



County of Fairfax, Virginia

To protect and enrich the quality of life for the people, neighborhoods and diverse communities of Fairfax County

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TO: Planning Commission

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SUBJECT: Parking Reimagined

At the conclusion of the July 26, 2023, public hearing on the Zoning Ordinance Amendment for Parking Reimagined, the Chair requested staff to compile key points associated with the hearing. The following is a summary of these points with a synopsis of staff recommendations and the associated advertised options for Planning Commission consideration.

Multifamily Rate: Commenters spoke about parking supply and demand factors. Most commenters discussed their experiences with parking oversupply, such as underused parking lots, and expressed support for the project. Comments were provided that despite the changes, developers will continue to build adequate parking and the County does not need to regulate private parking. A significant number of commenters expressed concern that inadequate parking could occur if the proposed changes take place. Specifically, these commenters stated that the proposed multifamily rate is too low and can result in overflow parking into neighborhoods.

From a residential affordability standpoint, commenters testified that lowering parking requirements create more opportunities for affordable housing, and it is inequitable to require lower income residents to have to pay for parking they may not want or need. Further, the costs to provide parking increase housing costs. Some commentors stated that when parking is constrained, available parking will be more costly, and the increased costs of parking adds to increases in rents that disproportionately impacts lower income and elderly individuals.



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Staff Response: The basis for the staff recommendation for the multifamily rates begins on Page 12 of the [staff report](#). Survey data supports the applicability of the recommended 1.3 spaces per unit base rate. The potential for spillover parking from multifamily development is a complex issue as discussed with the Planning Commission in the June 2023 work session. The revised recommendation of 1.04 spaces per unit in the Revitalization tier (80 percent of 1.3 spaces) was based on public feedback to ensure the minimum requirement for multifamily dwellings within the Revitalization tier results in at least one space per unit.

Page 15 of the staff report discusses the background rationale on the proposed use of a bedroom rate in the TSA, TOD, and PTC areas. Tying parking requirements to the number of bedrooms provides a more accurate representation of parking demand. This is more important in higher density areas where it is expected more studio and one-bedroom units will be constructed. A unit-based rate would result in a higher parking requirement for these units, which would likely be above the actual parking need, particularly in high-density, multi-modal development areas.

A discussion of the relationship of affordability and parking begins on Page 5 of the staff report. Providing less parking reduces the expense of providing parking which lessens the carry-through costs to consumers and businesses through rents and the price of goods and services. Further, while perhaps providing greater convenience, owning and operating a car is a considerable expense that has an inverse relationship to income. Transit and other modes of transport are less expensive, even if they are used exclusively for travel.

Advertised Options: The advertised multifamily rate range is from 1.3 to 1.6 spaces per unit for the base rate. The Planning Commission has the option to amend the staff recommendation and propose a higher base rate (up to 1.6) as represented in the two tables below. Any change in the base rate will affect the rates for the Suburban Center and Revitalization tiers as shown in the table below since they are a percentage of the base rate. The multifamily rates in the TSA, TOD, PTC tiers are proposed to be bedroom based and would not be directly impacted by a change to the base rate without a separate action by the Planning Commission.

Base Rate	Suburban Center (90%)	Revitalization (80%)
1.3 space/unit	1.17 space/unit	1.04 space/unit
1.4 space/unit	1.26 space/unit	1.12 space/unit
1.5 space/unit	1.35 space/unit	1.2 space/unit
1.6 space/unit	1.44 space/unit	1.28 space/unit

Below is a summary of staff’s proposed and advertised options for multifamily dwelling units.

