



City of Sunnyvale

Agenda Item

24-0141

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REPORT TO PLANNING COMMISSION

SUBJECT

Forward a Recommendation to the City Council to Evaluate the Minimum Automobile Off-Street Parking Requirements for Residential Uses (Study Issue CDD 19-07)

File #: 2022-7404

Environmental Review: The action is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(a).

Project Planner: George Schroeder, (408) 730-7443, gschroeder@sunnyvale.ca.gov

REPORT IN BRIEF

The Planning Commission sponsored this study issue in 2018. The original Study Issue was to explore potential reductions in residential automobile parking requirements and future conversions of parking to other uses; the study did not include potential modifications to bicycle parking requirements. In February 2022, the City Council supported the study with a scope limited to reporting Sunnyvale's standards vs. other cities' standards.

Recent changes in state legislation have already impacted the amount of parking that the City can require for certain projects. A reduced parking formula must be applied to any housing project seeking state density bonus provisions. No parking is required for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) or any type of residential development within a half mile of major transit stops. Only one covered parking space is required for each new single-family home in Dual Urban Opportunity (DUO) housing projects, including those utilizing an Urban Lot Split (ULS). DUO projects are also exempted from minimum parking requirements if within a half mile of El Camino Real, considered a high-quality transit corridor.

Data for minimum automobile parking requirements were collected for 14 other incorporated cities and towns within Santa Clara County, as well as the County's regulations. Additionally, eight other Bay Area peer jurisdictions were surveyed based on similarities in population and regional context to those of Sunnyvale. Based on the information gathered, the following observations were made:

- Current minimum parking requirements for single and two-family homes in Sunnyvale are higher on average than other jurisdictions, though many require additional uncovered parking through minimum front yard setbacks and required driveways.
- Minimum parking standards for multifamily residential in Sunnyvale are more closely aligned with other jurisdictions, however Sunnyvale's regulations include specific requirements that could increase the total number of spaces required.
- Parking requirements in Area Plans/Specific Plans (referenced collectively as specific plans in this report) are slightly higher than other jurisdictions (however lower than the Citywide standards).

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- Demographic data reveals that Sunnyvale has a higher percentage of households *without* cars, fewer households with multiple cars, and fewer residents per household than the cumulative average values of Santa Clara County jurisdictions.

Reasonable reductions in the amount of required parking could assist property owners, and could also:

- contribute to decreased housing costs;
- increase the number of available units;
- avoid an oversupply of parking spaces;
- reduce impervious surface area;
- discourage higher rates of vehicle ownership; and,
- promote climate-friendly modes of transportation such as walking, bicycling, carpooling, and using public transit.

Staff Recommendation: Recommend Alternative 1 to the City Council to direct staff to conduct community outreach and explore amendments to the Sunnyvale Municipal Code (SMC) and applicable Specific Plans parking regulations, to be considered at future hearings. The amendments to be studied should include:

- a. Clarifying parking standards to be objective and without discretionary review.
- b. Single/Two-Family Residential:
 - i. Lowering minimum off-street parking spaces per property, with flexibility in type and arrangement (e.g., covered/uncovered, tandem).
 - ii. Exploring maximum number of parking spaces and allowing tandem parking.
- c. Multi-Family Residential:
 - i. Introducing unbundled parking
 - ii. Adjusting/simplifying the unassigned space requirement (currently dependent on the type of covered assigned space provided)
 - For example, require the minimum parking standards to be a flat rate of 1 space per zero to one-bedroom unit; 1.5 spaces per two to three-bedroom unit; and 2 spaces for units with four or more bedrooms.
 - iii. Examining maximum amount of parking required, except for areas within a half-mile of major transit stops.
 - iv. Allowing flexibility in type (covered, uncovered) and arrangement, including a tandem allowance for up to 100% of units.
 - v. Evaluating use of compact parking spaces.
 - vi. Updating the Limited Street Parking Provisions to specify objective parking requirements in certain conditions.

EXISTING POLICY

Key Goals and Policies are provided below. A more complete list of goals and policies from the Housing Element, Land Use and Transportation Chapter, and other elements of the General Plan which pertain to residential parking are detailed in Attachment 3.

GENERAL PLAN

Housing Element

Goal H-4 Minimize the impact of governmental constraints on the maintenance, improvement, and development of housing.

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Land Use and Transportation Element

Goal LT-3.13 Move progressively toward eliminating direct and hidden subsidies of motor vehicle parking and driving, making the true costs of parking and driving visible to motorists.

COUNCIL POLICY

7.3.01 Legislative Management - Goals and Policies

Policy 7.3B.3 - Prepare and update ordinances to reflect current community issues and concerns in compliance with state and federal laws.

BACKGROUND

Study Issue History

The Planning Commission first sponsored this study issue (CDD 19-07) on November 12, 2018 with the title of, "Develop Citywide Guidelines or Criteria for Allowing Reduced Parking for Development Projects and for Future Conversions of Parking to other Uses." The Planning Commission asked whether there are circumstances where reduced automobile parking could be appropriate, such as: a multifamily project that may be able to increase the total number of units if parking requirements are reduced, or on a single-family property where the size of an existing one-car garage restricts the total allowable square footage of the house, thereby potentially restricting large or extended families from living together in one dwelling. The study issue did not include potential modifications to bicycle parking requirements.

