

Parking

Background, Examples from Other Cities, Policy Options

To: Ad Hoc Downtown Advisory Committee

From: Alex Wenger, Economic Development & Tourism Coordinator; Stacy Clauson, Community Planner II

Date: March 23, 2023

Re: **Parking**

Background

As noted in the Washington State Department of Commerce¹'s [Housing Memorandum: Issues Affecting Housing Availability and Affordability](#), on-site parking requirements for housing can render projects less feasible or infeasible because the project has to either provide land on-site to accommodate the parking, thereby reducing the units realized, or absorb the cost of structured parking. In short, reducing parking in residential development can make development densities more efficient or lower the cost of housing. That is why the Department of Commerce is recommending that cities consider reducing on-site parking requirements (Exhibit B, excerpt from Department of Commerce's [Guidance for Developing a Housing Action Plan](#)).

This concept has appeared in several legislative bills, as follows:

- [HB 1351](#)/[SB 5456](#) – These bills did not appear to make it out of their respective chamber in 2023. The bills would have restricted city authority to regulate parking, for sites that are within one-quarter mile, based on walking distance, of a major transit stop that receives frequent transit service, as defined in the bill.
- [ESHB 1923](#) (Section 5), as amended by [SHB 2343](#) in 2021, established a limit on the amount of parking local governments may require for low-income, senior, disabled, and market-rate housing units located near high-quality transit service. Under these provisions, local governments may require up to one parking space per bedroom for market-rate multifamily housing and housing affordable to very low and extremely low-income households. A city may choose to require less parking than the upper limit outlined in RCW 36.70A.620, such as 0.75 spaces per unit, or not require parking at all. A developer may choose to build more parking unless the jurisdiction has set a maximum. In case of housing specifically for seniors or people

¹ The Washington State Department of Commerce assists local communities in local land use planning by providing funding and technical assistance in developing local planning policies consistent with the Growth Management Act (GMA)

with disabilities, RCW 36.70A.620(2) states that a jurisdiction may not require parking for residents but may require for staff and visitors. However, if the jurisdiction has determined a particular housing unit to be in an area with a lack of access to street parking, physical space impediments or other reasons that would make street parking infeasible for the unit, a city may require resident parking.

The issue of parking has been analyzed by the Whatcom Housing Alliance (Exhibit A) that overviews the cost of parking, initiatives to remove parking mandates, and provides local context for this issue.

Current Downtown Parking Standards

17.124.115 Parking requirements in the Central Business District.

A. Off-street parking requirements for customer and employee use in the Central Business District shall be suspended until such time that the city has adopted a parking plan which allows for the provision of required parking on site or in close proximity; by mutual and joint use agreements; and/or through public action such as a special assessment district. Once adopted, all businesses and residents shall be subject to the provisions of the parking plan. Current on-site parking space and recorded off-site parking fees shall be incorporated into a pro rata and equitable cost-sharing parking program.

B. In conformance with the purpose of maintaining and encouraging a pedestrian-oriented commercial environment, parking requirements for the Central Business District are to be less stringent than for other commercial areas.

C. On-Street Parking in the Central Business District.

1. On-street customer parking for commercial use is allowed on city streets except in areas specifically signed and marked to provide for orderly and safe movement and operation of automobiles.
2. The city may designate certain areas for long-term or employee parking and reserve areas near and adjacent to retail and service businesses for short-term or customer parking.
3. The city may, if necessary, establish on-street parking time limits in selected areas in the Central Business District.

D. Off-Street Residential Parking in the Central Business District.

1. Residential parking shall be provided at a rate of one space per studio or one-bedroom unit, and one and one-half spaces per two-bedroom and larger unit.
2. Residential parking for senior housing shall be provided at one-half space per studio or one-bedroom unit, and one space per two-bedroom and larger unit. Senior housing shall be limited to residence occupancy by persons 55 and older as restricted by CC&Rs. City shall be a party to

CC&Rs regarding age limits to ensure the age restriction and shall have authority through CC&Rs to prevent waiving, amending or eliminating age restriction.

Note: Off-site or shared parking for residential uses is not permitted.

