of a small property in the downtown, I am in favor of the changes proposed with one exception regarding the visitor parking requirement.

I have owned a parcel in CBD 4 at 200 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave S for 30 years. As you can see in the diagram below, the site measures 40' x 95', and is restricted to a height of 35'. A little background:

- Although the zoning code allows single family development, setback requirements specific to single family units prohibit building single family unit on the lot. (Note that single family development would require 2 stalls in total.)
- For mixed or multiunit residential uses, setbacks of 10 feet are required on the side facing 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave South and 2<sup>nd</sup> Street South.
- The site dimensions prohibit developing underground parking.
- 3 or 4 two-bedroom units will be the best use of the property.
- A small development is usually not able to manage a transportation management plan and would not be an option for condominium or fee simple development.

As an example, consider a 3 unit building with 2 bedrooms each unit (see diagram below). The proposal would require 5 parking stalls plus 1 visitor stall. I have no concern with providing 6 stalls. A townhome configuration would likely contain 2 covered stalls per unit for a total of 6. However, due to the lot dimensions, the driveways would not be long enough to be counted as visitor parking. (The proposal language supports this approach where there is ample driveway length.) Therefore, a single visitor stall would need to be designated within the footprint of the dwelling, thereby either significantly reducing the size of the remaining units, or necessitating the elimination of an entire unit (see diagram). (A number of scenarios could be presented that further present this point based on the number or units and bedrooms per unit. I illustrated one for expediency.)

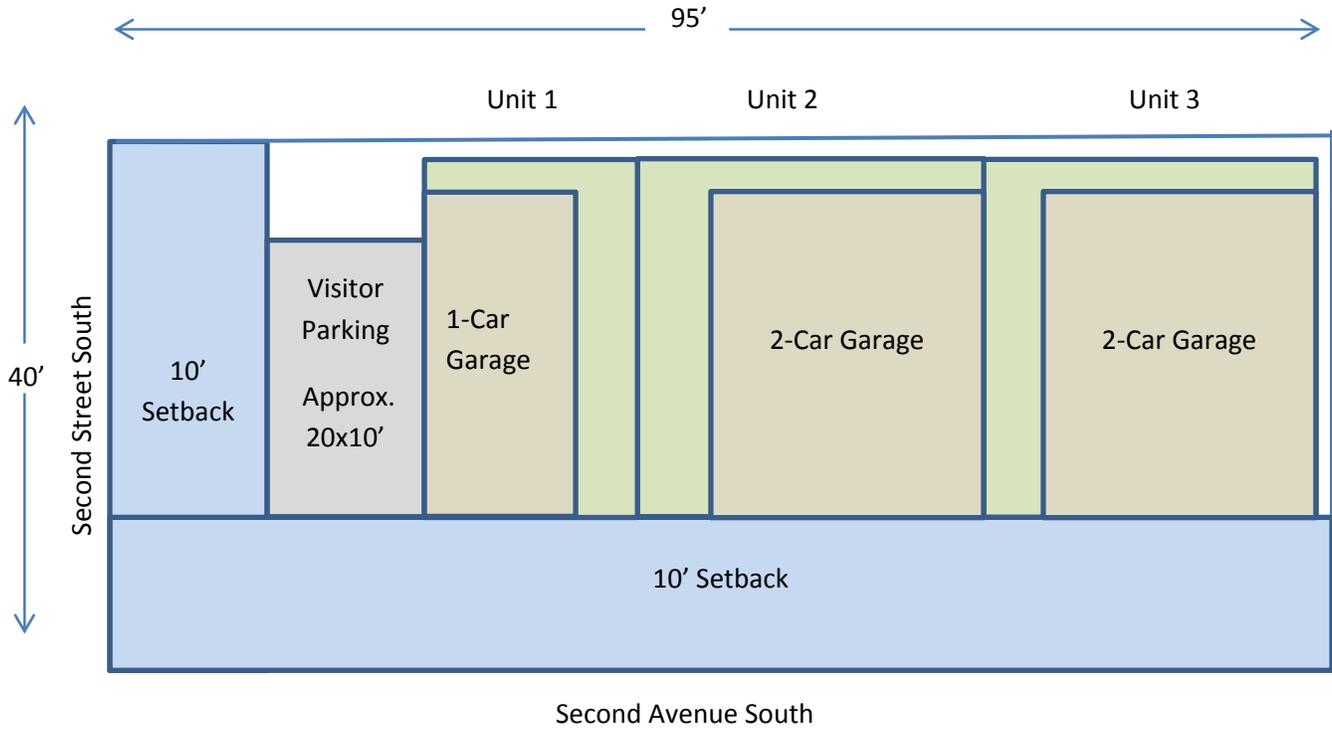
I propose that the commission consider eliminating the requirement for designated visitor parking in the CBD for developments less than 6 units that contain 2 or 3 bedrooms (these developments would be required to have a maximum of one visitor stall per the proposed scheme). At a minimum, an option to eliminate visitor parking should be available to sites that have such limitations as described above.

This change will avoid the allocation of living space to accommodate a single vehicle in a part of the city that is in line with density goals of the downtown.

Thank you for your attention to my concern.

Fred Romano  
11617 NE 92<sup>nd</sup> St., Kirkland 98033

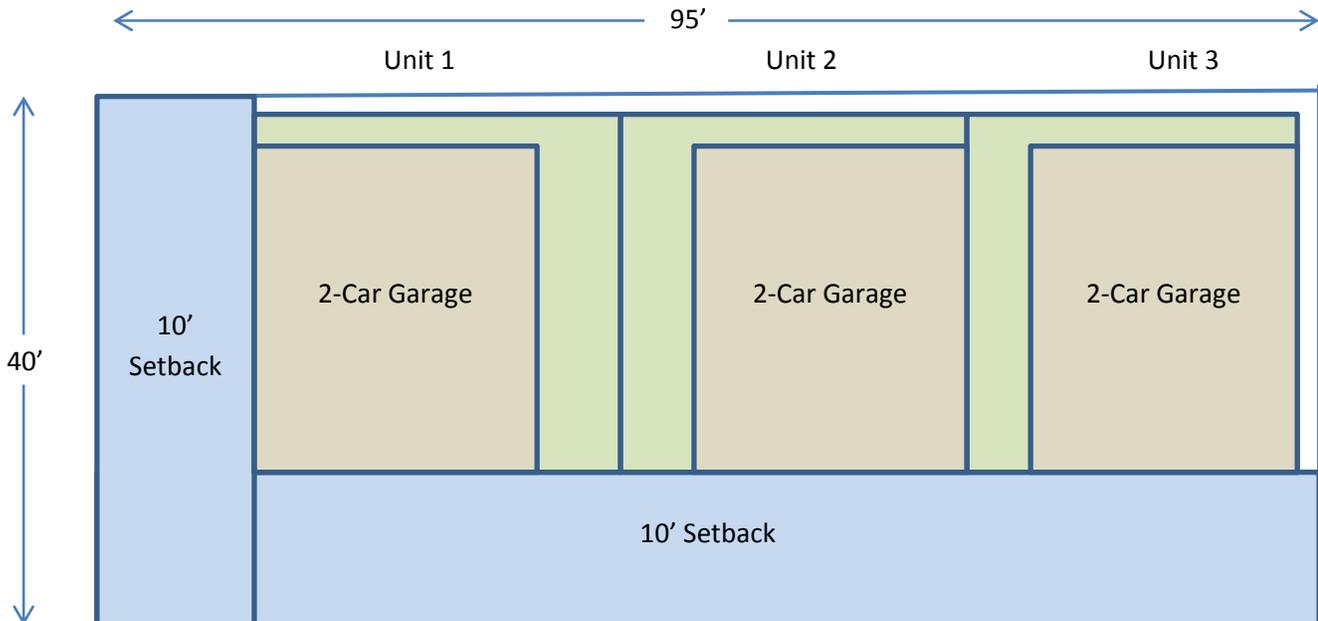
### Visitor Parking Requirement Currently Proposed For Building Containing Three, 2-bedroom units