The study issue was deferred for several years until the City Council's Study Issues/Budget Proposals Workshop on February 17, 2022, when they referred the study issue and reduced its scope to evaluate single-family and multifamily parking standards and to compare the standards to other jurisdictions and direct staff to identify policies from other cities that are worthy of further study. See the study issue paper in Attachment 2.

Brief History of Residential Parking Requirements in Sunnyvale (see Attachment 4 for more details)

1946 No parking requirements for any uses.

1951 First adoption of parking requirements: one space per residential unit (could be covered or uncovered).

1959 Single-family: 2 spaces per unit, plus 1 for each employee living at another location.
Multifamily: 1-1/2 spaces per unit (depending on unit size), plus 1 for each employee living at another location.

1975 At least one space per unit in multifamily must be covered.

1986 Compact spaces allowed in multifamily developments.

1996 Increased parking requirements for both single-family and multifamily.

2003 Upgrades for non-conforming single-family parking required when home exceeds four bedrooms or 1,800 square feet.

2015 Reduction in unassigned parking, for multifamily, when 2 covered spaces per unit provided; tandem parking allowed for all residential (with limitations on percentage of units).

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The action being considered does not constitute a project pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(a) as it has no potential for resulting in either a direct physical change in the environment or a

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reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment. There are no changes proposed to the SMC or Area/Specific Plan parking requirements at this time. If the Council directs staff to prepare amendments, the amendments would be considered a project, but would still likely be exempt from CEQA because it could be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the action will have a significant environmental effect. [CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3)]. Additionally, as affirmed in recent legal precedent, parking is generally not considered an impact on the environment. Future development projects that are subject to the requirements of the amended chapters will be environmentally evaluated on an individual basis.

DISCUSSION

This report reviews the City's current parking standards, provides information on what other cities require, presents demographic information on vehicle availability by household, and provides options to consider, moving forward.

History of Parking Regulations in Sunnyvale

A component of this study issue is to review the historic parking requirements for residential uses in Sunnyvale. Sunnyvale has a long history of reviewing its residential parking requirements. The City's minimum residential automobile parking requirements have trended upward since the original requirement of one space per housing unit in 1951, resulting in greater quantities of required parking; the exception being specific plan areas with more transportation options which have lower parking requirements. Residential parking requirements have also become more complex, depending on different factors such as: bedroom count; covered/uncovered; assigned/unassigned; part of a mixed-use project; and, tandem and mechanical parking structures. Only until recently has a slight degree of flexibility been introduced in the quantity and arrangement of parking spaces, mostly for multifamily residential.

In 2012, the City introduced maximum parking for non-residential uses only. The last update to citywide residential parking requirements was in response to State legislation, in January 2023.

Refer to Attachment 4 for a detailed timeline of the City's modifications to residential parking requirements.

Sunnyvale's Current Residential Parking Requirements

The general parking standards in Chapter 19.46 of the Sunnyvale Municipal Code (SMC) establish minimum required automobile parking for residential properties. There are also separate residential parking standards in most Area Plans and Specific Plans (collectively referred to as "specific plans" in this report). Minimum residential parking requirements are based on a variety of factors depending on land use. The parking requirements are very dependent on many factors which can be confusing to a property owner or developer. More details of the parking requirements for Sunnyvale are provided below. Comparisons of Sunnyvale and other cities are provided in Attachments 5 and 6.

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SUMMARY OF PARKING REQUIREMENTS*(excludes State regulations on parking)*

	Sunnyvale
Single family	2 covered +2 uncovered
Upgrade for additions	Y
Tandem	w/limits
Multifamily	1.5 - 2.65+
Tandem	w/limits on %
Type of Parking	Y
# of Bedrooms	Y
Special Housing	0.25 - 2.15
Tandem	Y
# of Bedrooms	Y
Senior (not deed restricted)	1
SRO	0.25 - 1.0
MHP	2
Tandem	Y
DSP Multifamily	0.5-1.0
LSAP	1.0-1.7
ECRSP	1.0 - 2.25
PPSP	Citywide
MPSP	Max only: 0.75-1.0

AB 2097 and 2023 SMC Amendments

Assembly Bill (AB) 2097 is the latest major change in state parking law which went into effect on January 1, 2023, and was incorporated into the SMC shortly after. The law prohibits local agencies from imposing any minimum automobile parking requirements, except for electric vehicle and accessible spaces, for all residential and nonresidential developments (with some exceptions for hotels and event centers) located within one-half mile in a straight-line distance of a major transit stop. In Sunnyvale, the major transit stops include the two Caltrain stations, eight Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) light rail stations (three of which are in Mountain View), and one bus stop in Santa Clara that has a one-half mile buffer that encroaches into Sunnyvale.

