



# City of Auburn, Maine

Office of Planning & Permitting

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To: Auburn Planning Board  
 From: Megan Norwood, City Planner  
 Re: Proposed Amendment to Chapter 60, Article IV, Division 14, Section 60-554 to Remove all Parking Requirements in the Form-Based Code Zoning Districts.  
 Date: June 08, 2021

**I. PROPOSAL:** At their June 7, 2021 meeting, the City Council is expected to request a recommendation from the Planning Board on removing all of the parking requirements for uses in the Form-Based Code Districts. Note: A lot of the content in this Staff Report is similar to the prior Staff Report regarding removing parking requirements for all land uses in all zoning districts. However, the Form-Based Code is unique in that it regulates the size and placement of building as opposed to the uses (provided they are compatible uses with residential areas). The only restrictions on uses (# of units, having a retail store downstairs with apartments upstairs, size of a restaurant, etc.) is being able to provide the required number parking spaces for the proposed use. Most of the properties in our Form-Based Code Districts (especially those that were just pulled in to the T-4.2 Form-Based Code from the Multifamily Urban) do not have a large amount of space to be able to provide parking for a large apartment building or restaurant – by removing the parking requirements in the Form-Based Code Districts, it would essentially open the door for existing/new buildings to be used at a greater capacity than they are currently.

USE(1)	T-4.1	T-4.2	T-5.1	T-5.2	T-6	PARKING REQUIREMENTS 2)
<b>Residential Type Use</b>						
Single Family	P	P	P			1 sp/DU
Duplex	P	P	P	P	P	1 sp/DU
Townhouse	P	P	P	P	P	1 sp/DU
Multi-Family	P	P	P	P	P	1 sp/DU plus 1 guest space/4 DU
Bed & Breakfast < 4 Rooms	S	P	P	P	P	1 sp/employee plus 1 sp/guest
Bed & Breakfast > 4 Rooms	S	S	P	P	P	1 sp/employee plus 1 sp/guest
Hotel	X	X	S	S	P	½ sp/employee plus 1 sp/room
Elderly/Child Care Facility	S	S	S	S	P	½ sp/employee plus 1 sp/ 8 users

Home Occupation	P	P	P	P	P	Based on Use Type (Ch. 60, Art. IX)
Community Based Residential Facilities	P	P	P	P	P	1 sp/employee plus 1 sp/client
Boarding House/Lodginghouse	P	P	P	S	X	1 sp/guestroom plus
						1 sp/employee
<b>Office/Service Type Use</b>						
Professional Offices	S	S	P	P	P	1 sp/400 sf
Medical and Dental Clinics	S	S	P	P	P	1 sp/400 sf
Personal Services	S		P	P	P	1 sp/400 sf
<b>Retail Type Use</b>						
General Retail	S	S	P	P	P	1 sp/400 sf
Age Restricted Retail (3)	S	S	S	S	S	1 sp/400 sf
Specialty Shops	S	P	P	P	P	1 sp/400
Restaurant up to 30 seats w/16 outdoor	X	S	P	P	P	1 sp/4 seats
Restaurant over 30 seats w/16 outdoor		S	S	P	P	1 sp/4 seats
Halls, Private Clubs, Indoor Amusement	S	S	S	P	P	1 sp/400 sf
Artist Studios, Performing Art Center	S	S	P	P	P	1 sp/400 sf
<b>Civic</b>						
Church or Places of Worship	S	S	P	P	P	1 sp/5 seats
Government Offices	X	X	P	P	P	1 sp/400 sf
Art Galleries	S	P	P	P	P	1 sp/400 sf
Transportation Facilities	X	X	S	S	S	1 sp/400 sf

Adaptive Reuse of Structures of Community Significance	S	S	S	S	S	To be determined by the planning board depending on use(s)
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As part of the Comprehensive Plan update process, the Committee received recommendations from the Mercatus Center at the George Mason University. One of those recommendations was thought to be something that the City could benefit from currently as the market should be able to dictate what is needed for parking without the City having to provide minimums.

The argument for removing parking minimums is that they create several empty spaces that do not add value to the City or property, they push homes and businesses further apart, impede the walkability of neighborhoods, raise the cost of housing and place an especially costly burden on small, local entrepreneurs. Removing the minimum parking requirements is not thought to remove parking entirely but will allow Property Owners to decide how much parking their proposed use will actually need, rather than being forced to add unproductive, empty parking spaces to their site.

On the contrary, comments from Department Heads speak to some of the unintended consequences this could cause such as increased on-street parking, issues with snow-bans/plowing, additional units created beyond what the site could reasonably accommodate to make installing a sprinkler system cost effective, etc.

As part of the Planning Boards recommendation to City Council, we suggest weighing the benefits and unintended consequences of scrapping the parking requirements entirely. Perhaps it is the direction the City wants to go in to spur affordable housing development or perhaps the City wants to ease into something like this by applying it only to developments less than a certain square footage, only in certain areas of the City, only for affordable housing projects or housing projects near transit.

**II. DEPARTMENT REVIEW:**

- Police – From the Police Department’s perspective, parking in the downtown and in congested residential areas is already challenging. Many multifamily properties do not have adequate parking and rely heavily on street parking. Allowing new units to be built specifically in these areas with no parking space requirements will magnify the problem. Parking during snow emergencies and for snow removal after storms is a shared concern we have with Public Works. The city has limited residential parking options with the exceptions of properties located close by the city’s parking garage and the few winter reliefs lots that currently exist. These lots are very limited in their size and availability. If the single parking space per unit requirement for multi-unit buildings is removed, we feel that the residential parking challenges may only get worse.
- Auburn Water and Sewer – No Comments
- Fire Department/Code Enforcement – The only thing that comes to mind is that the fire department needs to be able to access buildings in case of an emergency or fire. If there was congested parking lots, or roadways, it may present difficulties in our response to a scene. Also, see discussion above regarding problems that will be difficult to resolve later pertaining to sprinkler system cost effectiveness.
- Engineering – No Comments
- Public Services – I agree with PD on this especially the concerns during Winter Storms. We don’t call Parking Bans for anything less than 3 inches usually, but we still have to plow the streets. It is difficult getting by these cars and it usually leaves piles of snow that freeze, and it is difficult to remove after that.
- Airport – No Comments
- 911 - No Comments

**III. PLANNING BOARD ACTION/STAFF SUGGESTIONS:** Staff suggests the Planning Board think about the benefits and potential unintended consequences of removing all parking minimums from the Form-Based Code Districts and make a recommendation to the City Council.