Height limit = 35'

NOT TO SCALE

### No Visitor Parking Requirement for Small Lot



### Parking Issues for a Small Lot

Pertinent lot information: CBD 4, 200 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave S., 40 x 95 feet. Corner lot, 10 foot setback on 2 sides, 35 foot height limit

Current parking code for CBD: 1 parking stall per bedroom, PLUS 10% per bedroom with 2 minimum for visitors. No less than 1.3/unit average.

#### Housing Configuration Scenarios – Existing Code

1. Single family – not feasible due to setback requirements. 2 parking stalls total required.
2. Townhouse Configuration

Scenarios:

- a. 3 units with 3 bedrooms each >> 11 (9+2) parking stalls>>3.67/unit>>.67 visitor stalls/unit
- b. 3 units with 2 bedrooms each>>8 (6+2) parking stalls>>2.67/unit>>.67 visitor stalls/unit
- c. 4 units with 2 bedrooms each>>10 (8+2) parking stalls>>2.5/unit>>.5 visitor stalls/unit
- d. 2 units with 3 bedrooms each>>8 (6+2) parking stalls>>4.0/unit>>1.0 visitor stalls /unit

Proposed Parking Code “Right Size”: 1.2/studio; 1.3/single bed; 1.6/2 bed; 1.8/3 bed+; plus 10% visitor. Fractions are rounded up.

#### Housing Configuration Scenerios-Proposed Code

1. Townhouse Configuration

Scenarios:

- a. 3 units, 3 bedroom>>7 (6+1) parking stalls>>2.33/unit>>.33 visitor stalls/unit
- b. 3 units, 2 bedroom>>6 (5+1) parking stalls>>2.0/unit>>.33 visitor stalls/unit
- c. 4 units, 2 bedroom>> 8 (7+1) parking stalls>>2/unit>>.25 visitor stalls/unit
- d. 2 units, 3 bedroom>>5 (4+1) parking stalls>>2.5/unit>>.5 visitor stalls /unit

### Resultant Observations

1. Setbacks alone compose 33% of lot area; current code potentially results in an additional 5% of area for visitor parking. Setbacks in the CBD are unusual.
2. Current code is skewed against smaller development resulting in unfair share of parking requirements on a per unit basis for dedicated and guest parking
3. Visitor parking will displace livable floor space disproportionately on small lots, especially where underground parking is not feasible
4. Aggregation of lots due to inability to develop economically. This may reduce variety of housing mix and potential affordability
5. When studies were conducted, smaller developments not really considered adequately
6. Single family parking requirements (2 total regardless of number of bedrooms) appear to be less than for attached townhomes, although townhomes more likely resemble single family residences from a planning perspective
7. Parking issues in the downtown largely influenced by commercial activity

### For Consideration

- Elimination of setback requirement
- Elimination of dedicated visitor parking for developments containing 8 or fewer units

**PARKING MODIFICATION AND PROPOSED CODE REQUIREMENT COMPARISON TABLE**  
October 15, 2014

	Tera Apts.	Soho	West Water Apts.	Kirkland Central	Boulevard	128 State Apts.	The 101 Apts.	324 Central Way	Ondine	Luna Sol*	Slater 116*	Juanita Bay Apts.
<b>Address</b>	538 Central Way	511 7th Avenue	221 1st Street	211 Kirkland Avenue	375 Kirkland Avenue	128 State Street	117 Kirkland Avenue	324 Central Way	11702 98th Avenue NE	11415 Slater Avenue NE	12345 NE 116th Street	9720 NE 120th Place
<b>Studio</b>	22	0	8	10	0	9	10	0	40	16	18	0
<b>1-bedroom</b>	92	42	28	68	89	81	42	59	50	20	90	2
<b>2-bedroom</b>	46	16	24	32	30	33	13	14	6	16	0	14
<b>3-bedroom</b>	1	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Units</b>	161	58	62	110	119	123	66	73	96	52	108	16
<b>Total Bedrooms</b>	209	74	90	142	149	156	81	87	102	68	108	30
<b>PARKING MODIFICATIONS OR CASE-BY-CASE REVIEW</b>												
<b>Parking Mod. Parking Rate per Unit (includes visitor parking)</b>	1.26	1.57	1.52	1.47	1.28	1.37	1.41	1.23	1.41	1.10	0.72	1.44
<b>+15%</b>	1.45	1.81	1.75	1.69	1.47	1.58	1.62	1.41	1.62	1.27	0.83	1.66
<b>PROPOSED PARKING REQUIREMENT</b>												
<b>Base Parking Supply based on Proposed Code</b>	222	81	88	152	164	169	90	100	123	71	139	25
<b>Parking per Unit</b>	1.38	1.40	1.42	1.38	1.38	1.37	1.36	1.37	1.28	1.37	1.29	1.56
<b>Visitor Supply based on Proposed Code (+10%)</b>	23	9	9	16	17	17	9	10	13	8	14	3
<b>TOTAL Stalls Required</b>	245	90	97	168	181	186	99	110	136	79	153	28
<b>Required Parking per Unit (TOTAL)</b>	1.52	1.55	1.56	1.53	1.52	1.51	1.50	1.51	1.42	1.52	1.42	1.75

\* Case-by case parking review (not approved as a parking modification)

### **Overview – Why a Checklist for Parking Management Planning?**

*Regional growth centers* are focal points of many of the region's major cities and develop in a way that attracts residents and businesses, as well as entertainment and other services. The transportation network in centers should facilitate walking and the use of transit, as well as bicycle and automobile access.

Given the importance of these centers in achieving local and regional growth management and transportation planning objectives, the Regional Council's Growth Management Policy Board has directed the creation of a *Parking Management Plan Checklist* to help guide planning for parking in regional growth centers. Managing parking is one way to encourage alternative modes of travel into and within centers and therefore becomes a significant land use and transportation strategy. Parking management plans allow communities to control the supply and design of parking.