El Camino Real meets the state's definition of a high-quality transit corridor but does not currently meet the definition of a major transit stop. The VTA 22 and 522 bus lines have 15-minute headways in the morning and afternoon peak commute periods, but they do not intersect with bus lines going in other directions that also have 15-minute or less headways. If that should ever change, large swaths of single-family, multifamily, and commercial areas would be exempted from minimum automobile parking requirements.

Senate Bill (SB) 330 and SB 8 Objective Standards Requirement

The Housing Crisis Act (SB 330), approved in 2019, and its extension, SB 8, approved in 2021, applies to all-residential developments; mixed-use developments consisting of residential and nonresidential uses with at least two-thirds of the square footage designated for residential use; and

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transitional or supportive housing. The law states that where housing is an allowable use, the City cannot impose or enforce design standards on or after January 1, 2020, that are not objective design standards. Objective design standards involve no personal or subjective judgment by a public official and are uniformly verifiable by reference to a uniform criterion available and knowable by both the development applicant and public official before submittal of an application. Any new residential parking requirements established would need to be “objective.”

Single/Two-Family Parking Requirements

Required parking for single-family and two-family dwellings generally follow the citywide standard of four spaces total, two of which must be covered (garage or carport) and not in tandem unless specified existing conditions occur (narrow lot width or significant structural modifications needed to accommodate a side-by-side arrangement). Two uncovered parking spaces on a driveway with minimum dimensions of 17 feet wide by 20 feet in depth and located in front of a garage/carport count as two of the four spaces required.

AB 1308: Parking for Single-Family Home Remodels

The governor approved AB 1308 in 2023, which provides that if an owner of a single-family home seeks to remodel, renovate, or add to the single-family dwelling, and it will not exceed any local maximum size limitations (e.g. height, lot coverage, floor area ratio), then cities cannot increase the minimum parking requirement as a condition of approval.

The current SMC requirement in Section 19.46.050(b) seems to conflict with the new law by requiring dwellings with less than two covered parking spaces to provide an upgrade to two covered spaces when an addition to the home results in four or more bedrooms; or an addition results in a total living area of 1,800 square feet or more. This requirement is not based on exceeding a maximum size limitation for the property.

Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Parking Requirements

In 2019 AB 881 was approved. AB 881 established that, statewide, parking is not required for accessory dwelling units (ADUs) nor could replacement parking be required for conversion of a main dwelling's covered parking (garage or carport) into an ADU. This provision has effectively reduced the total required parking provided (for the main residence and any ADUs) on the same property to two driveway spaces. Some older homes in Sunnyvale only have a one-car driveway, which could be the only parking for those sites, even with the addition of ADUs.

Dual Urban Opportunity (DUO) Housing Parking Requirements

One covered parking space is required for each dual urban opportunity (DUO) housing unit. In addition to waiving minimum parking requirements if the site is within one-half mile of a major transit stop (per AB 2097), minimum parking is also not required if within one-half mile of a high-quality transit corridor. El Camino Real is considered a high-quality transit corridor because it has fixed route bus service with service intervals no longer than 15 minutes during peak commute hours. A map showing properties within one-half mile of major transit stops or bus stops along El Camino Real is available on the City's website at:

<https://gis.sunnyvale.ca.gov/portal/apps/webappviewer/index.html?>

Multifamily Residential Parking Requirements

The Sunnyvale Municipal Code general parking requirement is at least one covered parking space

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for each multifamily unit in Sunnyvale. Additionally, unassigned (resident or guest) parking spaces are required based on the number of bedrooms in a unit and the type of parking structure (i.e., private enclosure or open parking available to different residents). The minimum parking requirements range from 1.5/2.25 spaces per studio to one-bedroom unit to 2.15/2.65 spaces per four-bedroom unit, with an additional 0.15 unassigned spaces for each additional bedroom. Up to 10% of the unassigned spaces may be compact.

Tandem parking is allowed for up to 50% of the units in a development and must be assigned to the same unit. Required unassigned spaces must be in a side-to-side arrangement. Mechanical lifts, stackers or other similar means of independent mechanized parking may also satisfy covered assigned space requirements.

Reductions to multifamily residential parking standards require approval of a Variance or Special Development Permit (for sites in a specific plan area or specified Combining District). Parking adjustments are not allowed for residential uses except special housing developments (100% affordable housing developments, senior housing, and housing for persons with disabilities).

Limited Street Parking Provision

There are requirements in SMC 19.46 to provide additional off-street parking when there is limited on-street parking. New single/two-family developments require an additional 0.4 unassigned parking spaces per unit, not on a driveway. For multifamily residential the approval body may also require additional unassigned parking spaces. There is no definition for "limited street parking" and thus is not considered an objective standard as it involves a subjective determination by City staff or the approval body. Historically, staff has calculated adjacent on-street parking and if it is determined to be fewer than 0.4 spaces per unit, additional guest spaces are required as a condition of project approval.

Single-Room Occupancy and Special Housing Development Parking Requirements

Lower parking rates are established for single-room occupancy facilities and special housing developments. The minimum parking requirements for single-room occupancy developments are based on the square footage of the unit, ranging from 0.25 spaces per units less than 200 square feet to 1 space for each unit greater than 250 square feet.

