

ZONING STUDY SUMMARY ON SURFACE PARKING IN THE DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT ZONING DISTRICT

The purpose of this zoning study is to study the appropriateness of the surface parking use in the Downtown Development (DD) zoning district. The study incorporates an existing conditions assessment, community engagement feedback, public impacts analysis, and peer city code review.



1-EXISTING CONDITIONS

EXISTING SURFACE PARKING REGULATIONS

Surface parking and parking garages regulations already exist for the DD zoning district. As depicted in the Surface Parking Subdistricts map, parking is already regulated by three types:

- Accessory Surface Parking
- Public Surface Parking
- Parking Garage

The DD zoning district has four parking subdistrict which allow one or multiple of these types: W, X, Y, and Z. Surface parking is currently banned in the W (core subdistrict) and only allowed as accessory surface parking surrounding subdistrict X district surrounding subdistrict W. All parking is allowed in the two periphery districts, Y and Z.

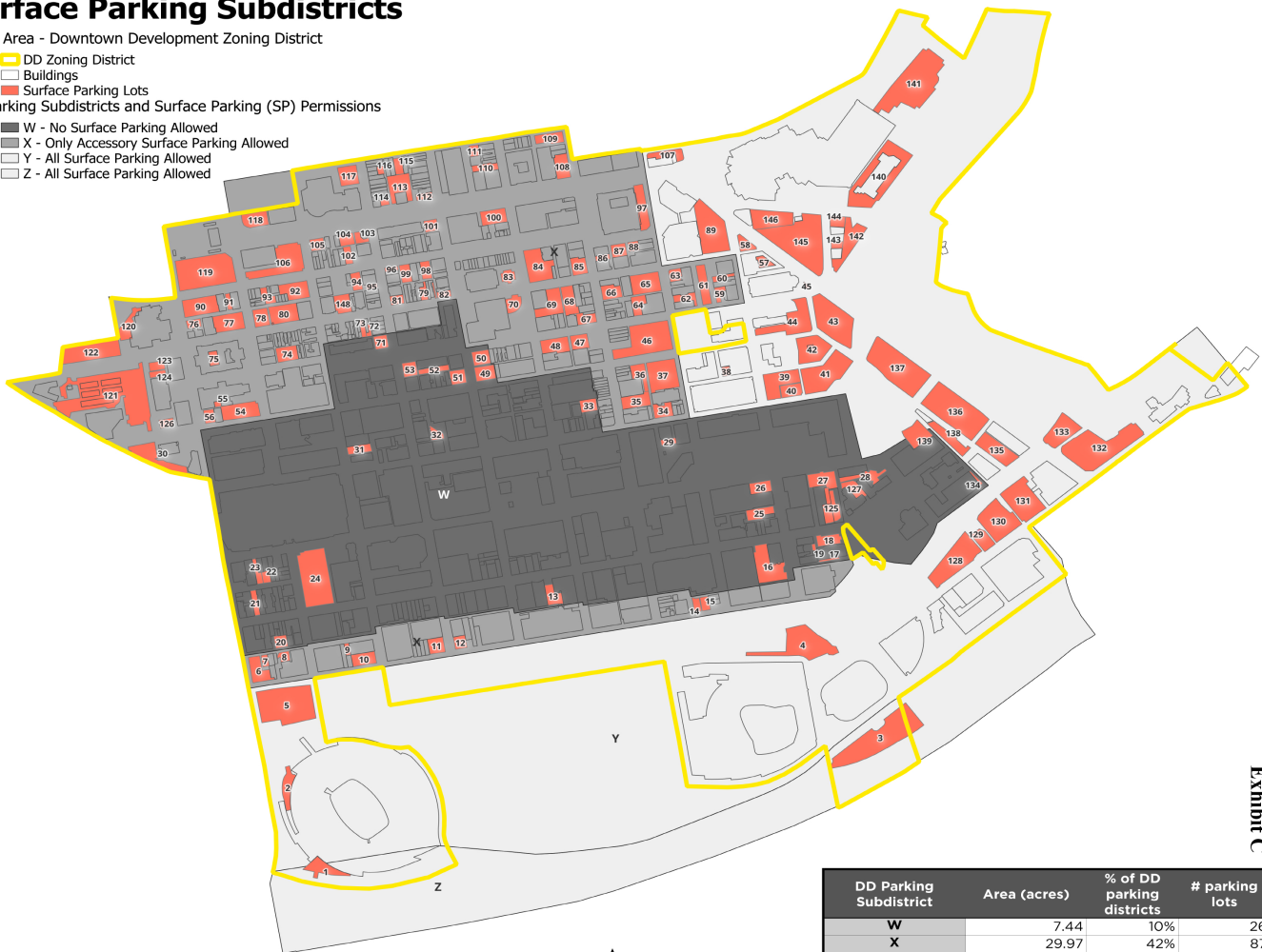
Parking Subdistricts				
Parking Type	W	X	Y	Z
Accessory Surface Parking	no	yes	yes	yes
Public Surface Parking	no	no	yes	yes
Parking Garage	yes	yes	yes	yes

