

Parking Requirements Guide For Affordable Housing Developers

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Parking Requirements and the Cost to Affordable Housing

Fear of traffic congestion and overcrowded street parking has led many cities to establish minimum parking requirements calling for developments to provide often excessive amounts of off-street parking. Aside from creating excess parking and adding to congestion by encouraging automobile usage, parking requirements have a tremendous negative impact on development of all kinds, especially affordable housing.

Problems for Affordable Housing Developers

- **Increases Development Costs** – Parking requirements drive up the cost of development, resulting in less units of housing. Needing to spend more on parking means less funds available to provide housing. Some developments end up having more space for cars than for people.
- **Reduces the Potential for Other Amenities and Uses, Wastes Land** – Parking requirements also mean that less money and land is available for other purposes. Childcare facilities, community rooms, and play areas may all be sacrificed in order to accommodate parking. The possibility for mixed-use, such as ground-floor retail, are also reduced, leaving other community needs unmet in the name of parking.
- **Less Attractive Designs** – Meeting parking requirements becomes a focal point in the design process and eliminates opportunities to incorporate open space. With less parking to consider, a building can be designed that more reflects a neighborhood's context and needs.

Is All This Parking Needed?

No. Parking requirements have largely been arbitrarily determined and do not usually reflect the verifiable parking needs of the people who will make use of a development.

- Parking requirements have often been set using a “one-size fits all” approach using information gathered during peak periods at developments with ample parking in areas with few public transit options.
- The likely residents of affordable housing do not require a great deal of parking. Studies show that the correlation between income and vehicle ownership is strong, with the likelihood of owning more than one vehicle increasing with income. Low-income families, seniors, and special needs populations are less likely to require the use of more than one parking space, if that at all. The need for parking also decreases for residents in dense areas near transit.

Resources

Planning for Residential Parking: A Guide for Housing Developers and Planners.

Website created by NPH to help developers be more effective in arguing for reduced parking. Contains data, recommendations, and a model for determining the amount of parking needed by a specific site.

<http://dcrp.ced.berkeley.edu/students/rrusso/parking/Developer%20Manual/index.htm>

Donald Shoup

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Has written numerous reports regarding parking requirements. Argues for reduced parking requirements for numerous developments, including affordable housing.

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Reports

Parking Requirement Impacts on Housing Affordability

Todd Litman, Victoria Transport Policy Institute. Victoria, B.C., Canada, 1999.

www.vtppi.org/park-hou.pdf

Pavement Busters Guide: Why and How to Reduce the Amount of Land Paved for Roads and Parking Facilities

Todd Litman, Victoria Transport Policy Institute. Victoria, B.C., Canada, 2000.

www.vtppi.org/pav-bust.pdf

Smart Growth Zoning Codes: A Resource Guide

Local Government Commission. Sacramento, 2003. To order a copy, visit www.lgc.org

Travel Characteristics of Transit-Oriented Development in California

Hollie Lund (CSU Poly, Pomona), Robert Cervero (UC Berkeley), Richard Wilson (CSU Poly, Pomona). California, 2004. Please contact SCANPH for a copy.

Rethinking Residential Parking: Myth & Facts

Non-Profit Housing Association of Northern California (NPH). San Francisco, 2001.

www.nonprohousing.org/actioncenter/toolbox/parking/mythsandfacts.pdf

Reducing Housing Costs by Rethinking Parking Requirements

San Francisco Planning and Urban Research Association (SPUR).

San Francisco, 1998. www.spur.org/documents/spurhsgpkg.pdf

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Reports, cont.

Buying Time at the Curb

Donald Shoup, UCLA Department of Urban Planning. Los Angeles, 2003.

www.sppsr.ucla.edu/up/webfiles/buyingtime.pdf

The High Cost of Free Parking

Donald Shoup, UCLA Department of Urban Planning. Los Angeles, 1997.

www.sppsr.ucla.edu//dup/people/faculty/Shoup%20Pub%204.pdf

In Lieu of Required Parking

Donald Shoup, UCLA Department of Urban Planning. Los Angeles, 1999.

www.sppsr.ucla.edu//dup/people/faculty/Shoup%20Pub%202.pdf

The Trouble With Minimum Parking Requirements

Donald Shoup, UCLA Department of Urban Planning. Los Angeles, 1999.

www.sppsr.ucla.edu//dup/people/faculty/Shoup%20Pub%203.pdf

Housing Shortage/Parking Surplus: Silicon Valley's Opportunity to Address Housing Needs and Transportation Problems with Innovative Parking Policies