The minimum parking requirements for 100% affordable housing developments range from 1 space per one-bedroom unit to 2.15 spaces per four- or more bedroom unit. Units of any size for seniors or persons with disabilities in all-affordable housing developments require 0.6 spaces. Otherwise, in standard housing, 1 space per unit is required for units for senior citizens or persons with disabilities. Units of any size in assisted living developments require 0.25 spaces per resident.

Rates for special housing developments can be further reduced by making findings for a parking adjustment as specified in Section 19.46.130 of the SMC.

Mobile Home Park Parking Requirements

The minimum parking requirement for mobile home parks is 2 spaces/unit plus 1 space per employee living offsite plus 1 space per special purpose vehicle. The provided parking can be in a tandem parking arrangement.

Automatic Parking Reductions for Projects Qualifying for a State Density Bonus

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In order to facilitate the construction of affordable units, the California State Density Bonus Law entitles developers providing affordable housing in accordance with the criteria of the law to automatic reduced parking ratios. The reduced requirements account for lower rates of car ownership in lower-income households and aim for cost reductions in affordable projects. The reduced parking ratios do not count towards the allowable incentives/concessions to development standards that depend on the percentage and type of affordable units provided. Most multifamily residential projects in the City qualify for a density bonus and automatic parking reductions because the City's affordable housing requirement meets or exceeds the thresholds in the density bonus law.

Qualifying projects with a percentage of affordable units are entitled to reduced parking ratios of 1 space per studio and one-bedroom unit, 1.5 spaces per two to three-bedroom unit, and 2.5 spaces per four or more bedroom unit. Further reductions to 0.5 spaces per unit, regardless of bedroom size, are allowed for projects with at least 11% very low-income units or 20% low-income units within one-half mile of a major transit stop with unobstructed access to the stop. If a development includes at least 40% moderate income units within one-half mile of a major transit stop with unobstructed access, the allowable ratio is 0.5 spaces per bedroom. Furthermore, no parking is required for 100% affordable projects (exclusive of manager's units) within one-half mile of a major transit stop with unobstructed access. No parking requirements also apply to special needs housing and rental senior housing (55 years or older) that have either paratransit service or unobstructed access, within one-half mile to fixed bus route service that operates at least eight times per day.

Required spaces under the state density bonus law may be provided through tandem or uncovered parking. Additionally, an applicant may request parking incentives or concessions beyond the reduced parking allowances specified in the law.

Area Plan and Specific Plan Parking Requirements

Specific plans either have their own minimum residential automobile parking requirements or default to the general standards in Chapter 19.46 of the SMC. Parking details not addressed in plan areas (such as parking space dimensions and drive aisle widths) revert to the general standards.

Downtown Specific Plan (DSP)

The DSP has its own minimum residential automobile parking requirements. For both single-family and multifamily, one covered assigned space is required per unit. One uncovered space is also required for single-family. Depending on the bedroom type of a multifamily unit, additional unassigned spaces are required, ranging from 0.5 per studio/one bedroom unit to 1 per three bedroom or larger unit. When two assigned spaces are provided for multifamily units, the number of unassigned spaces may be reduced by 25% for each unit. Tandem is allowed for up to 100% of units in multifamily, provided they are assigned to the same unit.

El Camino Real Specific Plan (ECRSP)

The ECRSP has minimum and maximum parking requirements, differentiated by the two types of locations - nodes (near transit, and where greater activity is expected) and segments, which connect the nodes with fewer transit connections. For node properties, the minimum for studio/one-bedroom units is 1 space/unit with a maximum of 1.5 spaces/unit. The minimum for two-bedroom units is 1.25 spaces/unit, the minimum for three-bedroom units and greater is 1.7 spaces/unit, and the maximum for two-bedrooms and greater is 2 spaces/unit. The studio/one-bedroom unit requirement for segment properties is the same as the nodes. The minimum requirement for two-bedroom units within segments is 1.5 spaces/unit and 2 spaces/unit for three bedroom and greater units. The

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maximum allowance for two-bedroom and greater units within segments is 2.25 spaces/unit.

Lakeside Specific Plan

This plan applies to the site on the south side of Lakeside Drive, north of the artificial lake behind properties on Oakmead Parkway. The residential portion of this plan was recently built out, and no additional residential development is expected to occur. The plan's residential parking requirement defaults to the SMC parking standards.

Lawrence/101 Specific Plan

This plan applies to the site to the west of the Lakeside Specific Plan, bounded by Lawrence Expressway to the west, US-101 to the north, Lakeside Drive to the east, and Oakmead Parkway to the south. This plan is also built out with no significant new development to occur. The plan requires 2.25 spaces per residential unit, regardless of the bedroom type. There are also limitations on provided surface parking.

Lawrence Station Area Plan (LSAP)

The LSAP includes minimum and maximum parking requirements with no separate requirement for unassigned spaces. The standards are the same for node properties within the ECRSP.