### **What's in the Checklist?**

The *Parking Management Plan Checklist* is intended as a tool to assist jurisdictions in addressing the location and amount of parking – both public and privately owned – in regional growth centers in a comprehensive manner. Developing a parking management plan can give a government or local improvement district a strategic say in:

- (1) what areas are dedicated to parking
- (2) what financing strategies are in place for parking
- (3) short-term and long-term parking considerations

This tool can help improve mobility and access to shops and businesses in centers and other locations, as well as controlling the amount of land that is dedicated to surface parking.

### **What will this Checklist be used for?**

This *Checklist* is primarily a tool to help localities develop parking management plans. A separate *Plan Review Questionnaire* is used to evaluate **all** adopted plans for conformity with *Growth Management Act* requirements.

### **Information and Questions**

For information about this Checklist, planning for regional growth centers, or the certification of local plans, please contact staff in the Growth & Transportation Strategies Section at (206) 464-5815.

# Parking Management Plan Checklist

## **Parking Management Plan Checklist**

### **1. Create a parking management plan concept.**

- a. Describe relationship of the parking management plan to the overall center plan.

*How does parking fit into the overall access and mobility plans for the center? Design the parking system to support the mobility and accessibility needs within the center – especially the pedestrian network.*

- b. Address parking comprehensively for the entire center.

*Rather than looking at parking needs building-by-building or project-by-project, look at the overall parking needs for the center and deal with parking in a comprehensive and strategic manner. Take into account the parking patterns for different user groups in the center – employees, customers, and residents – throughout the course of the day. Address freight and truck access and parking. Survey the supply of parking, along with actual demand for parking at different times and for different events. Take into account any traffic control management programs, such as parking restrictions during peak commuting periods. Develop parking strategies for special events. Determine the appropriate role and design of park-and-ride facilities within your center – particularly in and around transit stations. Address intercept or satellite parking.*

- c. Establish goals and objectives for parking – to support short-term and long-term development plans for the center.

*What will happen to existing locations of parking as the center plan is implemented? Are there opportunities to redevelop properties that currently have surface parking? Can certain parking areas be used for non-parking activities when not in demand – for example, street fairs or community events?*

- d. Improve user information and marketing.

*Provide signage directing visitors and customers to parking facilities. Consider development of an electronic system that monitors parking availability and informs users about the location of open parking spaces. Consider Web-based information sharing.*

- e. Provide parking for bicycles.

*Be attentive to workers, customers and visitors traveling to the center by modes other than automobile. Provide ample and convenient facilities for parking bicycles at employment sites. Consider providing lockers and changing facilities with showers.*

### **2. Ensure that parking standards conform with adopted urban form and design goals.**

- a. Ensure that parking facility design complements community character.

*Parking structures should be designed to complement adjacent buildings and uses. Facilities should be designed for convenience, safety, aesthetics, and accessibility by various user groups.*

# Parking Management Plan Checklist

- b. Design parking facilities to accommodate pedestrian movement, including safety and security.

*Parking structures and lots should not only be designed for easy automobile access, they should also provide for safe and easy movement of people on foot – that is, when they get out of their cars. Attention should also be given to facilitate easy access to transit stations and facilities. Restrict parking near pedestrian crossings (at corners and crosswalks).*

- c. Keep parking behind retail structures.

*Along the streets in a center, structures and facilities should be designed for pedestrians. There should be easy access into shops and businesses for people on foot.*

- d. Encourage active ground floor uses, such as retail or office, in above-ground parking structure.

*Where parking structures occur along a major pedestrian street, they should incorporate people-oriented uses along the sidewalk.*

- e. Minimize impervious surfaces and address other environmental considerations.

*Paved surfaces should be broken up, both for aesthetic reasons and to better accommodate drainage. Alternatives to paved surfaces should be considered. Parking facilities should be developed according to a jurisdiction's hydrology plan. Landscaping can be used to make surface lots more attractive and to accommodate at least some storm runoff on site (for example, drainage swales and rain gardens).*

### 3. Establish parking maximums, instead of – or in addition to – parking minimums.

- a. Consider establishing a parking cap within a center to limit the amount of land dedicated to automobile storage.

*Too much parking in a center can create large empty surface areas or underutilized structures that lead to additional challenges in attracting business and new development.*

- b. Maintain and optimize parking that already exists in a center, before taking on costly addition of new parking facilities.

*Look at opportunities to redesign or reconfigure existing parking facilities to maximize their capacity.*

- c. Encourage shared parking among neighboring businesses.

*Sharing parking spaces is particularly appropriate in areas where use is diverse – that is, different activities have different peak demand times. For example, an office complex and restaurant could share parking, since the office peak will be during the workday and the restaurant demands will peak during evening hours. (Note: communities should be aware of provisions in “shared parking” agreements and the possible ramifications of redevelopment of parking sites.)*

# Parking Management Plan Checklist

- d. **Promote the development of community parking facilities within districts of the center.**

*This can be an efficient way to pool limited resources to serve the needs of various business and commercial activities. In addition, it can provide for more direct management of the parking supply in a center. Parking management associations can be established to develop such facilities. Such associations can also be set up to provide “parking brokerage services,” to manage the sharing, leasing, renting, and/or selling of parking facilities.*
  - e. **Reduce parking requirements – where appropriate – for new development and redevelopment in centers.**

*Recognize that new development projects in centers can improve the overall urban environment – making it more attractive for walking and the use of other travel modes, such as transit.*
  - f. **Allow on-street parking – where appropriate – to be factored into parking formulas for new development projects.**

*In areas where on-street parking exists or can be provided, it should be considered when determining overall parking needs for a specific project or entire district. On-street parking can be a viable parking management tool to support business districts.*
- 4. Pricing parking.**
- a. **Location-based rates.**

*Higher prices and shorter payment periods can be charged for parking spaces that are in prime or more convenient locations. Fringe area parking rates should be lower and set for time periods to attract longer-term use.*
  - b. **Commuter financial incentives.**

*Offer incentives to commuters to use alternative travel modes to driving alone and reduce their use of parking facilities, particularly during peak periods. Consider discounts or reduced parking rates for carpools and vanpools.*
  - c. **Tax parking facilities or their use.**

*By taxing parking, localities can affect demand – either in general or for peak periods. Land value taxation can potentially encourage undeveloped parcels being used for surface parking to become sites for redevelopment.*
  - d. **Monitor the use of parking passes.**

*Regular audits should be performed on parking passes to prevent abuses, such as non-official personal use or improper loans to other motorists.*
  - e. **Unbundle parking from building costs.**

*Consider selling or renting parking separately from building purchases or leases. Occupants would save money by reducing their parking demand, as well as not having to pay for parking they do not use or need.*

# Parking Management Plan Checklist

## 5. Peripheral parking.

- a. Encourage long-term parking to locate on the periphery of centers

*Prime locations in centers should be vibrant and dedicated to major activities, including entertainment and commercial activities. Fringe parking is appropriate for long-term parking (particularly commuters), so that close-in parking spaces are available for priority users (that is, customers and visitors). When major parking facilities are located on the periphery, improved pedestrian connections should be developed into the core of the center.*

- b. Develop overflow parking strategies.

