

ZONING ORDINANCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE TUESDAY, JANUARY 30, 2024

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FILE NUMBER: DCA190-002 (MW) **DATE INITIATED:** October 3, 2019

TOPIC: Amendment to the Dallas Development Code regarding off-street parking and loading requirements, including off-street parking management strategies and design of parking lots and bicycle spaces.

COUNCIL DISTRICT: All **CENSUS TRACTS:** All

PROPOSAL: Consideration of amending Chapters 51 and 51A of the Dallas Development Code regarding minimum off-street parking and loading requirements, including but not limited to establishing a Transportation Demand Management Plan and off-street parking design standards.

SUMMARY: Shifting focus from the quantity of required off-street parking spaces to quality and location of off-street parking areas will align the Dallas Development Code with adopted citywide transportation, environmental, and land use policies by reducing priority of single-occupant vehicle trips and increasing opportunity for housing, business activity, and multi-modal transportation options. A Transportation Demand Management Plan will apply to qualifying development projects. Additional design standards will ensure new parking lots support a walkable environment.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Forward amendments to City Plan Commission with a recommendation of approval.

CODE AMENDMENT PROJECT WEBPAGE:

<https://dallascityhall.com/departments/pnv/Pages/parking-code-amendment.aspx>

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1. SUMMARY

On October 3, 2019, the City Plan Commission (CPC) authorized a public hearing to consider amending off-street parking and loading requirements including, but not limited to, hotel, restaurant, multifamily, and alcoholic beverage establishment uses, and transit-oriented development. From March of 2020 through August of 2021, city staff and the Zoning Ordinance Advisory Committee (ZOAC) commenced a study of current parking regulations and conditions, best practices in parking and transportation management, and precedent from other cities. Input from a wide variety of stakeholders was collected on several occasions and individual sample sites were tested.

After the August 26, 2021 ZOAC meeting, structural changes within the departments of Sustainable Construction & Development and Planning & Neighborhood Vitality led to the study being put on hold. The code amendment was brought back to ZOAC on August 15 and December 5, 2023. This report updates the proposal brought before ZOAC on December 5. (See the beginning of Section 3, page 11.)

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

a. Study origin

On October 3, 2019, the City Plan Commission (CPC) authorized a public hearing to consider amending off-street parking and loading requirements including, but not limited to, hotel, restaurant, multifamily, and alcoholic beverage establishment uses, and transit-oriented development. This study was requested by Councilmember Chad West after consistent interest from the architecture and development community and advocates for affordable housing, sustainable transportation, and environmental stewardship. PUD staff and the Zoning Ordinance Advisory Committee (ZOAC) commenced a study of current parking regulations and conditions, best practices in parking and transportation management, precedent from other cities, engagement from many stakeholders, and testing of ideas resulting in reports on the following subtopics from March 5, 2020 through August 26, 2021:

- Current parking and loading regulations, recent Board of Adjustment reductions, and case studies of current parking conditions;
- Review of peer cities, and local and national parking studies, and relevant goals and policies in adopted Dallas planning documents;
- Public and interdepartmental input, as well as discussions with an Assistant City Manager and staff from Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART); and
- Testing the partial removal or reduction of parking and loading minimums in areas across the city, as well as development of new parking management, parking design, and transportation demand management strategies.

Project was underway from 2019-2021.

After the August 26, 2021 ZOAC meeting, structural changes within the departments of Sustainable Construction & Development and Planning & Neighborhood Vitality led to the study being put on hold. This report continues that effort with updated context and a revised staff recommendation.

b. Summary of current parking and loading regulations

Division 51A-4.200 of the Development Code specify the quantity of off-street parking spaces required. The quantities of off-street parking spaces are usually stated as a ratio of spaces per some characteristic of the land use. Most nonresidential land uses require parking spaces per square feet of floor area, while others allot parking spaces by another variable such as the number of beds (hospitals and nursing homes), type of classroom (schools), number of guest rooms (hotels), or other relevant characteristics. Most residential and lodging land uses have parking spaces prescribed per dwelling unit, bedroom, or suite. The Development Code allows partial reductions in required parking for tree preservation and bicycle parking provision, or in the case of an exception by the Board of Adjustment (BDA) or director of the Department of Planning & Urban Design.

Regulations in Division 51A-4.300 “Off-Street Parking and Loading Regulations” address the design and location of off-street parking and loading. Division 51A-4.310 “Off-Street Parking Reductions” specify how minimum off-street parking requirements may be reduced, such as through the board of adjustment or administratively under certain conditions. Division 51A-4.320 “Special Parking Regulations” regulate how property owners can agree to provide minimum off-street parking spaces on another lot, sharing between uses, or both. Division 51A-4.330 “Bicycle Parking Regulations” addresses the quantity, design, and location for bicycle parking.

Planned Development Districts (PDs), described in Chapter 51P, often directly refer to the Development Code’s general parking ratios, location and design, and other regulations. In other PDs, a specific modification to 51A’s parking ratios or design standards are created and encoded within the specific PD regulations; when regulations are specifically modified in a PD, they are independent of and supersede the regulations of the Dallas Development Code cannot be amended through a code amendment process such as this case.

Current parking regulations include required minimums, bicycle parking, basic design standards, and special exceptions.

c. Interdepartmental and public input

Staff conducted virtual meetings with community stakeholders and City of Dallas departments in 2020 and held public input sessions in 2021 to better define current problems with the parking code, its impact on neighborhoods and businesses, and potential outcomes and results of parking code amendments. Stakeholder feedback is listed and described in the staff report for the October 15, 2020 ZOAC meeting, with additional city department input reported on at the November 19, 2020 meeting and public input reported at the June 3, 2021 meeting. (Presentations, reports, and videos for all of the ZOAC meetings are available at the [Archive section](#) of the project website.) Additional public listening sessions and presentations to stakeholder groups were held in August and September of 2023.