Moffett Park Specific Plan (MPSP)

The MPSP includes different residential automobile parking requirements than the rest of the City and is also unique in that the plan does not require minimum parking; it only sets maximums on parking supply. Projects may exceed maximums by up to 50% of the maximum ratio, provided that all of the additional spaces over the maximum are shared with the public or other entities at all times. Parking maximums are to be phased in over time where more parking would be built up front through a tiered approach to maximums. The maximum residential parking ratio at plan adoption is 1 space per unit with future maximums of 0.75 spaces per unit. Tandem is allowed for up to 100% of units in multifamily, provided they are assigned to the same unit or an automated vehicle release is provided at all hours of operation.

Peery Park Specific Plan (PPSP)

The PPSP residential parking requirements generally default to the SMC standard, with allowances for reductions in minimum parking through a transportation demand management (TDM) plan or other adequate survey data as requested by the City.

MTC Transit-Oriented Communities (TOC) Policy for Parking Maximums

In 2022, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), the Bay Area's regional transportation planning agency, adopted the Transit-Oriented Communities (TOC) Policy. The policy is rooted in Plan Bay Area 2050, the region's Long Range Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy and in Sunnyvale it applies to areas within one-half mile of Caltrain and VTA light rail stations. One component of the policy is parking management to support higher transit ridership. For new residential development, the policy specifies parking maximums of 1 space per unit or lower. This requirement has not been reflected in the SMC, DSP, or LSAP, but it was addressed in the recent comprehensive update to the MPSP. The City may be eligible for certain types of funding from MTC if in compliance with the MTC TOC policy.

Shared Parking

Shared parking is the use of a parking space to serve two or more individual land uses on the same

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property or across different properties without conflict, typically when the peak parking period for each use does not overlap. This arrangement reduces the number of parking spaces provided. For example, office uses see peak parking demand during the weekday daytime whereas residential parking is most needed in the evening, night and weekends. Rather than providing distinct parking spaces for each land use, the same parking supply can be used by office employees during the day and residents in the evenings and at night.

Shared parking is permitted on a citywide basis with a discretionary permit such as a Use Permit, Plan Review Permit, or Special Development Permit. Shared parking is also allowed in each of the major specific plans with varying nuances. A parking analysis and management plan are typically required for shared parking proposals.

The DSP, ECRSP, LSAP, and PPSP require or give the deciding body discretion to require a shared parking agreement for shared parking proposals. However, the discretionary procedures are not objective.

AB 894: Shared Parking

The governor approved AB 894 in 2023, which allows underused parking lots to satisfy parking requirements on a different site. There is specified criteria for when cities must accept shared parking agreements between sites. Prior to acting on a shared parking agreement, if the parties to the agreement include developments of at least 10 residential units, cities must notify all property owners within 300 feet, and if a request for a meeting is received within 14 days, hold a public meeting. However, if cities adopt a shared parking agreement ordinance, the noticing and hearing requirements would be avoided. Cities may also include requirements for recording the shared parking agreements against the affected parcels and for the content of the agreements. Prior to AB 894 Sunnyvale has approved off-site locations for required parking through the Variance procedure (probably less than 10 instances).

Parking Management Plans

Parking management plans are designed to manage the use of parking on a property. They can include demand management strategies such as valet parking, off-site employee parking, and shared parking agreements. These plans are required for all new multifamily and mixed-use development throughout the City, and existing developments when shared or mechanized parking is proposed. Parking management plans are reviewed by the Director of Community Development with a staff-level miscellaneous plan permit (MPP) or by the hearing body reviewing the associated permit for the development.

Unbundled Parking

Unbundling parking separates the cost to rent or own a parking space from the cost to own or lease the property or unit. The MPSP requires unbundled parking, stating all parking spaces shall be leased or sold separately from the rental or purchase fees for the individual units in perpetuity. Affordable units which include financing requirements may be granted an exception. There is also a policy in the LSAP to allow unbundling, provided that every unit has the option to access at least one parking space.

AB 1317: Unbundled Parking

The governor approved AB 1317 in 2023 which requires new residential rental properties with 16 or more units that are completed after January 1, 2025 to unbundle parking from rent. Tenants of these

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properties are given right of first refusal to parking spaces provided for their unit. The law applies to ten specified counties, including Santa Clara County. The requirement does not apply to 100% affordable housing projects or to multifamily projects with individual garages such as townhomes and rowhouses. Cities are not required to enforce this law as it is a civil matter between tenants and landlords.

Electric Vehicles

The City's Reach Codes are intended to exceed the state's energy codes to accelerate the reduction of greenhouse gases. The Reach Codes specify electric vehicle parking requirements for new construction. For each single-family, duplex, and townhome unit, one Level 1 outlet (standard outlet) and one Level 2 ready circuit (outlet for an EV charger) is required. Seventy percent of unassigned spaces for townhomes must have Level 1 ready circuits and the remaining 30% shall have Level 2 ready circuits. All other multifamily units follow the same requirement of 70% Level 1 outlets and 30% Level 2 ready circuits.

