



TOWN OF CARRBORO

NORTH CAROLINA

TRANSMITTAL

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

DELIVERED VIA: ☐ HAND ☐ MAIL ☐ FAX ☒ EMAIL

To: Richard White, Town Manager
Mayor and Town Council

From: Tina Moon, Planning Administrator

Date: October 20, 2023

Subject: Proposed Text Amendments Modifying Residential Parking Requirements

Overview

The Town of Carrboro's recently adopted comprehensive plan, Carrboro Connects, includes recommendations to examine and when appropriate update certain provisions in the Land Use Ordinance to better implement the Town's vision as set forth in the plan. One of the priority projects identified in the Transportation and Mobility and Land Use chapters of the plan involve a review of the current parking standards, particularly the residential standards, as described below:

Transportation and Mobility Goal 4, Strategy 4.2: Reduce negative effects of parking requirements on housing costs and natural resources.

- Project A: Remove minimum vehicular parking requirements for residential development close to transit. Lower vehicular parking requirements for all residential uses, including ADUs. Further reduce vehicular minimum parking standards for dedicated, long-term affordable housing units. Consider maximum parking rations to reduce impervious surfaces and make more efficient use of land.

Land Use Goal 4, Strategy 4.1: Update the Land Use Ordinance to be consistent with the goals of the Comprehensive Plan.

- Project C: Update parking requirements to remove minimum requirements for residential development close to transit (including affordable housing, accessory dwelling units, and the residential components of mixed-use developments) to reduce impervious surfaces and make more efficient use of land.

The reduction in parking requirements has also been identified as a "cross-cutting" strategy with the Affordable Housing Chapter, based on the possibility that the cost savings associated with the reduction of a development standard could lead to more affordable housing.

Existing standards

The standards for parking, the number of parking spaces required per land use and specifications relating to parking space and parking lot dimensions are described in Article XVIII of the Land Use Ordinance (LUO). The intent of these standards as set forth in Section 15-291 is to provide “a sufficient number of parking spaces to accommodate the number of vehicles that ordinarily are likely to be attracted to the development in question.” Subsection 15-291(b), as noted in the excerpt below, clarifies that the standards are presumptive.

(b) The presumptions established by this article are that: (i) a development must comply with the parking standards set forth in subsection (g) to satisfy the requirement stated in subsection (a), and (ii) any development that does meet these standards is in compliance. However, the Table of Parking Standards is only intended to establish a presumption and should be flexibly administered, as provided in Section 15-292.

Section 15-292 outlines the different provisions for seeking flexibility in the number of required spaces. Opportunities for shared parking and satellite parking are also provided in Section 15-297 and 15-298.

Discussion

On May 16, 2023, staff provided the Town Council with a report on the implementation of the strategies to adjust the parking standards to address the interests outlined in Carrboro Connects. ([Town of Carrboro - Meeting of Town Council on 5/16/2023 at 7:00 PM \(legistar.com\)](#)). The agenda item included information relating to existing transit service, to identify areas that met the locational definition of ‘close to transit’ as described in the comprehensive plan, along with different approaches to reducing parking and related considerations. The Council discussed the matter again on June 27, 2023 as part of an agenda item to set a public hearing on the draft text amendments [Town of Carrboro - Meeting of Town Council on 6/27/2023 at 7:00 PM \(legistar.com\)](#)). The draft ordinance, as prepared, would replace the existing minimum standard for residential uses and replace it with a maximum number of parking spaces. The existing flexibility established by the presumptive standards would therefore be removed for residential uses. The presumptive standards would remain in place for non-residential uses.

Public Input

The public hearing schedule was designed to provide an opportunity for staff to conduct a series of outreach events, to provide information relating to the proposed changes to local residents and to seek public input. The schedule of outreach events is provided in the table below. Of note, the bold font indicates events that allowed for more opportunities for one-on-one engagement and direct conversations with Planning staff.

Schedule of Outreach for Parking Text Amendment

DATE	EVENT
July 4	Independence Day at Town Commons
August 16	UNC Graduate Student Orientation
September 16	Carrboro Farmers’ Market
August 19	Carrboro in Motion – Carolina Apts
September 22	Carrboro in Motion – Estes Park Apts
September 20	Planning Open House
October 4	Planning Open House
October 6	Planning Open House
October 7	Carrboro Farmers’ Market

At all events, handouts and boards provided information about the proposed change to the existing parking requirements and opportunities for public comment at the October 24th public hearing. Staff

also directed residents to a page on the departmental website with information as well as a link to the draft text amendment on the Town Council agenda page.

On October 5, 2023, the draft ordinance was presented at the Joint Advisory Board review meeting. Comments from the Planning Board and Transportation Advisory Board are provided. The Environmental Advisory Board did not have a quorum and therefore did not provide comments. The Economic Sustainability Commission reviewed the draft ordinance at its regular meeting on October 11th. Comments are provided as Attachment E. Of note, advisory boards expressed interest in retaining the current presumptive nature of the parking requirements or adding some amount of flexibility for the Town Council to able to grant additional parking if needed. If there is interest in retaining flexibility, criteria may be needed to clarify when additional parking may be permitted and by how much. Pairing the existing presumptive language with parking maximums seems to be an awkward construction. In addition, advisory boards expressed a preference for the draft ordinance with the alternate language for Section 2 which would remove the different standards for persons of low- or moderate-income or the elderly.

Considerations/Summary Comments

The interest in the comprehensive plan is to right-size parking requirements to eliminate excess parking that could be better used for other Town interests. If the ordinance amendment is approved, it may take a few years to understand the impact of the change and to make adjustments, if necessary. Who would this effect, and how? Examples of other consideration are listed below.

- If there is insufficient on-site parking, where would over-flow parking occur?
- What mobility services are available to reduce car dependency: transit, micromobility, on-demand services, public or private?
- How to proceed regarding current transit frequencies.
- How to consider/incorporate changes to parking standards in the future if/when transit routes change?
- Is there interest in keeping the flexible administration/presumptive standard?
- Parameters for Council/Board of Adjustment decisions regarding number of spaces.
- Parameters for staff decisions regarding number of spaces.
- Relationship to infrastructure changes (accessibility, bicycle and pedestrian).
- How to evaluate whether the reducing parking requirements leads to more sustainable mobility patterns? Is private car ownership reduced? How are mobility services such as carsharing used?
- How many developers have requested a reduced number of parking spaces? Has it turned out to be enough?
- Will the savings be passed on to renters/owners?

The draft amendment, if approved, would remove the current parking minimums for residential uses and replace them with new parking maximums. No changes to the requirements for non-residential uses are currently provided. However, changes to commercial parking may be recommended as part of the upcoming master plan for the downtown. In addition, as implementation on other aspects of the Comprehensive Plan moves forward, such as the interest in increasing density, the parking standards may need to be revisited and/or further modified. This is important as it may take a few years and/or development projects to understand the impact of reducing the parking requirements and make any adjustments, if necessary. It will also be important to continue to expand multimodal options transportation to reduce the need for cars. Increasing local and regional transit service and continuing to design and build pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure projects will be essential.

Action Requested

Staff requests that the Town Council receive public comment and consider the draft ordinance (*Attachment B*). *The motion should include a statement regarding the inclusion of Section 2 or*

Alternate Section 2 in the draft ordinance. Support of Alternate Section 2 would include the removal of the sentence in the Table of Parking Requirements, Subsection 15-191(g), relating to the parking standards for multi-family units limited to persons of low- or moderate-income or the elderly (use 1.300). A resolution of consistency has been provided (*Attachment A*).