There are around 150 surface parking lots which total approximately 72 acres (13%) of the DD zoning district. A little more than half are in subdistricts W and X and the remaining are in subdistricts Y and Z.

Surface Parking Subdistricts

Study Area - Downtown Development Zoning District

- DD Zoning District
 - Buildings
 - Surface Parking Lots
- DD Parking Subdistricts and Surface Parking (SP) Permissions
- W - No Surface Parking Allowed
 - X - Only Accessory Surface Parking Allowed
 - Y - All Surface Parking Allowed
 - Z - All Surface Parking Allowed



DD Parking Subdistrict	Area (acres)	% of DD parking districts	# parking lots
W	7.44	10%	26
X	29.97	42%	87
Y	31.36	44%	33
Z	2.70	4%	2
Total	71.47		148

PARKING SUPPLY AND UTILIZATION

According to 3CDC's spring 2023 parking report, there are an estimated 40,162 off-street commuter parking spaces in the Central Business District. Of these, around 7,574 spaces are available, which is an 81% utilization rate.

Additionally, the City's 1,980 on-street parking spot utilization rate has remained at about half-capacity, both pre- and post-COVID-19:

- Pre-COVID: 52%
- Post-COVID: 47%

The DD is over-supplied and parking needs decrease as density increases.

"Research shows that each time residential density doubles, auto ownership falls by 32 to 40 percent (Holtzclaw et al. 2002). Higher densities mean that destinations are closer together, and more places can be reached on foot and by bicycle—reducing the need to own a car. Density is also closely associated with other factors that influence car ownership,



such as the presence of good transit service, the community's ability to support stores located in neighborhoods, and even the walkability of neighborhood streets." (Source: EPA Parking Space/Community Places: Finding the Balance through Smart Growth Solutions, 2006)

REDEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY

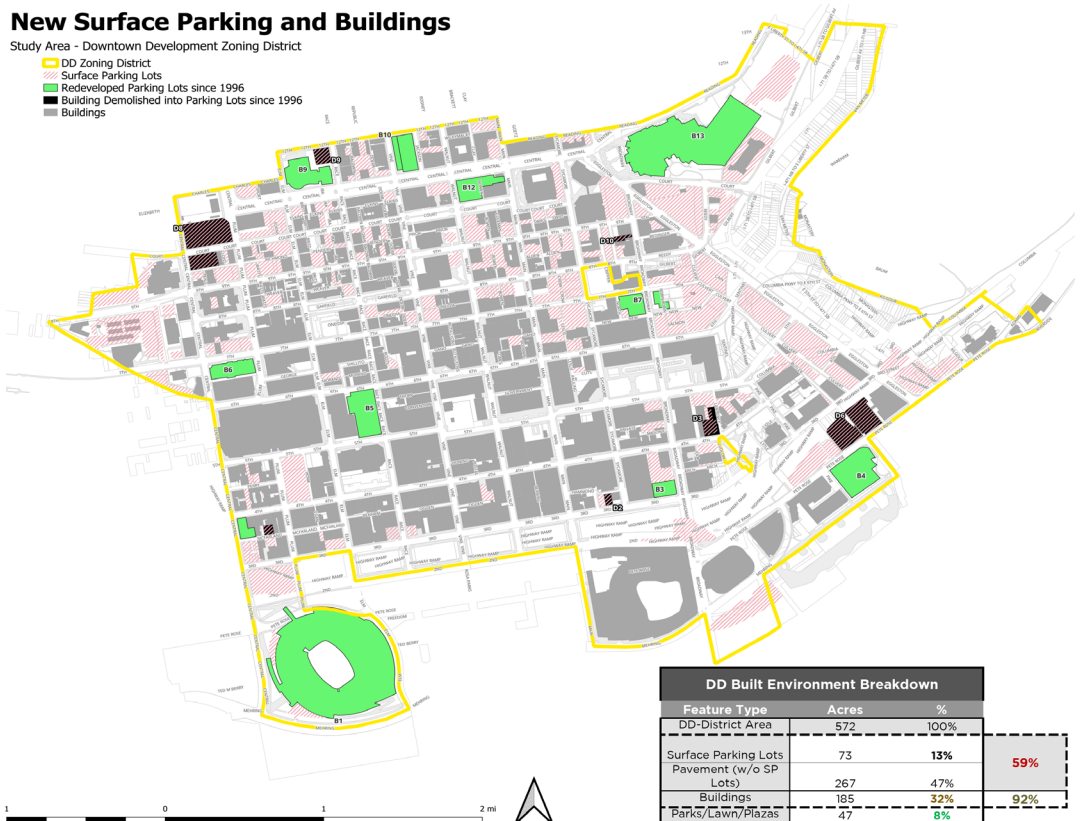
Over the last 26 years, there have been few buildings demolished or surface parking lots redeveloped:

