

CHARLOTTESVILLE CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING
WORK SESSION MINUTES
November 8, 2023 at 6:30 p.m.
City Hall Council Chamber, 605 E. Main Street

The Charlottesville City Council held a special meeting in the format of a work session on Wednesday, November 8, 2023. Mayor Snook called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m. with all members present: Mayor Lloyd Snook, Vice Mayor Juandiego Wade, Councilors Michael Payne, Brian Pinkston and Leah Puryear.

James Freas, Director of Neighborhood Development Services introduced Ben Chambers, Transportation Planning Manager, who summarized the meeting topic of Vehicular Parking Minimum Requirements in Zoning.

The following is a November 8, 2023, Memorandum from Mr. Chambers and Mr. Freas to City Council:

“The proposed Development Code does not require off-street vehicle parking. This change from the existing zoning code, which includes minimum parking requirements for each use, is intended “to reduce parking demand, support the use of alternative forms of transportation, promote reuse and redevelopment of existing buildings, reduce the overall cost of construction and development, and increase the overall efficiency and use of taxable land within the City.”¹

Background

- During the 1950s and 1960s, cities across the country began instituting vehicular off-street parking minimums in their zoning codes to mitigate impacts of development on on-street parking and traffic flows.
- The minimum requirements were very precise in their determination of which parking needs were associated with which land uses, largely based on the Institute of Transportation Engineers’ (ITE) Parking Generation Manual. Using a variety of parking studies, voluntarily provided to ITE by public agencies, developers, and consulting firms, ITE’s Parking Generation assigns parking needs to uses based on factors that seemingly correlate to anticipated traffic volumes associated with each land use, such as retail square footage, the presence of a drive-through, the number of employees, etc. In fact, these correlations are not statistically significant and have resulted in over-built parking lots.
- According to the Institution of Highways and Transportation (UK), the ability to reduce parking availability is the most effective policy tool for limiting car trips². The Comprehensive Plan’s Transportation goals are aimed at reducing the impacts of cars on the urban form, environment, and individuals, including:

¹ See Section 4.5.4 – Vehicle Parking.

² Institution of Highways and Transportation, “Parking Strategies and Management, London” (2005).

- Coordination with Land Use and Community Design: Improve quality of life and promote active living by reducing automobile use and congestion and supporting multimodal options for safe and convenient travel in conjunction with the implementation of the Future Land Use Vision.
- Parking Supply and Management: Provide a balanced approach to parking that supports economic vitality, achieves urban form goals, minimizes environmental impacts, and accommodates pedestrians, bicycles, transit users, and disabled individuals.
- The City's Inclusionary Zoning Analysis from August 2022 showed that reducing parking minimums would be effective at supporting the financial feasibility of constructing new mid-rise apartments with support for the deepest affordability levels.
- In the last decade, many cities have removed minimum parking requirements, including the nearby cities of Raleigh, Richmond, and Roanoke. Experience has shown that generally developers will continue to supply off-street parking to meet the needs of prospective residents, customers, and employees of newly developed sites. Removing minimum requirements though, allows a developer to balance competing needs as they design the optimal project for a given site.

Proposed Regulations

- For larger development projects, the proposed Development Code would require a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) plan. The TDM plan would include an estimate of anticipated travel demand and identification of the means by which that demand would be addressed, either through a combination of on-street, off-street, or shared parking spaces, short- and long-term bicycle parking, accommodations for pedestrians, cyclists, transit riders, and the mobility impaired, or employment of TDM strategies for reducing single-occupancy trips, like carpooling, shuttle services, guaranteed ride home programs, and parking cash-out programs.
- To promote the modal shift to pedestrian, bicycle, and transit uses necessary to support the allowable densities associated with the Comprehensive Plan, the proposed Development Code has detailed regulations associated with the provision of pedestrian access and provision of short-term and long-term bicycle parking. Regulation of off-street automobile parking is focused on design provisions that would ensure pedestrians are able to travel through safe, comfortable, and attractive environments, as well as mitigation of negative environmental effects.
- The proposed Development Code would not regulate the use of on-street parking. The use of on-street parking is currently managed by the Residential Permit Parking program (City Code Sec. 15-201) and by time restrictions around the Downtown Mall. Neighborhood Development Services is currently developing a scope of work with consultant support for a review and rewrite of these on-street parking regulations. While previous parking studies in the City have focused on parking needs Downtown and the management of those needs through pricing and enforcement, the upcoming parking

study will be more focused on the process by which the City identifies on-street parking issues throughout the City and employs parking management solutions. This parking management process will provide a clear and consistent method for determining the need for on-street parking and options for managing that need through time restrictions, residential permits, employee permits, or paid parking (by meters or by app), as appropriate to the neighborhood context. The objective is for a program that will be responsive to specific neighborhood needs. The parking study would also identify City staff roles and responsibilities for the management of the City's on-street parking.

Analysis

- The removal of minimum parking requirements in the proposed Development Code supports the City's goals in the Comprehensive Plan related to affordable housing, land use coordination, and parking supply management.
- Impacts to on-street parking should be mitigated through TDM plans and on-street parking regulation and enforcement. City staff should continue to work to develop a parking management process that will be responsive to possible development and the needs of the City's varied neighborhoods.

Further questions on planning efforts related to on-street parking, bicycle parking, or parking management can be directed to the City's Transportation Planning Manager, Ben Chambers (chambersbw@charlottesville.gov)."

Council discussed reducing minimum parking requirements in various sections of the city, the cost of having parking requirements (including opportunity costs for land use), the need for a paradigm and habit shift, walkable areas. Mr. Snook stated that other cities that have abolished parking minimums tend to have more functional transit systems.

Responding to a question from Ms. Puryear, Mr. Chambers addressed on-street permit parking and handicap parking, which are not included in the Zoning Ordinance rewrite, but will eventually be reviewed for updating.

Missy Creasy, Deputy Director of Neighborhood Development Services listed parking minimum requirements for various development and residential types.

Regarding the Zoning Map discussion on November 29, the mayor requested that each councilor provide feedback on areas for discussion by November 13. The next Zoning Ordinance Work Session was scheduled for November 13 at 6:00 p.m.

The meeting adjourned at 7:59 p.m.

BY Order of City Council

BY Kyna Thomas, Clerk of Council