Opinions diverged on where, how, and how much to affect existing parking regulations. Supporters of greater reform advocated for simplifying and reducing parking minimums, eliminating minimums entirely, or even establishing parking maximums due to their cost, land use inefficiency, the duration of permitting processes, effect on single-occupancy vehicle trip rates, detriment to pedestrian safety, and negative environmental impact. The switch from a quantitative approach to a qualitative approach found support, highlighting the benefits of a Transportation Demand Management program and design guidelines.

Others advocated for a more incremental reduction to parking minimums, focusing on transit-oriented development, malls, or shopping centers as the likeliest to translate into additional housing units. Alternative modes of transportation were identified as needing improvement and investment before drivers would choose these modes over driving, while transit and cycling officials and enthusiasts noted that greater investment in these systems would not occur as long as vehicles and parking were disproportionately prioritized through regulations like required parking minimums. Residents of single-family areas expressed aversion to spillover parking on single-family residential streets from adjacent commercial and multifamily land uses, and city leaders representing geographies farthest from the city core urged the auto-orientation of their areas be remembered.

Commenters differed on perceptions of whether there is currently too much or too little parking to meet parking demand. Generally, commenters agreed that a more coordinated system of parking would improve the connection between parking and destinations. Curb management strategies such as parking meters and resident-only parking permits were mentioned as important tools for managing on-street parking in a variety of neighborhoods and commercial areas when used judiciously. Safe and aesthetic pedestrian, bicycle, and transit networks were valued across viewpoints.

Public input yielded both support for major parking reform and caution toward any reform that could make automobile transportation more difficult.

d. Review of peer cities and best land use practices

The staff report dated August 6, 2020 reviews parking and loading regulations of 19 cities in detail: Atlanta, Austin, Baltimore, Boston, Columbus, Edmonton (Canada), El Paso, Fort Worth, Houston, Minneapolis, Philadelphia, Phoenix, Portland, San Antonio, San Diego, San Jose, Seattle, and Tempe, AZ. In summary, all of these cities have historically used ratios like those in Dallas to require minimum amounts of off-street parking and loading based on building square footage or dwelling unit count. They similarly carry location and design requirements addressing elements such as landscaping, lighting, screening, and requirement reductions. Similar to Dallas, central business districts or other historically compact areas tend to see parking minimums that are reduced, removed entirely, or left up to the discretion of traffic engineering and planning staff reviewers.

Although the driving force in zoning law behind required parking minimums was to ensure fast and efficient automobile travel across long distances and to relieve auto congestion on city streets, successful and growing cities have nevertheless continued to face heavy congestion and reduced vehicular travel times, while experts continue to catalogue the growing detriments to health, safety, and environmental stewardship correlated closely with mass use of motor vehicles. City planning best practices have thus been reevaluated and reformed in response to these observations, emphasizing a transition away from privileging automobile travel in favor of investment in other modes of transportation. Since the 1990s, the planning profession has shifted focus to the financial, environmental, and social costs of requiring free parking as cities have adopted new land use and transportation policies.

At the time of this report, hundreds of cities in North America have reduced or eliminated parking minimums for individual districts, while over fifty cities have reported complete elimination of parking minimums citywide.¹ The largest of these are Mexico City, Mexico (population 8.9 million), Toronto, Canada (2.7 million), Edmonton, Canada (981,280), Austin, TX (974,447), and San Jose, CA (971,233). Other American cities such as Fayetteville, AR and Seattle, WA have eliminated parking minimums in significant portions of the city or for entire categories of land uses. Because much of this shift in policy has been adopted so recently and the timelines of development projects and cultural preference can be prolonged, studies of the impacts of reductions or removal of parking minimums have been few but generally reflect city planners' expectations: new developments still provide most, all, or even more than the previously required amounts of off-street parking² due to customer, tenant, or resident expectations, or development financing requirements.

Parking requirements in cities across North America have been re-considered and reduced or eliminated recently.

e. City policy direction

As of the time of this report, several updates to local policy and planning complement this study by addressing off-street parking and loading factors outside the scope of this work:

¹ Parking Reform Network Mandates Map, 11/6/2023: <https://parkingreform.org/resources/mandates-map/>

² Sightline Institute. 04/13/2023: <https://www.sightline.org/2023/04/13/parking-reform-legalized-most-of-the-new-homes-in-buffalo-and-seattle/>

City work

i. ForwardDallas Update

The Land Use and Urban Design sections of Dallas' 2006 comprehensive plan are being updated and expanded into a new, dedicated visioning document that will guide land use, design, and development patterns across the city. Input from community engagement, city departments, and subject matter experts is being synthesized into policies and a new future land use map that will show residents, businesses, and decision-makers how their decisions fit into the bigger picture. The decisions based on this plan will influence job opportunities, commute times, air quality, and access to healthy food options once the plan is adopted by early 2024. While the city continues to take opportunities to improve and flourish, a rapidly expanding population demands that the City thinks critically about which land use policies at the block, neighborhood, and citywide levels will lead to achieving City goals over the coming decades, and which will stand as systematic barriers to reaching those goals.

Citywide land use visioning is interdependent with responsible transportation management as the configuration and design of a community impacts how people navigate these places, and as travel preferences then shape our urban fabric. As discussed in the "Land use, parking, and relevant policies" section of this report, an individual's decision concerning transportation style is a rational byproduct of how we've arranged our origins and destinations – homes, workplaces, daily needs, recreational attractions, etc. From an infrastructural and city planning perspective, however, individual transportation choices then influence land use planning decisions in an ongoing cycle of auto-dependency.