- 10 new surface parking lots (black)
- 13 new buildings (green)

New Surface Parking and Buildings

Study Area - Downtown Development Zoning District

- DD Zoning District
- Surface Parking Lots
- Redeveloped Parking Lots since 1996
- Building Demolished into Parking Lots since 1996
- Buildings



2-COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

INITIAL PUBLIC MEETING

An initial public input meeting was held on August 8, 2023. Notice was sent to all property owners within the DD zoning district with 14 members of the public in attendance. The presentation included a review of the proposed text amendment submitted by Council Member Mark Jeffreys, existing conditions information, and a survey capturing feedback of the participants.

Participants were given a series of polls to find out what was important to them to live, work, and play downtown and how parking affects this. They were also given a visual preference survey of various parking lot design elements.

Participants felt the downtown was generally a use-balanced, culturally-rich, and pedestrian-oriented, but that it still had many deadzones.

Users like to spend their time downtown in activated spaces with many amenities that tend to be dense and walkable. When asked what would make them spend more time, they said more amenities, better transit, active frontages, pedestrian activity, safe biking and walking, and free parking.

Participants main concerns with restricting parking lots were it being harder to find parking, fewer visitors patronizing downtown businesses, and reducing development. However, participants saw potential benefits of allowing for a higher and better use, especially for much needed housing, and creating more vibrant, pedestrian-oriented spaces.

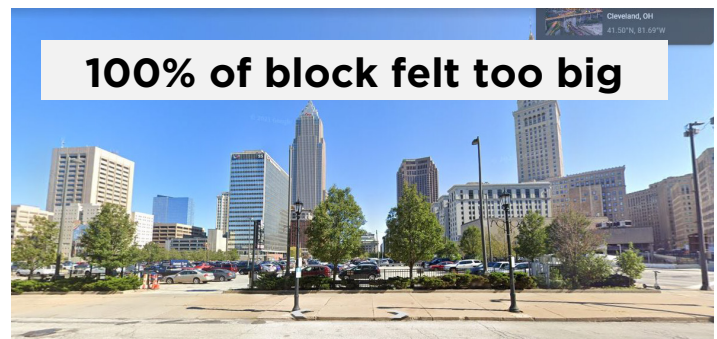
What are user concerns with restricting surface parking lots?

- Several had no concerns
- harder to find parking
- less patronage to from downtown visitors
- could be harmful to development
- still need ADA spots

What are the benefits of restricting surface parking lots?

- Most users felt it could allow for a higher and better use, especially for much needed housing, retail, tax revenue, and beautiful public spaces
- Better walkability, vibrancy, and slower traffic

What are users' preferred design and landscaping elements?



What are user priorities when parking downtown?

1. Safety getting to and from destination
2. Pleasant walk
3. Proximity
4. Cost

Most participants walked, rode public transit, or drove. A majority of participants polled would walk an average of 10 minutes from parking.

3-PUBLIC IMPACTS

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

The Office of Environment and Sustainability produced a report on December 14, 2022 on the Environmental Impacts of Surface Parking Lots, which found four negative impacts:

Stormwater Runoff

The impermeable materials of surface parking lots prevent water from permeating into the soil and contribute to a higher burden on our sewer system, increase flooding and soil erosion, and carry pollutants into the Ohio river watershed.