*Dedicating large areas for parking to meet the infrequent peak demands for special events can be reduced by developing an overflow parking plan for activity areas in centers. Such a plan can include:*

- Shared parking arrangements for peak periods*
- Use of remote parking with shuttle service*
- Promoting alternative modes, such as ridesharing and transit.*
- Encouraging employees to use remote parking or other modes during peak periods*

- c. Avoid spillover problems in adjacent neighborhoods.

*Prevent parking encroachment into neighborhoods next to centers with enforcement strategies, time limitations, and residential permits.*

## 6. Preferential parking.

- a. Give preference to short-term parking over all-day commuter-parking.

*Ensure retail and other businesses have nearby short-term parking. The most convenient parking spaces should be designated for use by customers or patrons who will be visiting between 30 minutes and 2 hours. More customers or visitors can be accommodated this way. "Early bird specials" are not appropriate in prime locations.*

- b. Assign preferred parking spaces to carpool and rideshare vehicles.

*Desirable parking spaces should be reserved for carpools, vanpools and buses to encourage ridesharing and discourage driving alone.*

## **Selected Examples of Locations with Parking Management Strategies**

### **Fee-in-Lieu Programs**

*Allows new development projects to pay into a fund for community parking facilities (typically municipally-owned), rather than providing on-site parking on their own.*

Bend (OR), Jackson (WY), Kirkland (WA), Lake Forest (IL), Miami, Skokie (IL), Seattle's University District

### **Parking Maximums**

Boston, Portland, San Francisco, Seattle (Downtown and Northgate), Bellevue (Downtown)

### **Parking Taxes**

Baltimore, Chicago, Los Angeles, Miami, New Orleans, New York, Pittsburgh, San Francisco, Santa Monica, Washington, DC. See also Bremerton, SeaTac, Tukwila. The State of Washington allows localities to tax commercial and employee parking.

### **Pricing**

*Such as electronic systems that accommodate various payment methods and rates.*

Philadelphia, New York

### **Time-Based Pricing**

Eugene (OR), Chicago

### **Parking Innovations in Zoning/Building Codes**

Denver, New York, Seattle

## **Selected Resources for Parking Management**

Childs, Mark (1999). *Parking Spaces/A Design, Implementation, and Use Manual for Architects, Planners and Engineers.* McGraw-Hill.

Congress for New Urbanism (1999). *Parking Management.* [www.cnu.org](http://www.cnu.org)

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Tri-State Transportation Campaign (2001). Parking Management. (Connecticut, New Jersey, New York) [www.tstc.org](http://www.tstc.org)

Urban Land Institute (2000). The Dimensions of Parking/4<sup>th</sup> Edition. ULI & National Parking Association (NPA).

Victoria Transport Policy Institute (2003). Parking Management/Strategies for More Efficient Use of Parking Resources. [www.wtpi.org](http://www.wtpi.org)

Washington State Transportation Center (2003). Strategies and Tools for Transportation-Efficient Land Use and Development Practices: A Reference Manual.

### **Parking Topics in the Revised Code of Washington**

Authority for Local Improvements .....Chapter 35.43, RCW  
(Section 35.43.040 addresses parking)

Public Facilities Districts..... Chapter 35.57, RCW  
(see Section 36.100.200 for Parking Charges Tax)

Off-Street Parking .....Chapter 35.86, RCW

Parking and Business Improvement Areas..... Chapter 35.80A, RCW

Driveway Entrances..... Chapter 46.61.570, RCW

Park-and-Ride Lots ..... Chapter 46.61.577, RCW



## Strategy 9: Adopt Innovative Parking Tools

Frequent and reliable transit service within walking distance of housing and commercial uses reduces the amount of parking needed as part of new development. Requirements for parking that are inflexible and exceed demand can drive up development costs and resulting prices and rents, and may render new development infeasible. A range of innovative parking tools are available for use in transit communities that are effective in supporting TOD while meeting the limited parking needs of a transit rich environment.

### Recommended Actions

#### Puget Sound Regional Council

- 9.1 Develop guidance on parking management best practices and innovative tools for use in transit station areas. Disseminate guidance on parking management through PSRC policy and plan review processes.
- 9.2 Collaborate with King County to further develop the data and tools included in the Right Size Parking project for application in transit communities throughout the region.
- 9.3 Establish criteria for transportation project funding that incentivize local adoption of comprehensive parking management strategies and innovative best practices (see 9.6).

#### Transit Agencies

- 9.4 Work with local governments and other transit agencies to coordinate implementation of access plans for transit stations and parking management strategies for station areas.

#### Local Governments

- 9.5 Adopt a district-wide management strategy for both on- and off-street parking as part of the station area plan or policies.
- 9.6 Adopt, where appropriate, innovative off-street parking management tools, such as:
  - Flexible or market-driven parking regulations
  - Reduced or eliminated parking requirements for special populations, such as seniors, and in locations with access to frequent transit
  - Limits on the maximum amount of parking that can be included in a development,
  - “Unbundling” the cost of parking from housing unit prices/rents
  - Shared parking facilities
  - Support for car sharing options
  - Transportation demand management
- 9.7 Where parking demand is high, adopt on-street parking management strategies, such as metered parking and residential parking zones.

#### Priority Transit Communities for this Strategy

- Transit communities with current high capacity transit service or expected within 10 years, and other regionally significant transit communities

# Releasing the Parking Brake on Economic Development

Cities flourish with reduced parking requirements.

By **BRIAN CANEPA** and **JOSHUA KARLIN-RESNICK**



**THE COST IS INVISIBLE TO CONSUMERS AND POLICY MAKERS**, but every developer knows just how much parking requirements figure into any pro forma.  $\downarrow\uparrow$  The minimum requirements in place in most municipalities—one to two spaces per residential unit—add an estimated six to 16 percent to per-unit costs through a combination of construction expenses and the opportunity costs of using a limited development envelope on car storage rather than revenue-generating living space.  $\downarrow\uparrow$  Requirements for retail uses are often much higher. A recent study by the Transportation Research Board found that parking was oversupplied in mixed use districts by an average of 65 percent, meaning that between four and 10 percent of the added costs—likely much more for nonresidential uses—are pure waste.  $\downarrow\uparrow$  Developers and planners in Petaluma, California, can attest to the power of eliminating this form of forced waste. Fifteen years ago, Petaluma's Theatre District was marked by surface parking, vacant lots, and derelict industrial buildings. Planners considered it a prime opportunity to extend and reinvigorate its downtown with a mixed use district anchored by a multiscreen cinema. In the end, easing parking requirements in the area became crucial to making that vision a reality.  $\downarrow\uparrow$  Instead of forcing the developer, Basin Street Properties, to provide as much as one space per 50 or 100 square feet of bar or restaurant, the city allowed the company to determine how much parking was reasonable. Considering the on-street parking supply in the area and how the project's different uses might have different periods of peak parking demand, the developer settled on one space per 300 square feet across the project.