As Dallas considers amendments to its parking requirements and management, the comprehensive land use vision of *ForwardDallas* will be the City's primary platform for understanding and mapping out the relationship between our land use vision and transportation choices.

ii. Connect Dallas: Strategic Mobility Plan

On April 28, 2021, the Dallas City Council unanimously adopted *Connect Dallas*, the City's first-ever comprehensive Strategic Mobility Plan. *Connect Dallas* shifts the City's transportation planning focus from minimizing congestion and commute times for automobile trips to strategically pursuing housing, economic, equity, and sustainability goals using multiple modes of transportation. From page 13 of the plan:

Growth over the past several decades has strained the City's existing transportation network to its breaking point, resulting in increasing congestion, longer travel times, and safety risks for all involved. Dallas now finds itself at a tipping point: either continue to do things the traditional way and continue on the same trajectory, or fundamentally shift the way transportation is planned and funded in hopes of a better future.

The resulting vision, "Compact and Connected", prioritizes giving people choices in how

they travel, especially for short trips. Investment in new and improved roadways will be accompanied by substantial investment in transit, bicycle, and sidewalk infrastructure, as well as enhanced Transportation Demand Management and shared mobility operations.

iii. Dallas Department of Transportation's Curb Management Policy Study (ongoing)

One recommendation of *Connect Dallas* is to “proactively manage the city’s curbside assets.” The Dallas Department of Transportation is currently conducting a study of strategies and policies for managing parking pricing, curb regulations, meter zones, and enforcement relating to the public right of way area between the pedestrian-oriented sidewalk zone and the automobile drive lanes. More specifically, draft objectives include:

- Achieve improved turnover of on-street parking using time limits and parking meters;
- Promote equitable accessibility;
- Make travelling in and around Central Dallas simple, predictable, and easy;
- Provide for the safe and efficient movement of people and goods;
- Accommodate growing loading needs technological change;
- Manage expectations and simplify the experience in Central Dallas for all curb users;
- Reduce conflicts along the curb that cause congestion and crashes;
- Manage loading and on-street parking for new developments.

Amendments to this present study of off-street parking and loading regulations will impact on-street parking and loading, making this an important complementary policy document.

iv. Sidewalk Master Plan

“In all multi-modal trips, the user at some point is a pedestrian” begins the 2021-adopted *Sidewalk Master Plan*. Based on guidance from *Connect Dallas*, the City’s *Sidewalk Master Plan* identifies and prioritizes sidewalk construction and maintenance projects for decision-makers. The Plan adheres to *Connect Dallas*’ six driving principles and results in priority actions such as improving sidewalks along high-crash corridors and intersections, reducing sidewalk gaps in areas with a high proportion of vulnerable populations, increasing sidewalk coverage near schools, establishing a Pedestrian Advisory Committee, and developing systems for managing data, funding, and sidewalk projects.

The *Plan* judges each project according to prioritization criteria with different weights, the most highly weighted criterium being “Activity Areas”. Activity Areas are defined as future development sites that are anticipated to have a high level of pedestrian need as measured by population density, density of intersections in the area, proximity to rail

stations, and demographic data. The Goals chapter unpacks policy objectives related to this criterion such as “Prioritize pedestrian networks in higher density housing areas”, “Increase sidewalk coverage in areas with high employment concentrations”, “Increase sidewalk coverage in high-density residential areas”, “Increase the proportion of the population that walks to work”, and “Improve access to transit including high-speed rail.”

Based on the above prioritization, we can expect pedestrian investments in dense and mixed-use areas of the city to generally outpace investments in low-density, residential neighborhoods. Current and future residents who choose a home in a low-density neighborhood are thus choosing an area with less access to transit or ability to walk, and accepting a higher dependency on automobile trips to, and parking provision at, their destinations.

Other work

v. NCTCOG parking management toolbox and studies

The North Central Texas Council of Governments has begun work on an array of parking-focused projects and studies centered around development of a Regional Parking Database. The Database’s purpose is to increase empirical knowledge of parking demand and to serve as a repository for insight on successful management techniques. NCTCOG has completed a wealth of parking capacity studies across north Texas in the last five years, including several in Dallas, and is currently conducting a parking capacity and behavior study of the entertainment and commercial district Deep Ellum, which will result in recommendations to the Deep Ellum Foundation and City leadership for managing on-street and off-street parking resources. (A presentation of draft findings by NCTCOG staff has estimated over 1,000 open public, off-street parking spaces in Deep Ellum at peak parking hours on weekend evenings in spite of perceptions of inadequate parking provision.)

Conclusions from NCTCOG’s work match those found by Dallas City staff: Parking for local districts, main street-like corridors, and transit-oriented developments tends to be either adequate for auto demand, or to even far surpass demand. Curb Management techniques like assigning time limits and charging a fee based on actual demand for on-street parking were found to more effectively ensure available parking. Another familiar result was that commercial tenants and property development lenders have reliably been the primary advocates for developers providing more than required amounts of parking, revealing the strength of the market in accommodating status quo parking demand expected by their customers and investors.

f. Conflicts with City policy

Minimum parking requirements are one of several zoning tools cities established to try to accommodate the last century’s emergence and cultural preeminence of the automobile. These regulatory tools, however, have resulted in a land use arrangement that perpetuates our dependency on cars in direct conflict with Dallas’ adopted environmental, transportation, housing, and land use goals. The arrangement and proximity of our home, work, shopping,

entertainment, and other daily destinations determine which transportation modes someone visitor can or must use for their trip. As Dallas embraces sustainable transportation modes such as walking, biking, and transit, the required provision of parking spaces must be considered in the context of broader land use systems and city policy.

Maintaining a government assurance of free parking has had two profound costs that conflict with Dallas' current public priorities.