Urban Heat Island Effect

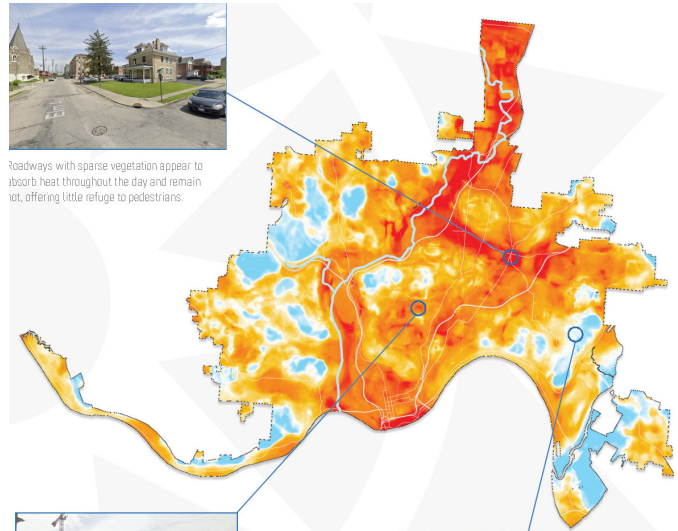
The high-contrast asphalt surfaces of parking lots creates hotter surface and air temperatures. Cincinnati's urban heat island effect was quantified in the 2021 Climate Equity Indicators Report which showed the highest temperatures in areas with low tree canopy and high percentage of impermeable surfaces, which is expected to increase in future years. The DD zoning district heat maps show hotter temperatures than other parts of the city.

Air Quality Issues

Asphalt breakdown and releases aerosols when exposed to extreme heat and radiation. These aerosols contribute to pollutants that create unhealthy air quality and are hazardous to human health. These pollutants are comparable to vehicle emission levels.

PEDESTRIAN IMPACTS

Surface parking lots create expanses of inactivity and emptiness that discourage pedestrians from activating the space. When there are large expanses of surface parking the effect is a pedestrian and activity dead zone.

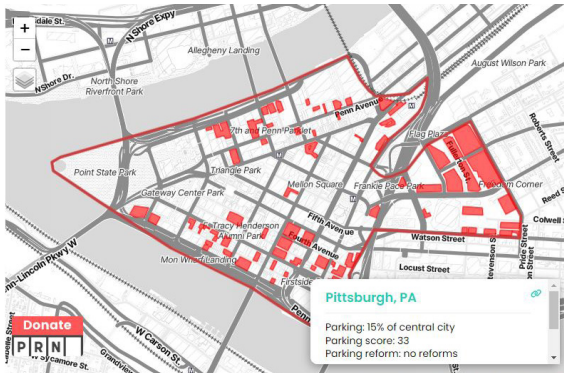


Enabling Automobile-Oriented Lifestyle Choices

Emissions from transportation now account for 30% of greenhouse gas pollution, driven by single-passenger vehicles. Parking availability has been shown to influence transportation decisions and increase car-ownership, driving frequency, and decrease in public transit use.



4-PEER CITY CODE REVIEW



Pittsburgh, PA | 2.3 million MSA population

Surface Parking Regulations

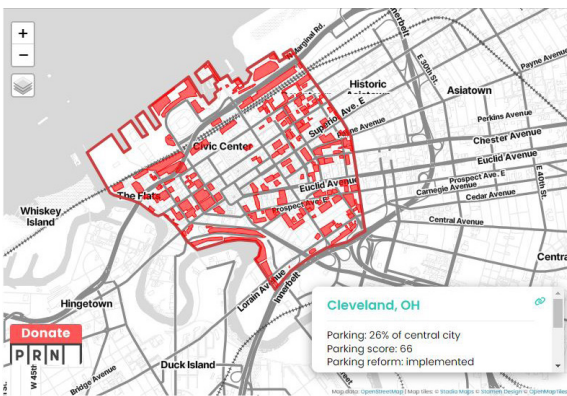
- Commercial parking banned (since 1998)
- Accessory parking allowed

Design and Landscaping Standards

- More robust bike parking spaces

Staff Assessment and Comments

- Haven't seen a negative impact on development. Noted development will almost always need subsidy regardless.



Cleveland, OH | 2.08 million MSA population

Surface Parking Regulations:

- No new surface parking allowed by-right;
- 1 year for temporary approval, only with approved building plans
- one-year renewal application, otherwise converted to open space
- Accessory parking allowed, limited to 120% current use standards.