Transportation and Land Use Coalition. San Jose, 2002.

www.transcoalition.org/reports/housing_s/housing_shortage_home.html

Best Practice Policies

Here is a quick list of jurisdictions and practices that can be used as examples:

Policy	Places	Descriptions
Combined Reductions in Parking Requirements for Affordable Housing and Proximity to Transit	City of Los Angeles	See Next Page
	City of San Diego	Parking requirements reduced by .25 spaces per dwelling unit for <i>Transit Area</i> or <i>Very Low Income</i> housing (Municipal Code 142.05)
Parking Requirement Reductions for Affordable Housing	Santa Monica	Reduces parking for two bedroom affordable housing units from 2 spaces per unit to 1.5 spaces per unit. (Section 9.04.10.08.040)
Using Square Feet Rather Than Bedrooms for Parking Requirements	City of Berkeley	In R-4 district, parking requirements are 1 per 1,000 ft of gross floor area. This reduces the penalty that minimum parking requirements typically have on smaller units. (Section 23D.40.080)
Lower Parking Requirements in Downtowns with Higher Densities and Better Transit Service	San Francisco	In RC-4, RSD and C-3 Districts (except Van Ness Special Use District), parking requirement is reduced to 1 space per 4 units from 1 space per unit. (Article 1.5. Section 151)
	Oakland	For multi-family housing, parking ratios are 1 per unit in higher intensity areas versus 1.5 per unit in other areas. (Municipal Code 17.116.060)
Lower Parking Requirements for Unassigned Parking Lots versus Assigned Parking Spaces	San Jose	For 1 bedrooms and studios only, San Jose has a 0.5 spaces per unit reduction in MPRs when a facility is "All Open Parking" vs. "One-Car" or "Two-Car Garage" (Municipal Code 20.12.215)
	Sunnyvale	If open lot, parking requirements are 0.3 to 0.4 spaces per unit lower than developments using one-fully enclosed garage. (Municipal Code 19.46.050)
Allowing Residential Development Managers to Purchase Annual Transit Pass for All Residents at a Discount	Santa Clara County - Valley Transportation Authority " Residential Eco-Pass "	Pass is between \$20 and \$80 per year per person depending on development size and location.
"By-right" reductions in parking requirements for Senior and disabled housing	San Francisco	One-fifth the regular parking requirement for housing specifically designed for and occupied by senior citizens or physically handicapped persons. (Article 1.5. Section 151)
	Berkeley	25% reduction of parking requirement for housing exclusively for persons over the age of sixty-two (62). One space per 5 residents for nursing homes. (Section 23D.40.080)
Discretionary reductions in parking requirements for senior and disabled housing.	Concord	If developer can demonstrate that an apartment project for residents with special needs will not generate a need for as much parking, approving bodies have the authority to reduce the number of required parking spaces. (Section 10825.A3)

City of Los Angeles Municipal Code
Chapter 1, General Provisions & Zoning
Section 12.22 A 25 (d)

25. Affordable Housing Incentives/Density Bonuses.

(d) Affordable Housing Production Incentives.

Notwithstanding any provisions of this article to the contrary, density bonus projects, and other development projects with any restricted affordable units or any affordable accessible units, shall be granted the following incentives:

(1) In calculating dwelling units or guest rooms, density shall be rounded upwards from fractions of one-half (1/2) and more from that permitted by the applicable zone to allow one additional dwelling unit or guest room.

(2) Parking requirements for each restricted affordable unit only shall be as follows:

For a project located within 1,500 feet of a mass transit station or major bus route	1.00 parking space per dwelling unit, regardless of the number of habitable rooms
For a project containing 1 or 2 habitable rooms and not located within 1,500 feet of a transit station or major bus route	1.00 parking space per dwelling unit
For a project containing 3 or more habitable rooms and not located within 1,500 feet of a transit station or major bus route	1.50 parking spaces per dwelling unit
For any project containing units designed for senior citizens and/or disabled persons	0.50 parking space per dwelling unit or guest room
For a single-room occupancy hotel	0.25 parking space per dwelling unit or guest room, with a minimum of 5 parking stalls per facility

Sample of Southern California Minimum Parking Requirements

Below is a table of many Southern California cities' minimum parking requirements (MPR) for multi-family housing. For comparison purposes, the required off-street parking spaces, including guest parking, was calculated for a hypothetical 100 unit development consisting of: 10 studios, 40 one bedroom units, 40 two bedroom units, and 10 three bedroom units. The municipalities are listed from the lowest required spaces to the highest.