First, requiring free and abundant off-street parking encourages additional single-occupant vehicle trips, counter to Dallas' environmental and transportation plans. Shown in recent studies, the addition of parking spaces itself, apart from the associated land use, creates additional traffic, especially by lone drivers.³⁴ Single-occupant vehicle trips are targeted for reduction in Dallas' *Comprehensive Environmental and Climate Action Plan (CECAP, 2020)* due to their substantial contribution to harmful greenhouse gas emissions. Through an economic lens, *CECAP* identifies the financial cost of roadway congestion in lost productive hours at \$12.1 billion in 2018. Through an environmental health lens, one study from 2010 estimates the premature mortality associated with vehicular traffic congestion to reach the thousands of deaths per year.⁵ Responding to these realities as well as Dallas-Ft. Worth's rapid population growth, 2021's *Connect Dallas: Strategic Mobility Plan* shifts the city's historical focus from prioritizing quick and efficient automobile trips to promoting compact growth and investment in transit, pedestrian, and bicycle infrastructure in order to give people more choices in how they travel. The *ForwardDallas! Comprehensive Plan*, adopted in 2006, pursues environmental sustainability and improved transportation methods and development patterns that do not require single-occupant vehicle trips. Attainment of Dallas' environmental, transportation, and land use goals will be frustrated as long as the City requires space for parking.

Requiring parking induces more traffic, which conflicts with adopted City policy.

The second conflict with current Dallas policy arises when requiring free and abundant off-street parking inhibits Dallas' finite land resources from being used for higher and better purposes such as additional housing and jobs opportunities. Not only does the physical parking area itself block use of the land beneath the concrete, but the requirement to build and maintain parking adds to the cost of building and operating the associated housing or business in the first place, raising the prices for the end resident or consumer. The *ForwardDallas! Land Use* element lists key goals such as making quality housing more accessible, pursuing redevelopment and revitalization, implementing a walkable urban fabric, and encouraging new development patterns that align with multi-modal transportation systems. The Housing element sets goals such as ensuring a sustainable and efficient long-range housing supply and expanding affordable housing alternatives, while the Economic Development element pursues balanced growth, zoning flexibility that responds to changing

Requiring parking spaces blocks land from being used for adopted City goals.

³ Bloomberg 1/2016: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2016-01-12/study-the-strongest-evidence-yet-that-abundant-parking-causes-more-driving>

⁴ McCahill, Garrick, Atkinson-Palombo and Polinski 11/13/2015: https://ssti.us/wp-content/uploads/sites/1303/2016/01/TRB_2016_Parking_causality_TRB_compendium.pdf

⁵ Levy, Jonathan I, et al. "Evaluation of the Public Health Impacts of Traffic Congestion: A Health Risk Assessment." *Environmental Health*, vol. 9, no. 1, 2010, <https://doi.org/10.1186/1476-069x-9-65>.

conditions, restoration of Dallas as the foremost retail location in the region, identifying redevelopment opportunities, maintaining an environment friendly to businesses and entrepreneurs, and fostering strong and distinctive neighborhoods with walkable and well-designed connection between residential and commercial land uses.

While a developer will build off-street parking to suit their project's unique needs, city regulations requiring free and abundant off-street parking conflict with adopted city policy and priorities. Off-street parking requirements encourage single-occupant vehicle trips, worsening air quality, health outcomes, and economic productivity. At a land use level, these requirements also block finite land resources from being used toward residential development and economic resilience.

3. STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the above general discussion, staff proposes the reduction of all required parking minimums in Chapters 51A and 51 to none, implementation of a basic Transportation Demand Management Plan for developments of a certain scale, and implementation of minor design standards.

Updates for January 30, 2024 ZOAC meeting

The following amendments have been revised for the January 30, 2024 Zoning Ordinance Advisory Committee Meeting. Each of these changes are also reflected in the relevant section of this updated report.

- *Clarification of the proposed pedestrian path requirements in Sec. 51A-4.301(a)(4)(C).*

At the December 5, 2023 meeting, ZOAC asked for clarity regarding the pedestrian path requirement, especially the requirement that the portion of any pathway that crosses a drive aisle be raised to the level of the sidewalk. The revised proposal keeps the requirement that pedestrian pathways be provided within 65 feet of every parking space, be protected from vehicular intrusion by permanent barriers, and be of a different texture or color when crossing drive aisles; however, it now also requires that *one* pathway – the pathway with the shortest distance between the primary entrance of each main building and the opposite side of the parking lot – connect to the public sidewalk and be raised when crossing drive aisles. This relieves the developer from the cost of multiple raised crosswalks, as well as the stormwater and other engineering concerns, while still providing protected pedestrian connections across the parking lot and a traffic calming device for the vital pedestrian connection across the vehicular activity in front of the main entrance.

- *New proposed requirement prohibiting drainage across public sidewalks in Sec. 51A-4.301(a)(4)(D).*

The new proposal is a single sentence: "Water from parking areas shall not drain across the surface of a public sidewalk or connections to pedestrian pathways." This limits the amount of surface water from rain, car washing, etc. running across the

public pedestrian network so those traveling by foot or wheelchairs can stay drier during their commute. It also limits the potential for icy sidewalks during freezing temperatures, and keeps leaves, dirt, and other detritus from being washed into the sidewalk right-of-way. Cities such as Austin and Minneapolis have long had this regulation in their codes, to which the engineering and development community have responded by working out standard drainage techniques such as landscaped areas abutting the sides of the driveway that divert stormwater underneath the sidewalk.

- *Reinstatement of loading regulations with narrowed focus on multifamily uses in Sec. 51A-4.303, Sec. 51A-4.200 (land use regulations), and a proposed provision for a remote and shared loading agreement in Sec. 51A-4.320.*

The current off-street loading regulations lay out robust and detailed dimensional and locational requirements in addition to the numerical requirements. Most other municipalities reviewed contain similar requirements, from multiple tables of dimensions per land use to one simple table and one simple size minimum. While the extent of Dallas' detail may at times appear excessive, the requirements do provide predictability and have not been flagged as true barriers to responsible and productive development. The previous proposal eliminated all off-street loading requirements in favor a simple requirement that a developer provide adequate off-street loading space per approval by the director. After further discussion and research, staff now propose keeping most of the off-street loading requirements in Section 5A-4.200 (land use regulations). However, multifamily uses, which currently have no required off-street loading, are proposed to be required to provide adequate space for off-street loading per approval by the director, as this is the main land use that reviewing staff have focused their attention on. Additionally, the special parking section, which enables remote and shared parking agreements in Sec. 51A-4.320, has been expanded to include remote and shared loading space agreements to provide for more flexibility in dense or unique mixes of uses. These changes provide both predictability and flexibility for users of the code while strengthening regulatory tools for City staff to responsibly guide off-street loading.