Design and Landscaping Standards

- no standards.



Lexington, KY | 0.52 million MSA population

Surface Parking Regulations

- Primary use permitted in small core area, accessory allowed surrounding core

Design and Landscaping Standards

- 8' plant buffer, 10% area for interior landscaping, 30% tree canopy
- max distance between islands, required at end of rows, every other row continuous interior landscaped area, min. top soil depth
- Bike parking required where parking provided (1:10 bike:car spaces)



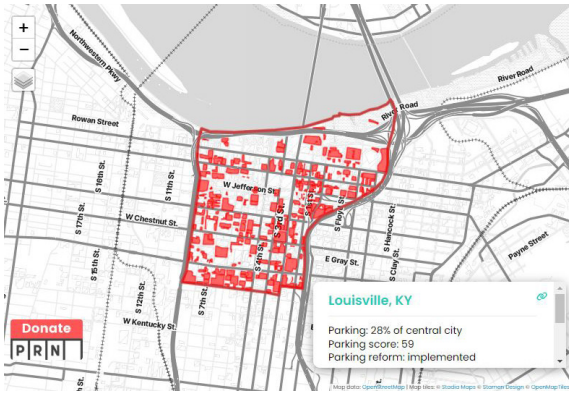
Indianapolis, IN | 2.08 million MSA population

Surface Parking Regulations

- prohibited in two small core areas, otherwise, limited to 2 acres
- Entrances located at least 75' from nearest intersection
- Accessory lots must be within 500ft of property

Landscaping requirements:

- 6' buffer, 1 tree + 3 shrubs/25-35' street frontage
- For 15+ spaces:
 - 6-9% of internal vehicle area, dispersed throughout
 - 1 tree/180sq. ft. internal landscaped area
 - reductions in space for more environmentally friendly landscaping methods



Louisville, KY | 1.4 million MSA population

Surface Parking Regulations

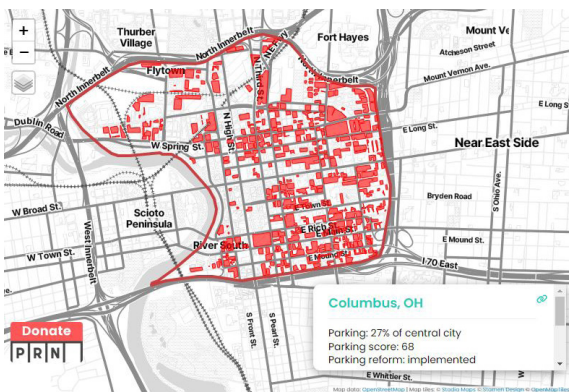
- Parking lots allowed.
- Downtown Development Overlay District (DDOD), with design review committee

Design and Landscaping Standards

- Encourage a strong street wall through plant buffering or screening
- 3 feet high, encourage public art
- Outside of Overlay
 - Up to 15% of spots can be compact cars spots
 - Option to substitute 5% of spaces for bike parking
 - Street trees required along all streets
 - Required landscaped/spaces: 10-19 : 2.5% | 20-99: 5% | 100+: 7%
 - 8'x8' minimum island area | 20' maximum distance between islands

Staff Assessment and Comments

- Development still happening



Columbus, OH | 2.15 million MSA population

Surface Parking Regulations

- Central Core subdistrict:
 - garages and accessory allowed within 1,320 ft
- Periphery Areas subdistrict:
 - All other forms of parking allowed

Design and Landscaping Standards

- Interior landscaping required if 10+ spaces
- 1 tree/10 parking spaces in landscaped islands or peninsulas dispersed throughout interior
- 4' heavily landscaped and screened residential buffer required

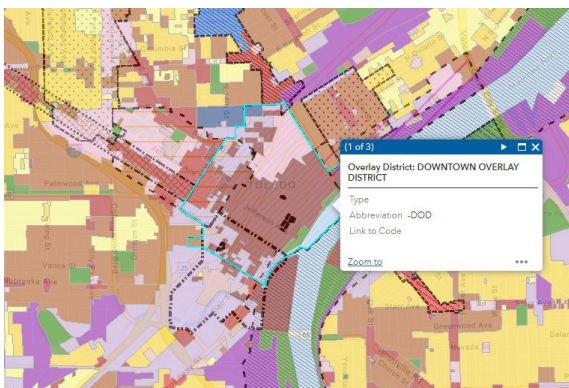
Toledo, OH | 0.65 million MSA population

Surface Parking Regulations

- Created very robust design guidelines, however lack of enforcement.
- Existing lots must comply within 1 year or use permit is denied

Design and Landscaping Standards

- High quality fencing guidelines
- Lighting and landscaping encouraged



5-PLAN CONSISTENCY

PLAN CINCINNATI (2012)

Live Goal 2: Create a more livable community.