	Minimum Required Parking Spaces per Unit for Multi-Family Developments (by Unit Type, Guest for all Units)					Hypothetical 100 Unit Development	
	Studio	1 BR	2 BR	3 BR	Guest	Total Spaces	Spaces Per Unit
Cathedral City	1	1	1.5	1.5	Not Specified	125	1.25
Los Angeles	1	1	1.5	2	ns	130	1.30
Irvine	1	1.4	1.6	2	1 per 4	175	1.75
Riverside (City)	1.5	1.5	2	2	ns	175	1.75
Ventura (City)	1	1	2	2	0.25/unit	175	1.75
Santa Monica	1	1.5	2	2	1 per 5	190	1.90
Long Beach	1	1.5	2	2	1 per 4	195	1.95
West Hollywood	1	1.5	2	2	1 per 4	195	1.95
Santa Barbara	1.25	1.5	2	2	1 per 4	198	1.98
Pasadena	1	2	2	2	1 per 10	200	2.00
San Bernardino (City)	1.5	1.5	2	2.5	1 per 5	200	2.00
City of Orange	1.2	1.7	2	2.2	0.2/unit	202	2.02
San Clemente**	1.5	1.5	2	2.5	0.333/unit	213	2.13
Oxnard	1	1	2	2	1/unit up to 30 units; 0.5/unit thereafter	215	2.15
Tustin	2	2	2	2	1 per 4	225	2.25
Huntington Park	2	2	2	2	1 per 3	233	2.33
Anaheim	1.25	2	2.25	3	0.25/unit	238	2.38
Santa Ana*	2	2	3	4	25% units' requirement	325	3.25

Note: These are merely the number of required parking spaces. This list does not include the additional regulations cities impose such as requiring that at least one space per unit be covered. These additional requirements may further impede development.

* Santa Ana recently changed their MPRs to more reasonable ratios. Santa Ana's municipal code still reflects these requirements as of 9/16/03.

** San Clemente may also use net floor area to determine MPRs. Whichever method yields the larger amount will be employed. Breakdown is as follows:

To 900 sq. ft -- 1.5 spaces
 To 1800 sq. ft -- 2.0 spaces
 To 2700 sq. ft -- 2.5 spaces
 Over 2700 sq. ft -- 3.0 spaces

Sample of Alternative Minimum Parking Requirements

Below is a table of alternative minimum parking requirements for various types of multi-family developments. Various cities have recognized that the standard requirements may not be fitting for every population, such as low income families or seniors, and have developed more reasonable requirements for sites serving to these groups. For comparison purposes, the same hypothetical development has been employed.

	Minimum Required Parking Spaces per Unit for Multi-Family Developments (by Unit Type, Guest for all Units)					Hypothetical 100 Unit Development	
	Studio	1 BR	2 BR	3 BR	Guest	Total Spaces	Spaces Per Unit
Anaheim – Senior	1	1	2	2	ns	150	1.50
Cathedral City – Senior	1	1	1	1	ns	100	1.00
Long Beach – Special Needs LI or Senior LI	1 space for every 2 bedrooms				1 per 4	75	0.75
Los Angeles – Affordable	1	1	1.5 (if near transit)	1.5 (if near transit)	ns	125 (105 near transit)	1.25 (1.05 near transit)
San Clemente – Senior	1	1	1	1	1 per 5, plus 2 for manager	122	1.22
Santa Barbara – 100% Affordable	1	1	1	1	ns	100	1.00
Santa Monica – Affordable	1	1	1.5	1.5	1 per 5	145	1.45
Ventura County – Low income or Senior	1	1	1.5	2	1 per 2	180	1.80
West Hollywood – Senior	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1 per 10	60	0.60

References

Access municipal code language for all cities listed via the internet.