Pre-wiring (Level 1 or 2 EV-ready) is required for all new construction, with charging stations not necessarily required. For single/two-family and townhomes with private garages, a Level 2 EV-ready space is required for one space with another Level 1 EV-ready space if two spaces are provided per unit. Thirty percent of unassigned spaces are required to be provided with at least one Level 2 EV-ready space. In addition, each remaining unassigned parking spaces must be provided with at least a Level 1 EV ready space. Multifamily shared parking facilities are required to provide at least one Level 2 EV-ready space for 30% of the dwelling units with parking spaces. In addition, each remaining dwelling unit with parking space(s) shall be provided with at least a Level 1 EV-ready space.

Specific plan areas default to the SMC standard, except for the MPSP. The MPSP specifies Level 2 EV Ready parking spaces for 30% of unbundled spaces with an additional 30% Level 1 EV Ready spaces; or in accordance with the CBC Tier 2, whichever is more stringent.

Compact Parking

The City's general parking requirements in SMC Chapter 19.46 allow multifamily residential uses with parking lots of ten or more spaces to provide compact spaces (7.5 feet wide by 15 feet in depth) for up to ten percent of the total number of unassigned spaces. However, compact parking is prohibited in mobile home parks, non-residential and mixed-use developments.

Overview of Other Jurisdictions' Parking Requirements

Data for minimum parking requirements were collected for the 14 other incorporated cities and towns within Santa Clara County, as well as the County's regulations for unincorporated areas, using online accessible municipal codes. Eight other Bay Area peer jurisdictions were selected based on population and regional similarities to Sunnyvale; these were Concord, Daly City, Fremont, Hayward, Redwood City, Richmond, San Mateo, and Walnut Creek. Data for their minimum parking requirements were also collected using online accessible municipal codes. All included agencies were contacted to confirm the preliminary data collected for their jurisdictions, and revisions were made based on their reviews.

Minimum parking requirement data for other jurisdictions' single/two-family and multifamily dwellings are presented in the tables below. Many other jurisdictions do not have a specified

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covered/uncovered parking space requirement like Sunnyvale, only total spaces per unit. Similarly, many other jurisdictions do not have an assigned/unassigned multifamily residential requirement like Sunnyvale. Other jurisdictions' parking requirements also do not follow Sunnyvale's requirements based on parking structure type (e.g. individual garages or open parking). To better compare the data, average and minimum/maximum total spaces per unit are shown in the tables below. Refer to Attachment 5 (single/two-family) and Attachment 6 (multifamily) for data from each jurisdiction, as well as notes further explaining intricacies in the requirements.

Table 1 – Single/Two-Family Residential Minimum Parking Requirements

	Total Spaces per Unit (Averages)	Total Spaces per Unit (Min/Max)
Sunnyvale	4.00	4.00
Other SCC Jurisdictions	2.27-2.60	0.00-6.00
Peer Jurisdictions	1.88-3.25	1.00-6.00

Table 2 - Multi-Family Residential Minimum Parking Requirements (Citywide)

	Total Spaces per Unit (Averages)	Total Spaces per Unit (Min/Max)
Sunnyvale	1.50-2.65	1.00-2.65
Other SCC Jurisdictions	1.31-1.96	0.00-3.00
Peer Jurisdictions	1.28-2.13	0.50-2.50

Table 3 - Multi-Family Residential Minimum Parking Requirements (Specific Plans)

	Total Spaces per Unit (Averages)	Total Spaces per Unit (Min/Max)
Sunnyvale	1.17-2.08	1.00-2.25
Other SCC Jurisdictions	0.95-1.63	0.00-3.00
Peer Jurisdictions	1.09-1.49	0.00-2.00

The results indicate that, on average, Sunnyvale's minimum residential parking requirements are higher for both single/two-family residential and multifamily residential developments than jurisdictions both within Santa Clara County and comparable Bay Area peer jurisdictions. The discrepancy is most pronounced for single/two-family development where Sunnyvale maintains a requirement of four total spaces per unit, while most other agencies within the county require a total of two spaces. Only Cupertino, Los Altos Hills, and Monte Sereno require four or more spaces for every single-family home.

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While Sunnyvale's minimum residential parking standards for single/two-family homes are higher on average, it is not uncommon for the other studied jurisdictions to impose other requirements which effectively provide additional parking spaces above the minimum. Cities in Santa Clara County require an average 23-foot front yard setback, which allows space for front driveway parking. Though, many other jurisdictions specify that required parking spaces are not counted within the required front yard, negating credit for front driveway parking. This pattern is generally true of the studied peer jurisdictions as well. In Walnut Creek, for example, only two covered parking spaces are required per single/two-family home, but their regulations effectively provide four spaces. This is because a minimum 18-foot long driveway is also required in addition to the two covered spaces, allowing space for two uncovered parking spaces on the driveway. However, credit is not given for front driveway parking because Walnut Creek specifies the required parking spaces may not occupy any portion of a required yard.