# Getting parking right might be a more dependable and longer lasting form of economic development.

Vin Smith, a planning consultant who represented Basin Street in the planning and entitlement process, says the project would “absolutely not” have penciled out without the city’s flexibility on parking. “We easily saved a floor or two of parking garage construction,” Smith says. At a price tag of roughly \$20,000 per space, that means the reduced parking requirements saved as much as \$3 million.

Little more than a decade later, it’s obvious that the now built-out Theatre District provides a compelling argument for that kind of flexibility. The area is alive on Friday night: Residents are arriving home from work, office workers are heading to happy hour, and people are walking to catch a movie at the 12-screen Boulevard Cinemas, a meal at Bistro 100, or to find something sweet at MoYo’s Frozen Yogurt Lounge. Smith, who lives in the area, says the parking supply is well used but not overloaded.

## A critical time

For the last century or so, cities have been struggling with the paradox of parking: Cars need large amounts of space, but making room for them comes at a direct cost to the vibrancy that makes the people in the cars want to come in the first place.

A 2013 study called “The Effects of Urban Fabric Changes on Real Estate Property Tax,” by researchers at the University of Connecticut, estimated that Hartford dedicates 15 percent of CBD land area—more than 7.5 million square feet—to parking. If each office worker needs 250 square feet of building space (a conservative estimate), that means the city could accommodate 30,000 additional sorely needed jobs if that land were dedicated to one-story office buildings rather than car-storage space.

The same study estimated that if the amount of land dedicated to surface parking had stayed the same as it was in 1950, the annual loss to government coffers would equal nearly \$22 million in Hartford, \$6.5 million in nearby New Haven, and \$3 million in Arlington, Virginia.

The story is doubtless the same in many cities across the country, and the lost economic activity is all the more damaging in an era of tight municipal budgets. Even as the economy recovers from the 2008 financial crisis, every underused parcel in a city’s downtown represents a costly missed opportunity.

Economic development is a central charge of local elected officials and their appointees, and their strategies often take the form of tax breaks for companies that promise a short-term infusion of jobs. Getting parking right might be a more dependable and longer lasting form of economic development.

Consider the examples of Ann Arbor, Michigan; Columbus, Indiana; and Sacramento, California. These three cities—of different sizes, with different development contexts, and in different parts of the country—have each reduced or eliminated off-street parking requirements downtown and in mixed use areas, yielding a range of benefits.

In some places, lifting onerous parking requirements has made infill development more financially viable, opening the door to projects that renew derelict buildings or activate what were previously inactive hardscapes or garbage-strewn lots. For others, it has simplified the development process, speeding the pace of revitalization.

In no cases have the reduced requirements led to the parking shortages or economic losses that are frequently feared.

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 PLANNING MAGAZINE ARTICLE 1  
 nia state capitol. Heller says it has 93,000 square feet of retail and office space, which means the parking regulations required roughly 150 dedicated parking spaces on a parcel that was already built lot line to lot line, with no room to add vehicle storage.

Heller cobbled together agreements with five small lots near the building to account for some of that parking and had to go to the planning commission to waive the rest of the requirement. The process was “a lot of work” and ultimately delayed the project by several months, he says.

Today, Heller is moving forward on another adaptive reuse project about a mile to the southwest, next to a light-rail station, called the Ice Blocks. With 60,000 square feet of office space, 50,000 square feet of retail, and 150 housing units, the project would have required more than 500 parking spaces under the old regulations. Instead, Heller is providing two spots for every three residential units and minimal parking for the office and retail space, and he will be implementing a robust transportation demand management program to encourage people to come to the site by other modes. The project is moving forward quickly, spared the expense and delays that had been a part of the previous process.

“The city really listened to us on this topic and took bold measures to embrace true green principles in the new parking code,” Heller says. “I tip my hat to staff on this because the city is now teed up for real growth with a framework for progressive, thoughtful infill projects.”

Sacramento’s development market is still stuck in a post-economic-crisis slump, having built just 200 housing units last year, but Sandlund says that sparing developers from building millions of dollars’ worth of unneeded parking has helped move more projects into the pipeline. “I don’t think there’s been an explosion of development, but if anything, at least the parking code isn’t getting in the way of development,” Sandlund adds.

There is evidence that larger economic impacts are right around the corner. One proposal that entered the pipeline last year was the i15 project, a proposed eight-story mixed use development with 96 residential units, more than 5,000 square feet of ground-floor retail, and zero on-site parking. The regulatory changes have also had a major impact on things like tenant improvements. Whereas transforming a retail space into one suitable for a restaurant, with higher parking requirements, would have required a lengthy trip through the waiver process, such improvements can be made by right today.

**Columbus kicks the rules to the curb**

Those unfamiliar with Columbus, Indiana (pop. 45,000), have no reason to suspect this small city would be on the cutting edge of parking policy. But

**Sacramento’s sea change**

Developer Michael Heller says that for years, Sacramento was a large central city with lofty, progressive ideals but conservative parking practices that more or less matched those in the suburbs, where land was plentiful enough to make it easy to surround a building with a sea of parking at a reasonable cost. Where land was much scarcer, the requirements led to either scaled down ambitions or time-consuming, costly, and highly political efforts to waive parking requirements and make projects viable.

“On one side of their mouths, everyone at the city was espousing green principles and encouraging transit-oriented development, but on the development-application processing side, you had to deal with this antiquated code,” Heller says. “You got pulled in two directions.”

All that changed in 2012. The city eliminated parking minimums in its Central Business and Arts and Entertainment districts, reduced minimums in some other parts of the city, and allowed developers to reduce those already lower requirements with programs and facilities that encouraged access by non-auto modes. The changes were rooted in a study that found that even at peak times, between 40 and 65 percent of spaces were unoccupied in five focus areas in central Sacramento.

The reforms have led to a sea change in the development process. Under the old regime, most developers found they simply did not have the land to build all the required parking and would instead apply for a waiver. Processing it would take anywhere from four to eight months and often ended up being a “lose-lose situation,” says Greg Sandlund, an associate planner for the city who played a key role in the city’s parking-requirement overhaul.

The planning commission and city council denied just one parking ratio waiver between 2000 and 2010, which meant that “the community got worked up and the development was delayed,” even though the parking that was ultimately provided was far lower than the code required. “It became a game that only the sophisticated knew how to play,” Heller says. “It wasn’t a genuine process and it took a lot of time and money.”

Today, the city’s parking code aligns with the visions espoused in the general plan, allowing planners to simply enter “no planning issues” (that is, no planning problems) on applications for projects that are looking to build the amount of parking developers think is needed to compete in the marketplace. Heller points to two developments to explain how the code update changed his business.