City	Section	Website
Anaheim	18.06.050	http://www.amlegal.com/anaheim_ca/
Cathedral City	9.58.020.F	http://ordlink.com/codes/cathedral/index.htm
Huntington Park	9-3.804	http://ordlink.com/codes/huntington/index.htm
Irvine	4-34	http://www.ci.irvine.ca.us/depts/cd/planningactivities/zoning_ordinance.asp
Long Beach	21.41.216	http://ci.long-beach.ca.us/cityclerk/lbmc/title-21/frame.htm
Los Angeles	12.21.A.4	http://www.lacity.org/lacity102.htm
City of Orange	17.34.060	http://bpc.iserver.net/codes/orange/index.htm
Pasadena	17.68.030	http://www.ci.pasadena.ca.us/cityclerk/municode.asp
Riverside (City)	19.74.010B	http://www.ci.riverside.ca.us/municipal_code/Default.htm
San Bernardino (City)	19.24.040	http://www.ci.san-bernardino.ca.us/site/htm/DevelopmentCode2002.htm
San Clemente	17.64.050	http://www.bpcnet.com/codes/sanclemente/
Santa Ana	4-1322	http://livepublish.municode.com/3/lpest.dll?f=templates&fn=main-j.htm&vid=11492
Santa Barbara	28.90.100	http://www.ci.santa-barbara.ca.us/departments/administrative_services/city_clerk/municipal_code/
Santa Monica	9.04.10.08.040	http://pen.ci.santa-monica.ca.us/municode/codemaster/Article_9/04/10.08.040.html
Tustin	9226	http://livepublish.municode.com/LivePublish/newonlinecodes.asp?infobase=11307
Ventura (City)	24.415.030	http://livepublish.municode.com/3/lpext.dll?f=templates&fn=main-j.htm&vid=10135
West Hollywood	19.28.040	http://www.weho.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=nav&navid=24&mode=Web

Making a House Call

Less Downtown Parking Is Part of Proposal to Streamline Home Building

by Jason Mandell, Los Angeles Downtown News

The city's restrictive building codes have caused many developers to shy away from tackling much-needed housing in the Central City. But a plan released last week by a business advocacy group hopes to make the prospect more attractive to residential builders by streamlining the process. It states that revising certain codes and zoning laws could reduce construction costs by \$20,000 to \$30,000 per unit.

A major focus of the plan, authored by the Central City Association, is to create more high-density housing by cutting back on open space requirements and steering development toward public transportation spots. It also has the controversial aspect of aiming to reduce the number of parking spaces required for a project.

The 19-page "white paper," which was unveiled last Tuesday at the Subway Terminal Building, has won the support of Mayor James Hahn and Ninth District Councilwoman Jan Perry. The plan states what most Angelenos already know – L.A. is in the midst of a housing crisis. According to the CCA, the city has a net deficit of between 8,000 and 10,000 housing units. Additionally, about 15% of all units are considered substandard, and 30% of the units are overcrowded, according to the report.

Developer Greg Vilkin, who heads CCA's housing production committee and oversaw the white paper, said the idea is to curb what residents consider their right to private open space and a parking spot for every car.

"L.A. needs to grow up," said Vilkin, whose company Forest City Residential West is developing several Downtown projects, including the 277-unit Subway Terminal Building. Vilkin said the CCA plan's ultimate goal is to force people to live near where they work, use public transit or rideshare, and use neighborhood parks rather than backyards.

Vilkin admitted that lowering the requirements for parking spaces for new projects would negatively impact Downtown, whose lack of affordable parking has long deterred visitors and potential residents.

"There will be some short-term pain," said Vilkin. However, he said that in the long run, cutting down on parking spaces will transform the area's lifestyle.

Hahn said the high cost of meeting the current parking requirements drives away developers. He said that if more housing is constructed near bus and subway stops, the need for parking spaces will diminish.

Making a House Call, cont.

A potentially controversial measure of the CCA plan is the elimination of prevailing wage requirements for public and private housing projects. The plan states that wage restrictions often deter developers from taking on projects because of high labor costs.

The report also calls for the city to abandon certain policies that require developers to include affordable housing in market-rate projects. The plan suggests providing better incentives and subsidies for mixed-income housing.

Among the plan's additional recommendations are:

- Create a housing advisory committee to help developers meet code requirements.
- Change building codes and zoning laws to cut costs and increase the speed of the approval and construction processes.
- Develop a workforce housing campaign and offer financial assistance to "critical employees" such as police, fire, nurses and teachers.
- Step up lobbying efforts for state and federal funds for market-rate and low-income housing.

As part of the effort to encourage residential development, Hahn announced during the press conference that his business team is being renamed the Los Angeles Housing and Business Team. He said the CCA plan offers real solutions for building housing quickly and at lower costs.

Hahn said he does not endorse every component of the initiative, and plans to further examine it. He expressed hesitation about the proposal to reduce open space requirements in development projects. "I'm not an advocate of that yet," said Hahn.

Perry praised the report for seeking to entice developers to tackle projects. "I like the fact that this paper provides incentives, not punitive measures."

Perry said the plan provides a blueprint for the city's effort to increase housing production. "I'm looking forward to using this paper as a measure of our success as we move forward."

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An Example of NIMBY

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