Sunnyvale's total parking requirements for multifamily residential units are closer to the average range for Santa Clara County and peer jurisdictions, however there is greater variation in other jurisdictions' multifamily parking requirements. Most require at least one assigned or covered space per unit, but the requirements for additional guest/unassigned spaces often vary based on the zoning, floor area, unit bedrooms, or total number of units in the development. Sunnyvale's parking regulations are unique in that the number of required parking spaces depends on the type of covered assigned space provided. Less unassigned parking is required when two assigned spaces are provided per unit, or when one assigned space per unit is provided in a carport or open parking structure. More unassigned parking is required when one assigned space is provided per unit in an individual fully-enclosed garage. This is because carports and open parking are more likely to be used to park cars than individual garages, which often are used for storage. Most other jurisdictions simply prescribe required parking ratios based on the bedroom count of a unit and then add on a percentage or additional ratio for guest/unassigned spaces.

Demographic Data

Demographic data was obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) to examine vehicle ownership rates and average household sizes for Sunnyvale and the other studied jurisdictions. Compared with other jurisdictions, Sunnyvale has a higher percentage of households with no vehicles available, fewer households with more than one vehicle, and fewer people occupying housing units. The comparison of this demographic data and minimum parking requirements between the different jurisdictions may warrant a reduction to Sunnyvale's minimum residential parking requirements. Table 5 below shows the overall summary. The full demographic data broken down by jurisdiction is included in Attachments 7 and 8.

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Table 5 – Demographic Data

	Households with No Vehicle Available	Households with More than One Vehicle Available	Average Persons per Household
Sunnyvale	6.5%	58.3%	2.69
Other SCC Jurisdictions	4.1%	71.2%	2.84
Peer Jurisdictions	6.5%	61.6%	2.84

Source: ACS Community Survey, 5-year Averages, 2021

State Law’s Impact on Residential Parking Requirements

As noted in the Background section, the State of California passed recent legislation with limitations on the quantity of parking local agencies can require in certain circumstances, such as when sites are near major transit stops or particular housing products (affordable housing, ADUs and DUOs). Additionally, any new requirements local agencies impose on residential parking standards must be “objective,” where reasonable people could not reach different conclusions as to how to comply with the standard. Construction of parking spaces can be costly to developers, limits single-family home expansions, and has been cited as a deterrent to housing construction throughout the state. The state has also set targets for carbon emission reduction which will be difficult to meet if driving gas-powered vehicles are still the predominant form of transportation.

Options to Consider

Moderately reduce required parking minimums for residential development

Code updates could be considered (Citywide standards and within specific plan areas) for reducing minimum residential parking standards. A reduction would make Sunnyvale’s standards more comparable with other jurisdictions, reduce housing costs, reflect lower vehicle ownership rates, and encourage use of active and public transportation. The updates would also include other revisions in accordance with recent state law (shared parking - AB 894 and unbundled parking - AB 1317) and refinements or deletions of various standards to ensure they are objective. Amendments would also address the three Housing Element programs associated with parking (Programs H21, H22 and H23, see Attachment 3 for more details).

For single-family and two-family developments, the City could consider a minimum of two total off-street spaces. These spaces could be configured in an uncovered or covered format, or in a combination thereof (such as a one-car garage and one driveway space). The two parking spaces might also be in a side-by-side or tandem arrangement. This approach would more closely align with other jurisdictions and allow more flexibility for property owners. Such a revised standard would be higher than the DUO requirement of one covered space per unit, or it could also result in no covered parking at all. The reduction would remove the current requirement for properties with less than two covered parking spaces to upgrade for certain remodels, which would also align with recent AB 1308. Staff further recommends not pursuing a maximum amount of parking for single/two-family developments.

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The consideration that staff is suggesting for multifamily closely follows the flat-rate reduced parking already allowed by the State Density Bonus Law, with a preliminary recommendation for four or more bedrooms as slightly lower than the State maximum (i.e., 2.0 vs State 2.5). Most multifamily projects would qualify for reduced parking under the State Density Bonus Law because the City's affordable requirements exceed the percentages needed to qualify for a density bonus. No additional unassigned parking would be required in addition to the flat rate and parking spaces would not be specified to be assigned or covered. Preliminarily, the requirements could be:

Size of Unit	Minimum Number of Parking Spaces
Zero to one-bedroom	1.0
Two to three-bedroom	1.5
Four or more bedroom	2.0*

**instead of two and one-half spaces per State Density Bonus law*

The reductions would also apply to Specific Plans, single-room occupancy, and special housing developments that currently require more parking. Compact parking spaces would be evaluated in the analysis with options to consider, such as eliminating the use of compact spaces, reducing the allowed amount, and only allowing compact through an adjustment or variance. Staff also recommends exploring an increase to the tandem parking allowance from 50% to 100%, which is what is currently in place for DSP properties. The recommended requirements would simplify the City's multifamily parking standards and reflect the trend of reduced parking minimums in the interest of increasing the supply of housing.