- *Reduction of the minimum 30-foot depth to 20 feet for active uses along the ground story of parking structures in WR Walkable Residential and WMU Walkable Mixed Use districts in Sec. 51A-13.304(a)(3)(D).*

Currently, parking structures in districts governed by Article XIII are required to have active uses occupying the first 30 feet in depth of their ground floor. This minimum of 30 feet applies to both residential and nonresidential uses; the intent of the minimum is to keep the active use from simply being a display case or unoccupied hallway instead of a use that generates pedestrian activity and activates the public right-of-way. A recent development proposal highlighted the unintended consequence that residential units, which may be easier for a property owner to fill with tenants than a commercial space, are held to an often-unrealistic size requirement that can inhibit the highest and best use of a parking structure ground floor. Requiring only 20 feet increases flexibility for a greater number and variety of residential units to fulfil this

requirement.

- *Revision to TDMP thresholds in Sec. 51A-4.804 to clarify their application to phased development projects and to specify a major review for public and private schools.*

The language of the TDMP requirement in Section 51A-4.804(b) and Table No. 1 previously only discussed construction projects that resulted in new dwelling units or square footage according to the proposed Table No. 1. In the case of a project with multiple phases, ambiguity in the language could be interpreted as holding each phase to its own requirement, regardless of the resulting total dwelling units or square footage. While the thresholds were low enough to be triggered by most individual phases of substantial developments projects, the language has now been revised to state that the TDMP requirements apply to an entire phased development that reaches the thresholds in Table No. 1 upon completion of all phases.

Schools have been identified as a unique land use that sees a variety of use cases and traffic impacts, such as queuing in adjacent streets, that consistently require a close staff review and substantial planning effort by schools. Requiring a major TDMP and review process ensures that a school's full array of transportation needs can be accounted for and integrated thoughtfully into the local context.

- *Additional item for further consideration: Planned Development (PD) Districts.*

Several large PDs in central Dallas would retain minimum parking requirements for some or all land uses upon adoption of these proposed amendments. However, many of those same PDs were adopted with parking minimums significantly lower than those in Chapter 51A, inversely causing them to enforce in these PDs the stringent regulations that this proposal would remove for base zoning districts. While the scope of this study includes only Chapters 51 and 51A of the Development Code, amendments to the following districts should be considered:

- 145 (Arts District);
- 193 (Oak Lawn Special Purpose District);
- 269 (Deep Ellum/Near East Side);
- 298 (Bryan Area Special Purpose District);
- 317 (Cedars Area Special Purpose District)
- 357 (Farmers Market);
- 468 (Oak Cliff Gateway Special Purpose District);
- 595 (South Dallas/Fair Park Special Purpose District);
- 619 (Downtown Core);
- 621 (Old Trinity and Design District Special Purpose District);
- 830 (Bishop Arts)

a. *Off-street parking and loading minimums*

Amendment description.

Minimum off-street parking:

- i. Off-street parking minimums for base zoning districts are generally found in the (C) subsection within each land use description of § 51A-4.200 and take the form *“Required off-street parking: One space per ___ square feet of floor area.”* Because of the cross references between some Planned Development (PD) Districts, staff proposes to keep the same structure and “zero out” each requirement, thus: *“Required off-street parking: None.”* Most of the development code provisions regarding calculating required parking, reductions, exceptions, and Delta Theory (of nonconforming properties) remain intact with minor revisions in order to apply to PDs.
- ii. The parking reduction allocation for the Mixed Income Housing Development Bonus program in § 51A-4.1106 has been struck as it would no longer apply if parking requirements for all land uses are eliminated.
- iii. Maximum reductions from special exceptions and reductions in § 51A-4.311 through 4.313 are increased to 100%, and the prohibition on allowing the board of adjustment to reduce parking in PDs and SUPs has been deleted in order to allow an applicant to benefit from the BDA’s shorter public hearing process rather than go through a lengthier change in zoning process.
- iv. Remote parking agreement requirements in § 51A-4.328 are revised to allow a parking agreement based on a lease rather than a covenant recorded on a property’s deed for those areas within the city that specifies parking requirements in a PD or SUP.
- v. The requirement to offer off-street parking for free has been deleted and the definition of a commercial parking lot or garage use has been updated to reflect its association with a main land use rather than whether it charges for a fee. Residential adjacency review has been expanded to apply to commercial parking in all nonresidential zoning districts.
- vi. Section 51A-4.301 is restructured to be more succinct and readable, and accommodate revised parking location and design changes that will be discussed in the “Parking design standards” section below.

Minimum off-street loading:

- i. The requirement for the Multifamily land use in 4.209(b)(5), which is currently “None”, is replaced with *“Required off-street loading: Adequate off-street space for loading must be provided at the director’s discretion. See Section 4.303 for loading regulations.”*
- ii. A provision authorizing a reduction in off-street loading per approval of a Transportation Demand Management Plan has been added as Sec. 51A-4.303(a)(2).
- iii. Language authorizing special loading agreements is added as Sec. 51A-4.303(b)(2).

- iv. Dimensional requirements have been replaced with a simple minimum requirement of 11 feet wide, 35 feet long, and 14 feet high for the first required space.
- v. Lastly, off-street loading is prohibited from locating in one required front yard except in CS and industrial districts in Chapter 51A, or HC or industrial districts in Chapter 51. (Loading spaces may be located in a second front yard in the case of a corner lot.)