The physical space of a community should help us live healthy, engaged, and positive lives. Driving is becoming more expensive and less desirable, and individuals and families want walkable neighborhoods that encourage interaction. We will adapt our neighborhoods to respond to these growing trends.

Our Strategies

Become more walkable.

Support and stabilize our neighborhoods.



Walkable public places allow social interactions

Sustain Goal 1: Become a healthier Cincinnati.

The good physical health of our residents encourages future growth by creating relationships and developing a greater quality of life. Cincinnati seeks to develop a culture of health embodied by thriving residents, not merely by absence of disease.

Our Strategies

Create a healthy environment and reduce energy consumption.

Decrease mortality and chronic and acute diseases.



Connect Goal 1: Develop an efficient multi-modal transportation system that supports neighborhood livability.

Linking people and places, true connectivity provides people with multiple transportation options. Multi-modal transportation options are vital to link people to employment, goods, services, and recreation. The design of the transportation system will complement and support both the built environment and its users.

Our Strategies

Expand options for non-automotive travel.

Plan, design and implement a safe and sustainable transportation system.



SORTA andTANK provide comprehensive bus services throughout the region

GREEN CINCINNATI PLAN (2023)

Mobility Focus Area

- Embrace zoning reform that increases density near transit, reduces or eliminates parking requirements across the City, and minimizes the use of surface parking lots. (p. 120-121)
- Increase the use of zero-emission vehicles in the City to 25% by 2030. (p. 117)

Natural Environment Focus Area

- Improve air quality so that Air Quality Index “Healthy Days” are increased by 30% by 2028 (p. 128)
- Increase use of green infrastructure to mitigate the effects of stormwater, sewer overflows, overland flooding, and contaminated stormwater in waterways (p. 133)

Resilience and Climate Adaptation Focus Area

- Reduce extreme heat, overland flooding, landslides, and water-pollution vulnerabilities by incentivizing, improving and increasing green infrastructure and other mitigating methods. (p. 141)
 - Use heat reflective materials when appropriate (roads, parking surfaces, roofs, etc.) (p. 141)



Green Cincinnati Plan  2023



CINCINNATI 2000 PLAN (1986)

- “pedestrian movement must be preserved” and “measures must be taken to ensure access to and improve mobility within the CBD and takes care to prevent parking needs and street traffic from destroying the ambience of the downtown” (p. 5)
- “increase in the downtown living with emphasis on attractive and distinctive residential neighborhoods,” and for “the increased use of trees, sidewalk pavement treatments, lighting and street fixtures to make the downtown area more attractive and interesting” (p. 1)

6-RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION #1: PROHIBIT NEW SURFACE PARKING LOTS IN ALL PARKING SUBDISTRICTS

RECOMMENDATION #2: ALLOW TEMPORARY SURFACE PARKING IN PARKING SUBDISTRICTS Y AND Z FOR UP TO 5 YEARS, WITH POSSIBLE 2-YEAR EXTENSION.

RECOMMENDATION # 3: ADD LANDSCAPING AND DESIGN REQUIREMENTS FOR INTERIM LOTS.

Current Code



Proposed Code Changes



Regulation Category	Current Code	Proposed Change	Rationale
TREES	1 tree/10 parking spaces	1 tree/4 parking spaces	City Form-Based Code alignment
BUFFERS	3' perimeter buffer	5' buffer along street edge	peer city research
IF LARGER THAN 0.25 ACRES:			
INTERIOR BUFFERS	None	must be broken down into smaller parking areas with 15' planted landscape areas between them	Form-Based Code alignment
BIKE PARKING	None	1 bike parking spot/20 car spaces	current parking garage code requirement
EV CHARGING	None	2 percent requirement (1 out of 50 spaces), 5 percent of spaces are EV charger ready (including installed EV spaces)	City Ordinance (89-2017), peer city research
SURFACING/PAVING	Asphalt, concrete, interlocking masonry paver, or open honeycomb paving blocks	Heat reflective materials OR permeable pavers required	public impacts analysis, OES pilot at LeBlonde Rec