Tier	Staff Recommendation	Advertised Options
Base	1.3 spaces per unit	1.3 to 1.6 spaces per unit
Suburban Center	90 percent of the base rate	80 to 90 percent of base rate or 1.3 to 1.6 spaces per unit or Up to 1 space per bedroom
Revitalization	80 percent of the base rate	70 to 90 percent of the base rate or 0.4 to 0.6 space per bedroom
TSA	0.4 space per bedroom	0.4 to 0.8 space per bedroom or 60 to 80 percent of the base rate
TOD	0.3 space per bedroom	0.3 to 0.7 space per bedroom or 50 to 70 percent of base rate
PTC	0.2 space per bedroom within ¼ mile 0.3 space per bedroom ¼ to ½ mile 0.4 space per bedroom for Non-TOD	0 to 0.4 space per bedroom

Single Family Attached and Stacked Townhouse Rate: Early during the public engagement, concerns were raised about parking for single-family attached residential development. As a result, the staff proposal retained the current rate of 2.7 spaces per unit, and further proposed that 0.2 of those spaces be available as shared or visitor spaces for the base rate. Concerns raised at the public hearing related to the proposed reduction of the required rates for single-family attached and stacked townhouses in the tiered framework, specifically the revitalization tier.

Staff Response: This is discussed on page 12 and 16 of the staff report. The proposed rates, including the tiered framework, was released in November of 2022 and are summarized below.

Use	Current	Proposed Base	Suburban Center	Revitalization	TSA	TOD	PTC TOD-NonTOD
Single Family Attached	2.7 spaces/ unit	2.7 spaces/ unit of which 0.2 spaces are available for visitor or shared	2.7 spaces/ unit of which 0.2 spaces are available for visitor or shared	1.8 spaces/ unit of which 0.3 spaces are available for visitor or shared	1.3 spaces/ unit of which 0.3 spaces are available for visitor or shared	1.3 spaces/ unit of which 0.3 spaces are available for visitor or shared	1-1.3 space/ unit
Stacked Townhouse	2.3 spaces/ unit	2.3 spaces/ unit of which 0.3 spaces are available for visitor or shared	2.3 spaces/ unit of which 0.3 spaces are available for visitor or shared	1.8 spaces/ unit of which 0.3 spaces are available for visitor or shared	1.3 spaces/ unit of which 0.3 spaces are available for visitor or shared	1.3 spaces/ unit of which 0.3 spaces are available for visitor or shared	1-1.3 space/ unit

Advertised Options:

Staff has advertised multiple options for Planning Commission consideration as summarized below.

Use	Staff Recommendation – Base and Suburban Centers	Advertised Option – Base and Suburban Center
Single Family Attached	2.7 space/unit of which 0.2 spaces are available for visitor or shared	2.7 space/unit with 0 - 0.7 spaces available for visitor or shared
Stacked Townhouse	2.3 space/unit of which 0.3 spaces are available for visitor or shared	2 - 2.7 space/unit with 0 - 0.7 spaces available for visitor or shared

Use	Staff Recommendation – Revitalization	Advertised Option – Revitalization
Single Family Attached	1.8 space/unit of which 0.3 spaces are available for visitor or shared	1 – 2.7 space/unit with 0 - 0.3 spaces available for visitor or shared
Stacked Townhouse	1.8 space/unit of which 0.3 spaces are available for visitor or shared	1 – 2.3 space/unit with 0 - 0.3 spaces available for visitor or shared

Use	Staff Recommendation – TSA and TOD	Advertised Option – TSA and TOD	Staff Recommendation - PTC	Advertised Option - PTC
Single Family Attached	1.3 space/unit of which 0.3 spaces are available for visitor or shared use	1 – 2.7 space/unit of which 0 - 0.3 spaces are available for visitor or shared use	1 space per unit – TOD 1.3 space per unit – NonTOD	1 – 1.75 space per unit – TOD
Stacked Townhouse	1.3 space/unit of which 0.3 spaces are available for visitor or shared use	1 – 2.3 space/unit of which 0 - 0.3 spaces are available for visitor or shared use	1 space per unit – TOD 1.3 space per unit – NonTOD	1 – 1.7 space per unit – TOD

Environmental Trade-off: Testimony was provided that any reduced parking requirement must have a direct environmental benefit such as a direct increase to amount of required open space. Comments were also received noting that lowering required parking would itself be a net environmental benefit.

Staff Response: A discussion of the project values begins on Page 4 of the staff report. Page 8 and Page 20 of the staff report outline specific modifications to support development and retention of green spaces. In our discussions of the project, we have acknowledged the role this project plays in enhancing environmental benefits. Open space is always recognized as an important factor for redevelopment, but it should not be directly tied to right-sizing parking. Lower parking requirements can provide benefits to affordability and site design with redevelopment activities.