Elaboration: This amendment removes off-street parking minimums as a pillar of Dallas' auto-dependency in pursuit of City goals to reduce single-occupancy vehicle trips, free valuable land for housing and economic development, and implement high quality pedestrian design principles. By keeping the same structure but changing the exact requirement to "None", PDs that reference § 51A-4.200 land uses will also have a minimum parking requirement of zero, while PDs that include their own minimum parking requirement will retain it. Because no parking will be required, the mandate to offer required parking for free becomes irrelevant and is therefore deleted. Other proposed amendments addressing exemptions, reductions, and remote parking agreements are intended to allow more flexibility in fulfilling parking requirements specified in Planned Development Districts.

This amendment also adds the requirement that developers of multifamily residential properties will need to plan adequate loading space to accommodate the consistent moving-in and moving-out typically generated by rotating occupation of rental residences. This provision empowers Department of Transportation review staff to guide development teams toward loading options that least disrupt the vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian right-of-way. Along with simplified minimum dimensions and the addition of shared and remote loading options, the amendments to off-street loading provide predictable guidelines, flexible regulatory pathways, and a simplified experience using the development code.

Expected Impact: This amendment is expected to allow additional dwelling units in infill housing development projects, remove administrative burdens and permitting delays for small businesses, and facilitate a more compact built form that enables walking, biking, and transit ridership in areas of Dallas with multi-modal transit options as transportation and lifestyle preferences adapt to new conditions over time. Reduced provision of parking for new construction will largely be mitigated by market demand for plentiful parking, which is felt by developers from lenders and commercial tenants at the foundational financial planning stages all the way to residents and customers once a development is complete. However, without city-imposed minimum parking amounts bloating development costs or preventing a project from occurring in the first place, a development team can tailor parking to each unique site and situation. Indications from Dallas' own PD's and Mixed Income Housing Development Bonus program show that developers still build close to the existing base parking requirements even when they can build significantly less, often exceeding the minimum requirement.

While large parking lots around malls, shopping centers, or transit stations may see the largest replacement of excess and unused parking spaces by new developments, existing buildings generally are expected to retain their current parking spaces due to their configuration and cost of replacement. In order for a neighborhood-scale multifamily building,

for example, to replace parking spaces, they would only replace them with something justifying the replacement cost – in this example, that would entail adding enough new units at price points that would be profitable in spite of construction costs and the loss of parking as an amenity. It is doubtful that most existing multifamily layouts and current construction costs would permit such expansions and on such a scale that nearby neighborhoods would be significantly affected with overflow parking.

This code amendment does propose to allow parking lot owners to charge a fee for any parking serving their use. This allows parking lot operators to respond to changing demand for parking by charging the cost of providing parking back to the motorists using it. As motorists seek parking in an area, they will gravitate toward the lowest charge for parking that is close to their destination, which in some cases may include free on-street parking nearby; however, the code currently allows any use, including multifamily, to charge for required parking within a contract longer than hourly or daily. Many multifamily residential buildings already charge parking fees within their residential leases, so this is not expected to produce much overflow parking.

Where a reduced parking supply associated with new development does create a public nuisance for adjacent properties, neighbors and businesses can utilize management strategies proposed in the Department of Transportation’s in-progress parking management policy study such as resident-only parking permits, metering, Parking Benefit Districts, shared parking agreements, and others.

The duration of permit review by Planning and Building Inspection staff is expected to be immensely reduced for new development, adaptive reuse, and other relevant zoning cases, as staff will no longer need to count, calculate, measure, or enforce parking space provision or process parking-related variances for much of the city.

PD’s that do not modify base zoning district parking and loading requirements will be impacted by these amendments; PD’s that specify their own modified parking and loading requirements will not.

b. Bicycle parking

Amendment description:

- i. Bicycle parking requirements in § 51A-4.330 are proposed to transition from a ratio of one to every 25 required vehicular parking spaces to one per 20 provided vehicular parking spaces, while maintaining the minimum of two spaces. This requirement is expanded to non-residential uses that provide four or fewer parking spaces.
- ii. The current “Class I” and “Class II” terms are replaced with “short-term” and “long-term” bike parking terms, each with clarified and expanded placement and dimensional standards. The following design and location standards are added or updated:
 - A. Bike parking must be within 150 feet of a primary entrance unless an alternative plan is approved by the director, and must be accessible without lifting or carrying the bicycle;
 - B. It is clarified that each space must be served by a vertical element (bike rack)

that the bike can lock to with a U lock securing both a wheel and the frame at the same time. Grid-style racks are not permitted, and preferred styles are given as examples;

C. Dimensions for usable spaces are clarified and shown in diagram form.

Elaboration: Because current bicycle parking requirements depend on required vehicular parking spaces, amendments to bike parking regulations were necessary and appropriate. The existing bike parking standards have been unclear and implemented in such a way that many bike parking areas are functionally unusable by a bike rider.

Expected Impact: Slightly tightening the requirement for bike parking spaces will complement our city bike planning and multi-modal transportation efforts, while clarifying which rack styles are preferred and how much space must be provided around the racks will encourage use of existing and future bicycle infrastructure.

c. Site Plan Review

Amendment description:

- i. The trip generation threshold for when a site plan review is required for a construction project, found in § 51A-4.803, is proposed to be lowered from 6,000 trips per day and 500 trips per day per acre to 1,000 trips per day or 100 trips per hour at peak times of day.
- ii. Site plan review is also expanded to apply to multifamily districts in addition to nonresidential (except for CA) zoning districts and certain parts of the Oak Lawn Special Purpose District.

Elaboration: Per Department of Transportation review staff, the scale of development that generates 6,000 trips per day is around 500,000 square feet of office space, 840 apartment units, or over 17,000 square feet of restaurant space without a drive through. This provision was originally intended for review of district-level development projects. However, at around 100 trips per peak hour – or around 1,000 trips per day – department of transportation staff are already involved in a development project considering the impact of the development on adjacent streets and the necessity of adding a traffic light. 1,000 trips per day is about 140 apartments or 3,000 square feet of restaurant without drive-through service, noting that a single restaurant rarely hits this threshold.