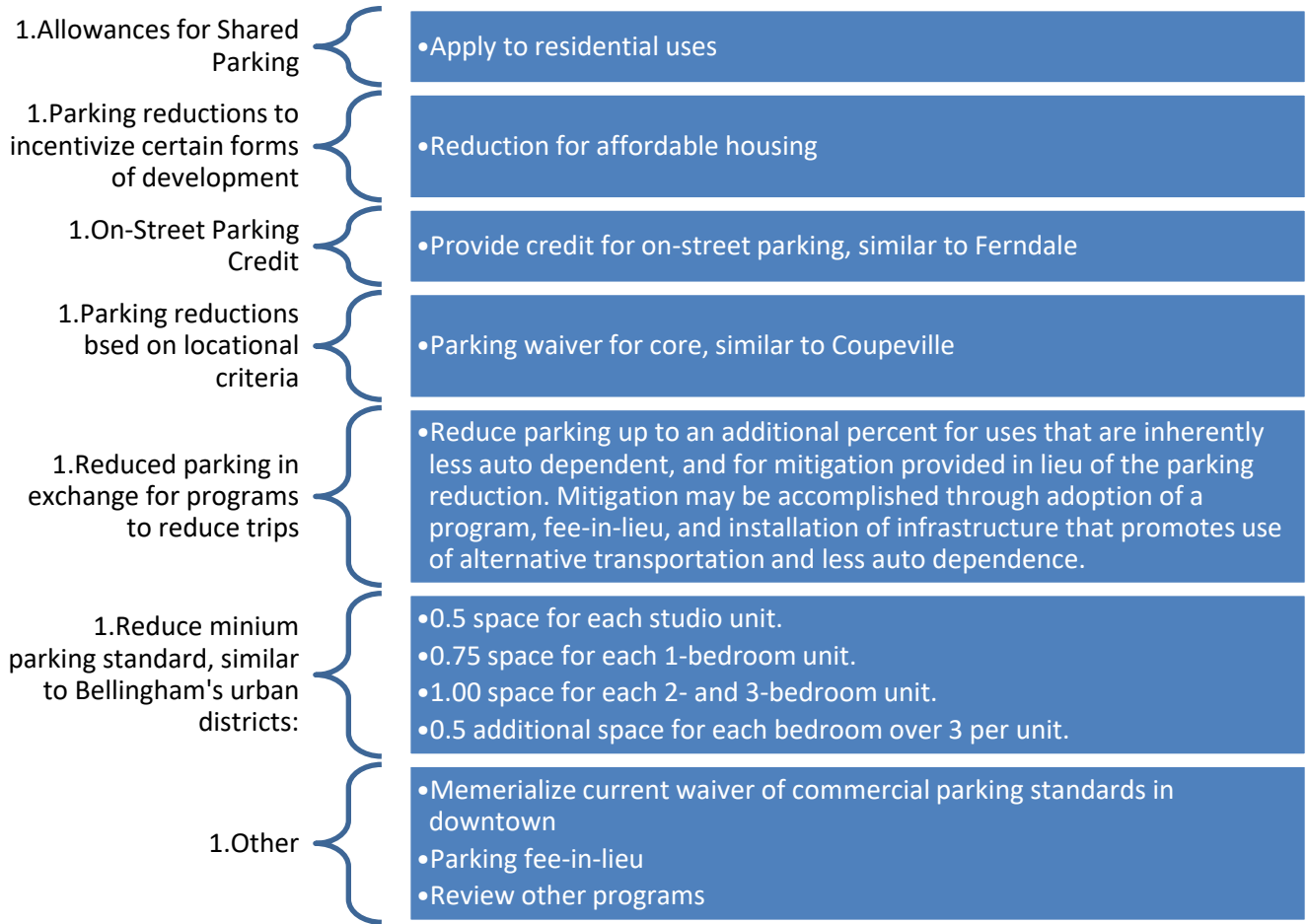
Examples from Other Cities

Measure	Example	Description
Allowances for shared parking	Bellingham	The amount of off-street parking required by this chapter may be reduced by an amount determined by the director when shared parking facilities for two or more uses are proposed, provided the requirements in BMC 20.12.010.A.6 are met
Parking Reduction based on locational criteria	Ferndale	In the City Center zone, parking space requirements can be reduced by 25 percent. This is to be done by deducting 25 percent from the gross floor area prior to calculating required spaces per square foot. Residential uses must have minimum of one parking stall/unit. <u>See FMC 18.76.090</u>
Off-Street Parking Credit	Ferndale	A commercial or mixed-use commercial-residential development may receive credit for one space for each two on-street spaces within 300 feet of the property line frontage of the use. Residential uses must have minimum of one parking stall/unit. <u>See FMC 18.76.090</u>
Reductions to minimum parking required if the development includes programs to reduce single occupancy vehicle trips	Bellingham	<i>Parking Reduction Allowed.</i> The director may administratively reduce parking up to an additional 30 percent for uses that are inherently less auto dependent, and for mitigation provided in lieu of the parking reduction. Mitigation may be accomplished through adoption of a program, fee-in-lieu, and installation of infrastructure that promotes use of alternative transportation and less auto dependence. This is permitted in several urban villages, including Bellingham, Fairhaven Urban Village, Old Town District
Administrative Reduction of parking requirements	Bellingham	Off-street parking requirements can be reduced up to a maximum of 25 percent, when: a. A parking generation study is prepared by the applicant or an independent consultant; and b. Whatcom Transportation Authority GoLine route is provided

Measure	Example	Description
		<p>within one-quarter mile of the site. The amount of reduction shall be based on the number of transit runs during peak hours each business day; and</p> <p>c. The applicant demonstrates enhanced bicycle and pedestrian facilities; or</p> <p>d. The applicant pays into a city adopted fee-in-lieu-of-parking program. BMC 20.12.010.A.6</p>
Lower parking ratios	Bellingham	<p>In Downtown and Waterfront Districts, the following residential parking standards apply:</p> <p>0.5 space for each studio unit.</p> <p>0.75 space for each 1-bedroom unit.</p> <p>1.00 space for each 2- and 3-bedroom unit.</p> <p>0.5 additional space for each bedroom over 3 per unit.</p>
Eliminate Parking Minimums	Coupeville	<p>In the historic Front Street area bounded by Coveland on the South, Alexander Street on the West, Main Street on the East, and extending into Penn Cove to include the Coupeville Wharf, the minimum required parking standards contained in this section shall not apply.</p>
Parking Fee-In-Lieu	Burien	<p>Parking minimums can be reduced through contribution to a parking <i>Fee-in-Lieu</i> program..</p>

Policy Options

These examples provide some policy options for the City to explore. These options could be considered independently or bundled. They could apply throughout the district or apply within certain sub-districts.



Next Steps

The Committee may use and modify this list as it builds consensus on recommendations that will ultimately be reviewed by the City Council.