In the mid-2000s, his company built the Midtown Art Retail Restaurant Scene, a block-long, mixed use, adaptive-reuse development in a thriving neighborhood just a few blocks east of the Califor-

Today,  
 Sacramento’s  
 parking code aligns  
 with the visions  
 espoused in  
 the general plan,  
 allowing planners  
 to simply enter  
 “no planning issues”  
 (that is, no  
 planning problems)  
 on applications  
 for projects that  
 are looking to build  
 the amount of  
 parking  
 developers think  
 is needed to  
 compete in  
 the marketplace.

→ The I15 multifamily project, now in Sacramento, California's development pipeline, would never have been proposed for a small infill site if on-site parking had been required. Instead, residents with cars will use an adjacent existing public lot; those without cars will have access to Zipcars two blocks away and public transit just a block away.

in 2008, it eliminated parking requirements in its downtown district. The change was part of a larger effort to revitalize the area, and its implementation amounted to a "non-event," rooted in a "shared understanding of where downtown was going," says planning director Jeff Bergman, AICP.

"There was a feeling at the time that the local government, through the zoning ordinance, didn't have nor really could have enough information to accurately regulate parking downtown, not without potentially causing some sort of negative consequence," he says. Without reliable metrics, the city decided to leave these decisions to the market.

Bergman notes that the change has allowed developers and planners to focus on other aspects of projects, instead of getting hung up on whether a project was going to meet its parking requirements. This has led to better developments that reflect the true vision of developers and the needs of their tenants.

As an example, Bergman points to a regional headquarters for the First Financial Bank, in the southwest corner of downtown. The combined bank branch and office building development opened in 2014 with 62 surface parking spaces, built to accommodate the anticipated needs of employees traveling to the office for regular meetings.

Parking was a non-issue during the development approval process. And the limited parking approach has been successful from the developer's perspective.

The Cole, a four-story mixed use residential building across the street, is another development that has gone up since the regulatory change. The project wrapped around a redevelopment authority-sponsored parking garage that was already going up on the same block, and the developer was able to negotiate with the authority to reserve 200 spaces for use by the 146 residential units in the new building.

Developer Matt Griffin, who led the effort for the Buckingham Companies, says the Cole shows that eliminating parking requirements does not mean developers will stint on parking. In the case of the Cole and infill projects in other places, it has simply meant he has had the flexibility to provide only the amount of parking that his company thought was truly needed for the developments to succeed.

"Most jurisdictions are coming around to the point that at least for multifamily projects, it's our business, and if we underpark ourselves, we're going to destroy our primary cash flow," Griffin says.



### Ann Arbor at the forefront

Although it is near the epicenter of the auto industry, Ann Arbor was an early trendsetter in minimizing the role of parking in the development equation; it eliminated most of its downtown parking requirements in the 1960s. Coupled with a long-standing commitment to building publicly owned and managed structured parking and pricing it at market rates, the lack of requirements laid the groundwork for what is one of Michigan's most vibrant downtowns. Ann Arbor boasts retail occupancy rates that are among the highest in the state and a mere three percent residential vacancy rate.

According to the city's zoning code, downtown projects that adhere to the letter of the code are not required to provide any parking, and those that exceed floor-area limits are required to provide just one space per 1,000 square feet of additional floor area, far lower than typical requirements.

Susan Pollay, executive director of the city's Downtown Development Authority, says the low requirements have had a direct impact on the city's development environment. "There has been a strategy that from the beginning [eliminated] parking at the heart of our zoning, so we've been able to build a strong downtown core," she says.

Over the years, developers have steadily gobbled up surface parking lots for projects. Of late, the focus has been in the area around East Washington and South Division streets. On that corner, Pollay says, a small building surrounded by surface parking was recently replaced by a 10-story residential building with a grocery store and fast-food restaurant on the ground floor and far less parking than zoning codes typically require.

## BUFFALO, NEW YORK

**“People walked around downtown and saw all this surface parking that is ample and underpriced and said, ‘We want development here, we want buildings here.’”**

**DANIEL HESS,**  
associate professor  
of urban and regional  
planning, University of  
Buffalo

Next door, another residential high rise went up on a lot with a low building and surface parking lot. Across Washington, the McKinley Towne Center filled in its driveway with a new retail building to create a steady, active street front along East Liberty Street.

Across downtown, at the corner of Huron and Ashley streets, a recently built mixed use residential high rise with minimal parking will soon be joined by a new hotel that will provide no parking, replacing another low-density development surrounded by a sea of asphalt. There is plenty of parking in a city-owned parking garage down the block.

The University of Michigan’s tens of thousands of students, faculty, staff, and supporters provide a sizable and steady market for Ann Arbor businesses, which are located close to the campus. But the city shows that the fears that drive policy makers to err on the side of oversupplying parking are largely unfounded. If a tight parking supply really limited an area’s economic potential, Ann Arbor businesses would be struggling, university or not. Instead, despite high parking prices and long wait lists for garage permits, the development market could scarcely be hotter.

“Apartments are filled to the brim,” Pollay says. “If parking was the driving factor, that wouldn’t be the case because none of them are providing parking at the rates that would typically be required.”

#### An idea spreads

Buffalo, New York, may soon become the next example—and the biggest to date—of what can happen when a city takes parking out of the development-review process. At press time, the city was about to become the first in the country to eliminate parking re-

quirements citywide, in hopes of spurring development on some of its many surface parking lots.

The change was part of a zoning code update that was focused on revitalizing the city’s downtown, which today contains two parking spaces for every job. City officials saw those parking spaces as a massive opportunity.

“People walked around downtown and saw all this surface parking that is ample and underpriced and said, ‘We want development here, we want buildings here,’” says Daniel Hess, an associate professor of urban and regional planning at the University of Buffalo who has studied the city’s zoning code reform process.

That a Rust Belt city like Buffalo has eliminated parking minimums is evidence that we have come a long way in how we think about downtown development. The idea that providing ample parking was the key to economic success has begun to give way to the realization that too much parking can cause economic stagnation. Sacramento, Columbus, Ann Arbor, and, soon, Buffalo are leading examples of how much economic development potential is sitting right under many cities’ tires. ■

Brian Canepa is a principal and chief growth officer at Nelson\Nygaard Consulting Associates. Joshua Karlin-Resnick is an associate there. They worked on the Sacramento zoning code update and on Petaluma’s Theatre District development.

#### RESOURCES

*Parking Requirement Impacts on Housing Affordability*, by the Victoria Transportation Policy Institute: [vtpi.org/park-hou.pdf](http://vtpi.org/park-hou.pdf).

*Parking in Mixed-Use Districts*, by Rachel Weinberger and Joshua Karlin-Resnick, presented at the 94th annual Transportation Research Board meeting in 2015.

# Putting a Cap on Parking Requirements

A way to make cities function better. By **DONALD SHOUP, FAICP**

Suppose the automobile and oil industries have asked you to devise planning policies that will increase the demand for cars and fuel. Consider three policies that will make cars essential for most trips. First, segregating land uses (housing here, jobs there, shopping somewhere else) will increase travel demand. Second, limiting density will spread the city and increase travel demand. Third, minimum parking requirements will ensure ample free parking almost everywhere, making cars the default way to travel.