Expected Impact: The lower threshold for review, as well as the addition of multifamily districts to those eligible for review, formalize and add the authority of the Development Code to the work transportation engineering staff do already.

d. Transportation Demand Management Plan

Amendment description: In Division 51A-4.800, a new section, § 51A-4.804 Transportation Demand Management Plan, is proposed. A Transportation Demand Management Plan (TDMP) is a plan formed by an applicant to incentivize the residents, employees, or other users of a development to reduce the number of single-occupant trips by car that the new development would otherwise require of them. The City presents a list of strategies to reduce

vehicle miles traveled (VMT), and the applicant must commit to a selection of these strategies in order to be issued a permit to work. These strategies include physical improvements such as improving the bicycle or pedestrian offerings around a property, installing a bike repair station, or ensuring a convenient location for people to access rideshare services; financial strategies such as subsidizing transit passes or unbundling parking from the price of apartments; and direct provision of alternative modes of travel such as shuttle routes or an on-site micro-mobility service. Each strategy will be assigned with a number of points reflecting their expected efficacy in reducing VMT and the ease and cost at which they can be achieved, and each development project will be assigned a target point total that must be achieved by their selection of strategies. An option to provide custom strategies to reduce VMT is also provided. A building permit cannot be issued without an approved TDMP, and adherence to their TDMP will be confirmed through periodic audits.

This proposed amendment includes the dwelling unit or square footage thresholds at which an applicant must complete a TDMP and a description of the process. A separate TDM Program Guide – drafted, approved, and updated administratively – contains the point targets per dwelling unit or square footage threshold and point assignments for TDM strategies.

Residential developments of fewer than 20 new dwelling units are not required to submit a TDMP. The requirement for residential projects begins when 20 to 49 dwelling units are added to a property, which would be assigned a low point target that could be fulfilled by adding an additional bike rack, providing transit information to residents, providing delivery service amenities (lock boxes, for example), or other combinations of strategies. A building in the next category of 50-139 units would face a higher requirement that might include strategies such as providing a bike repair station, subsidizing transit passes or membership for residents, or providing a great number of bike parking spaces that include long-term (protected) bike spaces. At this tier, a “major” review would also be held, requiring a Traffic Impact Assessment (TIA) in addition to meeting the assigned point target. The third proposed tier applies to multifamily developments of 140 or more, as that scale of development begins to generate around 100 trips per peak hour, which is when the Department of Transportation begins a closer review of a property’s traffic needs, including consideration of a new traffic signal. This tier also requires a TIA as part of the TDMP, and will also need to implement additional strategies to reach a higher point total.

Between 20,000 and 99,999 square feet, a relatively low point target and minor review will be required. 20,000 square feet is the scale of two two-story main street-style buildings or one full-sized Walgreens or CVS pharmacy building. The next tier begins at 100,000 square feet, which falls between the size of a typical one-story grocery store and a department store such as Target. This tier, which holds a higher point target and TIA requirement, also applies to Commercial Amusement (inside or outside) land uses of any size (including land uses such as dance halls and live music venues) and public and private schools (which includes charter schools). Uses of any size with drive-through and drive-in components will hold a slightly higher point requirement. Nonresidential development below 20,000 square feet that are not Commercial Amusement Indoor or Outdoor and do not include drive-through or drive-in components are not required to submit a TDMP.

Any new development, residential or nonresidential, that provides 100 parking spaces or

more will require a TDMP, and any development project regardless of the thresholds described above can be flagged by review staff for additional review and a TDMP when it presents substantial and unique transportation challenges.

Elaboration: While removal of parking minimums frees a project team to craft parking provisions uniquely to their site and context, the TDMP requirement takes a step to bolster multi-modal transportation activity by incentivizing users of the site to arrive, operate, and depart with limited reliance on cars. Lowered parking provision may be complemented by investment in a new bicycle path nearby or by subsidized transit passes, for example. The intent is not to replace one burden with another, but to establish more ubiquitous infrastructure for – and awareness of – non-automotive transportation options at a scale that is only feasible when implemented by private land use developers.

Cities throughout America implement some form of TDM program, though details vary wildly. This proposed TDM program is a “light touch” version which will have easily-attainable point goals for developments in most locations, and higher goals for developments near high-frequency transit and in the central business district. Point targets and strategies will be adopted and revised administratively for efficient improvement of the program over time.

Expected Impact: The impact on single-occupant vehicle trips is expected to grow over time from the point of adoption. While studies do show general correlations between TDM program strategies and reductions in VMT generation⁶, variation in local and regional context prevent staff from arriving at exact ratios of VMT reduction per strategy. Instead, expectations of VMT reduction were combined with ease and cost of implementation. (For example, providing local transit information is very easy and cheap to implement, while building a staffed bicycle repair facility costs more financially and spatially; provision of long-term bike parking, meanwhile, may fall in the middle in terms of ease and cost, but may be the most effective component to meeting an employee’s needs for a safe and convenient bike commute to the office.) Early stages of TDM program implementation will likely see some strategy customization and provide data for later improvement to the program.

e. Parking location and design standards

Amendment description: Several amendments have been proposed to location and design standards with the goals of increasing walkability along sidewalks and near and through parking lots, and increasing flexibility for compact neighborhoods with a reduced remote parking agreement requirement:

- Deleting § 51A-4.301(a)(13), allowing the use of alleys by nonresidential and multifamily properties when built across the alley from a TH, D, or CH district to avoid the need for additional curb cuts;
- In § 51A-4.301(a)(3)(D), prohibiting off-street parking from locating between the front façade of a building and the street. Parking should be behind the building unless infeasible, in which case the parking may be located on the side of the building as long

⁶ US Dept. of Transportation, August 2012: <https://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/fhwahop12035/chap10.htm>

as it does not take up more than 60 feet or 50% of street frontage, whichever is less. This is intended to support the connection between the sidewalk and pedestrian realm and the front façade of buildings while moving unsightly parking lots out of sight;

