BERKELEY CITY COUNCILMEMBER
TERRY TAPLIN
DISTRICT 2

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CONSENT CALENDAR
June 28, 2022

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Councilmember Taplin

Subject: Parking Minima for Mixed-Use Projects and Manufacturing Districts

RECOMMENDATION
Refer to the City Manager and Planning Commission to develop amendments to Berkeley Municipal Code Chapter 23 Section 322 and return an Ordinance to Council with such amendments to include the following:

- In BMC 23.322.030(B)(1), Table 23.322-2:
    - remove "(residential use only)" from Mixed-Use Residential category;
    - reduce "Live/Work" off-street parking requirements to, at most, 1 space per unit;
    - reduce "Manufacturing" off-street parking requirements to, at most, 1 space per 1,500 gross square feet;
    - reduce off-street parking requirements for "All non-residential uses except uses listed below" to, at most, 1 space per 1,000 square feet.
- In BMC 23.322.020(C)(2)(i): reduce district minimum parking requirements to 1 space per 1,000 square feet at most in Manufacturing Districts.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS
Staff time.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS
Reducing minimum parking requirements is a Strategic Plan Priority Project, advancing our goals to create affordable housing and housing support service for our most vulnerable community members, and to be a global leader in addressing climate change, advancing environmental justice, and protecting the environment.

On March 19, 2021, a parking reform ordinance (Ordinance 7,751-N.S.) became effective after being adopted by the City Council, eliminating minimum residential parking requirements across all zoning districts (except in the ES-R district, and except in the Hillside Overlay district on roads less than 26 feet in width) and requiring Transportation Demand Management (TDM) measures for projects with ten or more

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units. However, this policy change only applied to residential uses, and to the residential portions of mixed-use projects.

Several mixed-use projects have been permitted in Berkeley with off-street parking spaces required for non-residential uses that could have otherwise provided more housing near transit. For example, 1717 University Ave. (Use Permit #2016-0101) has 28 dwelling units (including 4 Below Market-Rate) and 14 parking spaces. Four of those spaces on the ground floor could have been additional housing units.

BACKGROUND

Minimum parking requirements have been shown to increase the cost of housing by discouraging the construction of smaller, lower-cost units that can be offered at lower prices[1] and reducing the overall supply of housing.[2] Cities that have removed minimum parking requirements for non-residential uses have also seen improved outcomes. In Arkansas, the City of Fayetteville removed commercial parking requirements entirely in 2015, and as a result, saw many long-term vacant commercial buildings revived with new businesses[3] and rising wages.[4] In New York, the City of Buffalo removed parking minimums citywide in 2017. Following this change, researchers found that "47% of major developments included fewer parking spaces than previously permissible, suggesting earlier minimum parking requirements may have been excessive." In particular, mixed-use projects provided 53% fewer parking spaces.[5]

While originally adopted in 1993 as Resolution No. 57,301-N.S., the West Berkeley Plan anticipated increased parking demand resulting from development in West Berkeley, including in Manufacturing Zones. These were addressed in Section 4 of the Environmental Impact Report for Transportation impacts, including a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program, increased transit service, and employer-provided shuttle service.[6] However, the EIR's measure of transportation impact was "Level of Service," a now-outdated metric for automobile convenience that has been replaced by Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) or the aggregate demand for automobile travel, pursuant to Senate Bill 743 (2013).[7]

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[1] Lehe, L. (2018). Minimum parking requirements and housing affordability. *Journal of Transport and Land Use*, *11*(1), 1309-1321.

[2] Gabbe, C. J., Pierce, G., & Clowers, G. (2020). Parking policy: The effects of residential minimum parking requirements in Seattle. *Land Use Policy*, *91*, 104053.

[3] Gould, C. (2022). No Minimum Parking Requirements? No Problem For Fayetteville, Arkansas. *Sightline Institute.* Retrieved from https://www.sightline.org/2022/02/22/no-minimum-parking-requirements-no-problem-for-fayetteville-arkansas/

[4] Jebaraj, M., & Sorto, D. (2021). Northwest Arkansas State of the Region Report 2021. State of the Northwest Arkansas Region Report. Retrieved from https://scholarworks.uark.edu/nwaregion/12

[5] Hess, D. B., & Rehler, J. (2021). Minus Minimums: Development Response to the Removal of Minimum Parking Requirements in Buffalo (NY). *Journal of the American Planning Association, 87*(3), 396-408.

[6] https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/2022-03/12_14_1993%3B%20CLK%20-%20Resolution%3B%20City%20Council%3B%2057301%3B%20West%20Berkeley%20Area%20Plan%3B.pdf

[7] https://mtc.ca.gov/planning/transportation/driving-congestion-environment/sb-743-los-vmt-transition

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE IMPACTS

Data from Seattle[8] and Buffalo[9] suggests that developers provide more parking than needed when required to do so, but will otherwise provide a lower, though often non-zero amount of parking spaces. Minimum parking requirements thus effectively subsidize automobile travel at the expense of other land uses by reserving more land for automobile storage. Research has found that a greater supply of free or underpriced parking increases Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) per capita and increases emissions from the transportation sector by reducing parking availability and increasing time spent searching for parking.[10] Transportation comprised 59% of the City of Berkeley's greenhouse gas emissions in 2018.

However, because of Berkeley's lower average per capita emissions relative to the region and the state at large, Wheeler et al (2018) concluded that cities like Berkeley have the most potential to reduce carbon emissions through local policy by enabling more urban infill housing. Even in wealthier neighborhoods with higher than average carbon footprints per capita, the authors observed that cities in the urban core still "have lower than average carbon footprints for their income level," and thus: "Low carbon footprint cities that make housing available at all income levels help share the burden of meeting housing demand, while lessening the impact on the climate across the population."[11]

CONTACT PERSON

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[8] See footnote 2.

[9] See footnote 5.

[10] Shoup, D. C. (2006). Cruising for parking. *Transport policy, 13*(6), 479-486.

[11] Wheeler, S. M., Jones, C. M., & Kammen, D. M. (2018). Carbon footprint planning: quantifying local and state mitigation opportunities for 700 California cities. *Urban Planning, 3*(2), 35-51.