American cities have unwisely embraced each of these car-friendly policies, luring people into cars for 87 percent of all their daily trips. Zoning ordinances that segregate land uses, limit density, and require lots of parking create drivable cities but prohibit walkable neighborhoods. Urban historians often say that cars have changed the city, but public policies have also changed the city to favor cars.

Minimum parking requirements are particularly ill-advised. In my book *The High Cost of Free Parking*, I argued that parking requirements subsidize cars, increase traffic congestion and carbon emissions, pollute the air and water, encourage sprawl, raise housing costs, degrade urban design, reduce walkability, exclude poor people, and damage the economy. To my knowledge, no one has argued that parking requirements do not have these harmful effects. Instead, a flood of recent research has shown that parking requirements do have these effects.

## The high cost

Planners are put in a difficult position when asked to set parking requirements in zoning ordinances, largely because they do not know the parking demand at every site, or how much the parking spaces cost, or how the requirements increase the cost of development. Nevertheless, cities have managed to set parking requirements for hundreds of land uses in thousands of cities—the Ten Thousand Commandments for off-street parking.

Not knowing how much required parking spaces cost, planners cannot know how much the parking requirements increase the cost of housing. Small, spartan apartments cost much less to build than large, luxury apartments, but their parking spaces cost the same. Because many cities require the same number of spaces for all housing, the cost of required parking can consume the entire

subsidy intended for affordable housing.

Minimum parking requirements resemble an Affordable Parking Act. They make parking more affordable by raising the cost of housing and everything else. Using data on the cost of constructing parking spaces and shopping centers, I estimated that the parking requirement of four spaces per 1,000 square feet for a shopping center in Los Angeles increases the cost of building a shopping center by 93 percent if the parking is underground and by 67 percent if the parking is in an aboveground structure.

This cost increase is passed on to all shoppers. Parking requirements raise the price of food for people who are too poor to own a car to ensure that richer people can park free when they drive to a grocery store.

## The median is the message

A single parking space can cost far more than the entire net worth of many American families. In recent research, I estimated that the average cost per space for parking structures in the U.S. is about \$24,000 for aboveground parking and \$34,000 for underground parking. We can compare the cost of a parking space with the net worth of U.S. households (the value of all assets minus all debts). In 2011, this median net worth was \$68,828 for all U.S. households, \$7,683 for Hispanic households and \$6,314 for black households.

Thus one underground parking space can cost five times more than the median net worth for all black households in the country. Nevertheless, cities require several parking spaces (at home, work, shopping, recreation, churches, schools, and many other places) for every household.

Many families have a negative net worth because their debts exceed their assets. Eighteen percent of all households, 29 percent of Hispanic households, and 33 percent of black households had zero or negative net worth in 2011. The only way these families can take advantage of all the parking cities require is to go further into debt to buy a car, which they must then support, often by financing it at a high subprime interest rate on a car loan.

In other words, cities require parking for every building without noticing the high cost of the required spaces or the burden placed on families who have little or no wealth.

## Time for reform

Perhaps because of the growing doubts about minimum parking requirements, a few cities have begun to backpedal, at least in their downtowns. They recognize that parking requirements prevent infill redevelopment on small lots, where it is difficult and costly to fit both a new building and the required parking. And they see that parking requirements prevent new uses when older buildings lack the parking spaces required for those new uses.

'A city can be friendly to people or it can be friendly to cars, but it can't be both.'

—ENRIQUE PEÑALOSA, FORMER MAYOR OF BOGOTA, COLOMBIA

According to recent newspaper articles, many cities have reduced or removed their parking requirements. Some of the reasons: "to promote the creation of downtown apartments" (Greenfield, Massachusetts), "to see more affordable housing" (Miami), "to meet the needs of smaller businesses" (Muskegon, Michigan), "to give business owners more flexibility while creating a vibrant downtown" (Sandpoint, Idaho), and "to prevent ugly, auto-oriented townhouses" (Seattle).

Given this policy momentum, I thought the time to reform parking requirements in California had arrived when the legislature considered Assembly Bill 904 (the Sustainable Minimum Parking Requirements Act of 2012). AB 904 would have set an upper limit on how much parking cities can require in transit-rich districts: no more than one space per dwelling unit or two spaces per 1,000 square feet of commercial space. The bill defined these districts as areas within a quarter-mile of transit lines that run every 15 minutes or better.

AB 904 would limit how much parking cities can require, but it would not limit the parking supply. Developers could provide more than the required parking if they thought the demand justified the cost.

Why would a state want to adopt this policy? Federal and state governments give cities billions of dollars every year to build and operate mass transit systems, yet most cities require ample parking on the assumption that almost everyone will drive almost everywhere, even where public transit is available.

Twenty public transit lines serve the UCLA campus in Westwood, with 119 buses per hour arriving during the morning peak (7 to 9 a.m.). Nevertheless, across the street from campus, Los Angeles requires 3.5 parking spaces for every apartment that contains more than four rooms.

Los Angeles is building its Subway to the Sea under Wilshire Boulevard, which already boasts the city's most frequent bus service. Nevertheless, along parts of Wilshire the city requires at least 2.5 parking spaces for each dwelling unit, regardless of the number of rooms.

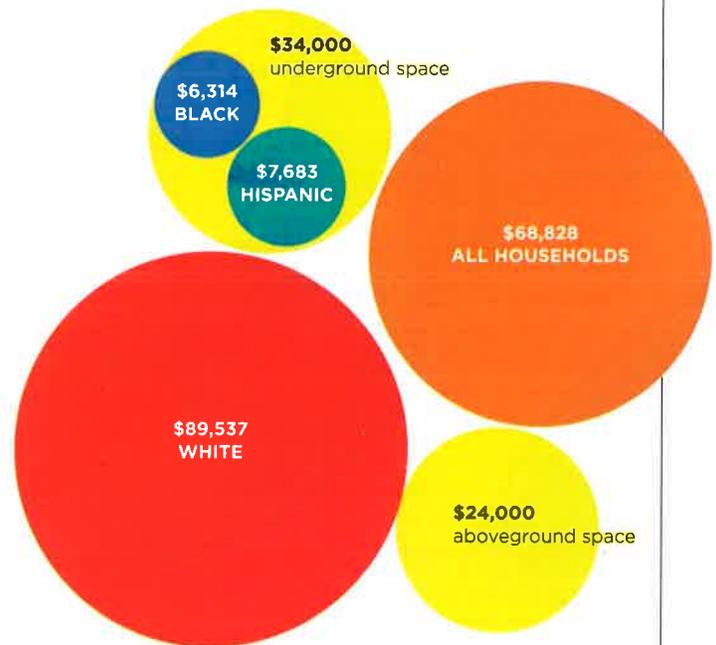
Also on Wilshire Boulevard, Beverly Hills requires 22 parking spaces per 1,000 square feet for restaurants, which means the parking lot is seven times larger than the restaurant. Public transit in this parking environment resembles a rowboat in the desert.