- In § 51A-4.301(a)(3)(E), allowing enclosed parking to build closer than 20 feet to an alleyway in order to incentivize alley access, decrease impervious coverage of driveways, and give builders more flexibility in location and design of their buildings. Because of the proliferation of remote controlled garage door openers and the need for additional space on a lot to accommodate housing, a space for a car to idle while a garage door is manually opened is outdated and overly restrictive;
- In § 51A-4.301(a)(4)(A) and (B), limiting the size and location of driveway entrances in order to reduce the amount of a pedestrian’s walking path that conflicts with an entering or exiting vehicle. Single-family, duplex, and multifamily dwellings with three or four dwelling units may have no more than one curb cut; no single driveway entrance may be more than 12 feet in width measured at the sidewalk; and no two adjacent driveway entrances (one shared curb cut) may be more than 20 feet in width;
- In § 51A-4.301(a)(4)(C), requiring protected pedestrian paths to be constructed through large parking areas to enhance safety and connectivity for drivers and pedestrians. One of these paths must be raised as it crosses drive aisles;
- In § 51A-4.301(a)(4)(D), prohibiting drainage from parking areas across the surface of public sidewalks;
- In § 51A-4.301(d)(7), clarifying how pedestrian ways and landscaping must be protected from parking automobiles;

Elaboration: The proposed amendments are intended to protect and enhance the pedestrian realm and mitigate the risk and aesthetic impacts of entering, exiting, and parking automobiles on foot-traffic. These basic design and locational standards are minimal and should be seen as a baseline for additional incentives and strategies to address parking lots, such as those that would mitigate the environmental impact of parking lots. While these present new design opportunities for land developers, they further the City’s goals to be a more walkable, inclusive, and environmentally responsible city.

Expected Impact: These design and locational standards are expected to improve the pedestrian experience along public sidewalks by decreasing the amount of conflict points between entering and exiting vehicles, as well as increasing the aesthetic value of the pedestrian realm by keeping parking lots and automobiles from filling the view of those on the right-of-way. These amendments will encourage buildings to locate to the front of a lot, strengthening the public right-of-way as an inclusive and multi-modal “outdoor room” rather than an unsafe, auto-dominated obstacle to be navigated.

f. Other amendments

Amendment description: The proposed amendments include some restructuring and reformatting for easier readability, as well as changes that reflect the City’s adopted shift in focus from privileging automotive travel to providing for multimodal transportation options.

These include:

- In § 51A-1.102(b)(1)(A), changing the development code’s purpose statement from “lessen the congestion in the streets” to “ensure safe and efficient circulation of all modes of transportation, prioritizing transit and active transportation modes”, which includes lessening vehicular congestion in the streets where possible in the context of also promoting functional and convenient transit, pedestrian, and bicycle activity;
- In § 51A-4.219(b)(4)(E), allowing a decrease in the number of off-street parking spaces in a specific use permit through the minor amendment process;
- In § 51A-4.505(d)(4)(C)(i), removing the requirement that conservation districts include off-street parking and loading requirements;
- In § 51A-4.702(4), removing the requirement that planned development districts include off-street parking and loading requirements;
- In § 51A-13.300(a)(4)(C) and (b)(f)(C), removing “reduced parking demand” as a sign that an area is appropriate to be rezoned to WMU walkable urban mixed use or WR walkable urban residential districts; and
- In § 51A-13.306(a)(6)(B)(viii), replacing the consideration of “parking requirements” with “expected parking activity” when the building official is issuing a determination of similar use.
- In § 51A-13.304(a)(3)(D), reducing the minimum depth of 30 feet to 20 feet for active uses required on the ground floor of parking structures in WR and WMU districts;

Expected Impact: These minor amendments are intended to make the code more readable and in conformance with Council-adopted plans and policies.

g. Further consideration

Staff considered many other standards and actions to form a cohesive, efficient, and effective body of regulations around off-street parking in the Dallas Development Code. The following are items that should be considered in appropriate context:

- *Environmental standards.* Parking lots and structures account for massive amounts of concrete around the city, worsening surface water runoff and pollution, as well as the heat island effect. Standards should be considered to limit the proportion of land area that is dedicated to concrete parking areas, as well as incorporation of landscaping and other green features to support Dallas’ environmental goals. The ongoing code amendment considering limitations on impervious surface [DCA212-008 (LL)] is an appropriate time to address this.
- *Parking in front setbacks.* The code currently permits parking up to the front lot line for most uses in most districts. The front yard setback area is historically valued as an unobstructed area with potential for green space and impervious ground area, and a way to separate pedestrians from exposure to car bumpers and unsightly infrastructural elements in parking lots. In light of Dallas’ abnormally complicated front

yard setback regulations, a more focused study on this area of a lot should include consideration of parking. A study on setbacks or housing density or the upcoming comprehensive code reform are appropriate times to consider this.

- *Transportation demand management refinement.* The light-touch transportation demand management plan requirement included in this amendment should be evaluated periodically for its ease of administration and efficacy at reducing vehicle miles generated by development activity.
- *Consideration of amendments to Planned Development (PD) Districts.* Several PDs in central Dallas would retain their minimum parking requirements upon adoption of these proposed amendments. Many of the following PDs in fact specify lower parking minimums than those currently in Chapter 51A, and it is within the intent of the creation of these and other PDs to re-examine their parking regulations for further reduction or elimination of minimums.
 - 145 (Arts District);
 - 193 (Oak Lawn Special Purpose District);
 - 269 (Deep Ellum/Near East Side);
 - 298 (Bryan Area Special Purpose District);
 - 317 (Cedars Area Special Purpose District)
 - 357 (Farmers Market);
 - 468 (Oak Cliff Gateway Special Purpose District);
 - 595 (South Dallas/Fair Park Special Purpose District);
 - 619 (Downtown Core);
 - 621 (Old Trinity and Design District Special Purpose District);
 - 830 (Bishop Arts)