Advertised Options: Staff has not proposed an option to require the direct trade-off of parking spaces for open space or other environmental goals. Provisions in subsection 6100.1 and 6100.6 provides options to allow reduced parking for certain environmental goals such as tree preservation and open space.

Administrative Adjustment of Rates: Testimony was provided concerning the proposed administrative adjustments that could be made by the Director of Land Development Services. Some commentors indicated that any proposed adjustment should only be considered by the Board of Supervisors and require a public hearing. Concerns were also raised about the potential for administrative parking adjustments for sites located in tiered framework areas which was described as ‘an adjustment on top of an adjustment’. Testimony was also provided supporting the proposed administrative adjustments and a suggestion that the Director have the latitude to base decisions on a technical review by staff.

Staff Response: Discussion of the staff recommendations associated with adjustments begin on Page 18 of the staff report. In recognition of previous citizen input, staff revised the scope of administrative approvals from an original recommendation of up to 60 percent for all adjustments to now limiting administrative adjustments to shared parking and transit-related reductions. The Director currently has authority to administratively approve a 30 percent adjustment for shared parking. The staff proposal allows the Director to approve any shared parking adjustment subject to specific standards.

A 10 percent administrative reduction is permitted if the use is located within 1,000-foot walking distance of a transit facility such as bus rapid transit, express bus service, or a bus stop that serves a rail station and is not located within the transit-oriented development or PTC tier.

A 30 percent administrative adjustment is permitted for uses located within or outside of the tiered framework if they are located within 1,000-foot walking distance of a transit facility but not within the transit-oriented development or PTC tier. It must also be demonstrated that the use has a proffered transportation demand management plan, bicycle parking and/or a high walk score. The Board of Supervisors will have the authority to approve a reduction greater than 30 percent. The tiered framework is intended to recognize that factors associated with those identified areas are conducive to a lower minimum parking requirement.

Addressing the ‘adjustment on top of an adjustment’ discussion, opportunities for multiple adjustments are not restricted in the current ordinance. Today, in a Revitalization area, an applicant can justify a 20 percent adjustment for commercial uses and justify an additional 30 percent reduction for shared parking. The proposed shared parking adjustment requires a higher burden of data and/or rationale to allow consideration of a lower rate than the mandated rate. During the past year, the Board has approved 13 parking adjustments to allow parking rates below the minimum requirement. Whether adjustments are approved by the Board of Supervisors or by administrative action, the technical recommendation by staff is the strongest factor in an approval decision. Staff recommends no change to the current proposal; however, we are exploring additional options for Planning Commission consideration.

Advertised Options: The staff recommendation is to permit up to a 30 percent reduction for a transit-related adjustment by the Director with an advertised range of 30 to 50 percent. Staff is in the process of developing additional options for Planning Commission consideration that could further limit the administrative transit related reductions.

Loading Spaces: Commenters who addressed this topic expressed concerns that reducing loading spaces would create a conflict between loading activities and accessible spaces. Concern was also raised that due to limited staff there is little enforcement to prevent the blocking of accessible spaces.

Staff Response: The proposed changes for loading spaces are discussed on pages 20 and 21 in the staff report. In staff's opinion the requirement for adequate receiving facilities will help address this concern. Currently, due to their required size (15x25 feet), loading spaces are not often located near a front door of the establishment, and therefore do not facilitate quick deliveries. Staff is reviewing the proposed language and may offer some additional standards to help address these concerns.

Further in the staff proposal, we have taken care to ensure, even with lower parking requirements in the tiered framework and adjustments, at a minimum the base parking requirement is used to meet accessible parking standards. This will result in a higher ratio of accessible spaces within these parking areas. Accessible parking requirements are based on formulas published by the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).

Advertised Options: The staff recommendation was to exclude loading space requirements for the first 10,000 square feet, but the advertised option is for the first 5,000 to 25,000 square feet.

Next Steps

A staff report addendum with revisions to the proposed text is being finalized and will be distributed to the Planning Commission by August 16, 2023 and posted to the parking reimagined website.

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