### Why limit parking requirements?

The rationale for a limit on parking requirements in transit-rich districts is the same as the rationale for most city planning: The uncoordinated actions of many individuals can add up to a collective result that most people dislike. In this case, minimum parking requirements create an asphalt wasteland that blights the environ-

### Parking inequity

The cost of one structured parking space far exceeds the median net worth of minority households.



SOURCES: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU, NET WORTH AND ASSET OWNERSHIP, 2011; DONALD SHOUR, IN *PARKING: ISSUES AND POLICIES*, 2014; GRAPHIC BY JOAN CAIRNEY

ment and compels people to drive. Limits on the parking requirements in transit-rich neighborhoods can reduce this blight by making redevelopment more feasible near transit stations.

How will reducing off-street parking requirements affect development? Zhan Guo and Shuai Ren at New York University studied the results when in 2004 London shifted from minimum parking requirements with no maximum to maximum parking limits with no minimum. Comparing developments completed before and after the reform, they found that the parking supplied after the reform was only 68 percent of the maximum allowed and only 52 percent of the previous minimum required.

This result implies that the previous parking minimum was almost double the number of parking spaces that developers would have voluntarily provided. The researchers concluded that removing the parking minimum caused 98 percent of the reduction in parking spaces, while imposing the maximum caused only two percent of the reduction. Removing the minimum was far more important than imposing a maximum.

Cities usually require or restrict parking without considering the middle ground of neither a minimum nor a maximum. This

behavior recalls a Soviet maxim: "What is not required must be prohibited." AB 904, however, was something new. It did not restrict parking but simply imposed a cap on minimum parking requirements, a far milder reform.

Aided by lobbying from the California Chapter of APA, opponents succeeded in defeating AB 904 in the legislature, but it has since been resurrected and revised, and will be reintroduced as a new bill in the next session.

There have been precedents for statewide limits on parking requirements. Oregon's *Transportation Systems Plan* requires local governments to amend their land-use and subdivision regulations to achieve a 10 percent reduction in the number of parking spaces per capita. The United Kingdom's transport policy guidelines for local planning specify that "plans should state maximum levels of parking for broad classes of development. . . . There should be no minimum standards for development, other than parking for disabled people."

These attempts to take state and national concerns into account suggest that, when left to their own devices, local governments require too much parking.

### An arranged marriage

Many people believe that America freely chose its love affair with the car, but I think there was an arranged marriage. By recommending minimum parking requirements in zoning ordinances, the planning profession was both a matchmaker and a leading member of the wedding party.

Unfortunately, no one provided a good prenuptial agreement. Planners can now become marriage counselors or divorce lawyers where the relationship between people and cars no longer works well. Putting a cap on parking requirements is a good place to start.

Donald Shoup is a distinguished professor of urban planning at the University of California, Los Angeles, and the author of *The High Cost of Free Parking*, published in paperback by APA's Planners Press in 2011. He will retire later this year, and UCLA is launching a scholarship in his name. Details are at [shoupista.com](http://shoupista.com).

### RESOURCES

#### FROM APA

*The High Cost of Free Parking*, by Donald Shoup, APA Planners Press, 2011 (paperback).

#### MORE

California Assembly Bill 904. The Sustainable Minimum Parking Requirements Act of 2012: [shoup.bol.ucla.edu/AssemblyBill904.pdf](http://shoup.bol.ucla.edu/AssemblyBill904.pdf).

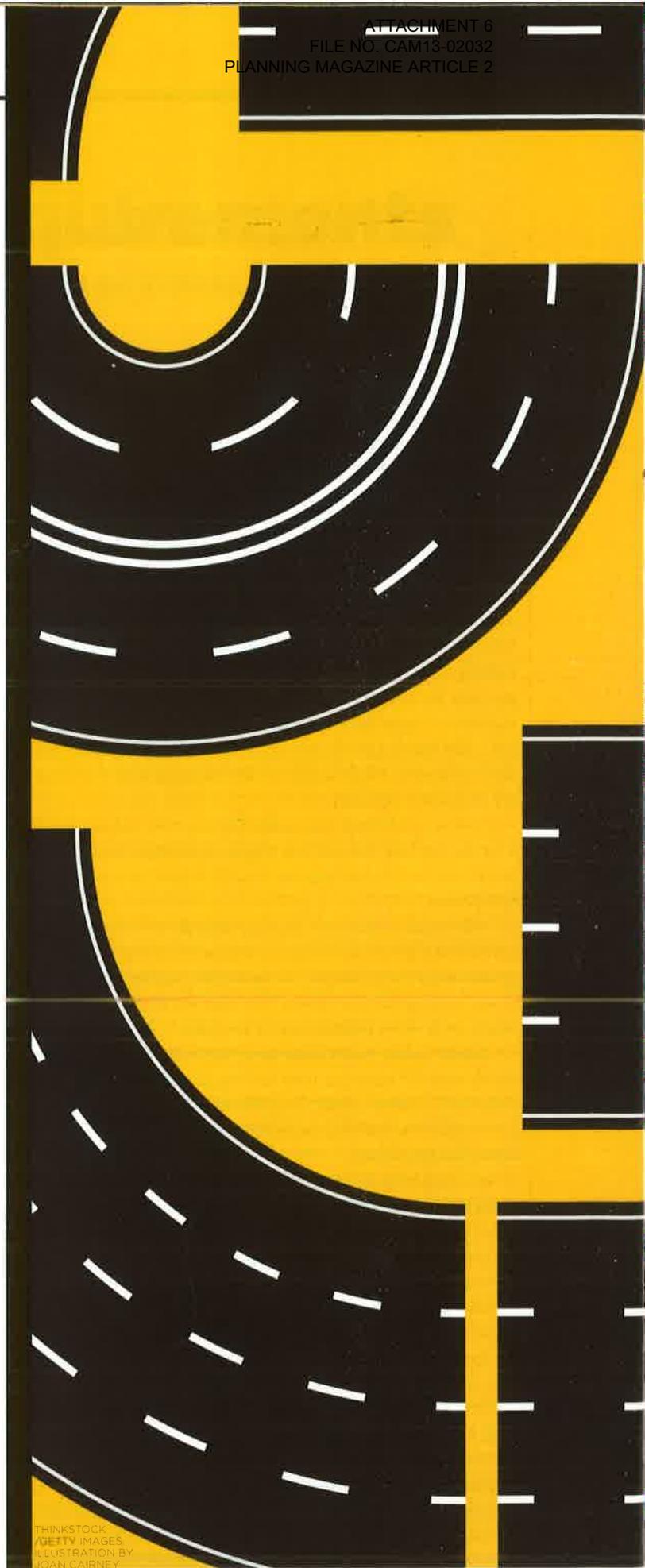
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Letters about AB 904 from mayors, planning academics, planning practitioners, and the California Chapter of APA are available here: [shoup.bol.ucla.edu/LettersAboutAssemblyBill904.pdf](http://shoup.bol.ucla.edu/LettersAboutAssemblyBill904.pdf).

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