Eliminate required parking minimums for residential development

The Council may want to consider eliminating required parking for residential uses altogether. This approach has been utilized by the City of San Jose, which instead requires Transportation Demand Management (TDM) plans for all new projects, exempting most small projects including single-family homes. Alameda, Berkeley, Emeryville, and San Francisco have eliminated minimum parking requirements for most uses and implemented parking maximums instead. Many residential properties in Sunnyvale already qualify for no parking requirements under AB 2097, and many more will be exempted if bus frequency along El Camino Real someday meets the definition of a major transit stop. An elimination or reduced requirement for minimum parking does not prevent additional parking from being built at the applicant's discretion. It is possible that a reduction or elimination of required off-street parking may increase demand for street parking or the need for permit parking. Permit parking has added enforcement costs to the City. While perfectly legal, many Sunnyvale residents have complained about parked cars in their neighborhood belonging to residents of other neighborhoods (or belonging to non-residents); the concerns are that it impacts the availability of street parking for visitors, deliveries and personal vehicles (that cannot be parked on their property). The City could also consider phasing in the elimination of parking based on the availability of other transportation and lower vehicle ownership rates.

Maintain current parking regulations

The collected data indicates that Sunnyvale's minimum residential parking requirements are higher on average than those of other jurisdictions in Santa Clara County and the greater Bay Area, despite having lower vehicle ownership rates and lower household sizes. However, if the City Council finds

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that current minimum parking requirements are sufficient, recent state law reductions already in effect, and the potential impacts of reducing the amount of required parking, the Council may decide to make no changes to minimum residential parking requirements at this time.

FISCAL IMPACT

No fiscal impact is anticipated due to the recommended action. However, if the City Council directs changes that require detailed parking studies, a consultant that specializes in parking requirements may need to be hired, necessitating a budget modification.

PUBLIC CONTACT

Public contact was made by posting the Planning Commission agenda on the City's official notice bulletin board outside of City Hall, Sunnyvale Public Library, and Department of Public Safety. Notices were also posted in the *Sun* newspaper and the City's website.

ALTERNATIVES

Recommend that the City Council:

1. Direct staff to conduct community outreach and prepare amendments to the Sunnyvale Municipal Code (SMC) and applicable Specific Plans parking regulations, to be considered at future hearings. The amendments to be studied include:
 - a. Clarifying parking standards to be objective and without discretionary review.
 - b. Single/Two-Family Residential:
 - i. Lowering minimum off-street parking spaces per property, with flexibility in type and arrangement.
 - ii. Exploring maximum number of parking spaces and allowing tandem parking.
 - c. Multi-Family Residential:
 - i. Introducing unbundled parking.
 - ii. Adjusting/simplifying the unassigned space requirement (currently dependent on the type of covered assigned space provided).
 1. For example, require the minimum parking standards to be a flat rate of 1 space per zero to one-bedroom unit; 1.5 spaces per two to three-bedroom unit; and 2 spaces for units with four or more bedrooms.
 - iii. Examining maximum amount of parking required, except for areas within a half-mile of major transit stops.
 - iv. Allowing flexibility in type (covered, uncovered) and arrangement, including a tandem allowance for up to 100% of units.
 - v. Evaluating continued use of compact parking spaces.
 - vi. Updating the Limited Street Parking Provisions to specify objective parking requirements in certain conditions.
2. Alternative 1 with modifications.
3. Do not modify parking requirements.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Recommend Alternative 1 to the City Council to direct staff to conduct community outreach and prepare amendments to the Sunnyvale Municipal Code (SMC) and applicable Specific Plans parking regulations, to be considered at future hearings. The amendments to be studied include:

- a. Clarifying parking standards to be objective and without discretionary review.
- b. Single/Two-Family Residential:

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- i. Lowering minimum off-street parking spaces per property, with flexibility in type and arrangement.
- ii. Exploring maximum number of parking spaces and allowing tandem parking
- c. Multi-Family Residential:
 - i. Introducing unbundled parking.
 - ii. Adjusting/simplifying the unassigned space requirement (currently dependent on the type of covered assigned space provided).
 - 1. For example, require the minimum parking standards to be a flat rate of 1 space per zero to one-bedroom unit; 1.5 spaces per two to three-bedroom unit; and 2 spaces for units with four or more bedrooms.
 - iii. Examining maximum amount of parking required, except for areas within a half-mile of major transit stops.
 - iv. Allowing flexibility in type (covered, uncovered) and arrangement, including a tandem allowance for up to 100% of units.
 - v. Evaluating continued use of compact parking spaces.
 - vi. Updating the Limited Street Parking Provisions to specify objective parking requirements in certain conditions.

Reasonable reductions in the amount of required parking not only assists property owners, but also contributes to decreased housing costs, increases the number of available units, avoids an oversupply of parking spaces, reduces impervious surface area, discourages higher rates of vehicle ownership, and promotes climate-friendly modes of transportation such as walking, bicycling, carpooling, and taking transit.

Directing staff to study policy updates based on Alternative 1 would allow property owners of single/two-family dwellings to more easily expand and remodel without the constraint of accommodating a total of four parking spaces onsite. Reducing the area dedicated to parking allows more space available for ADUs and extended families living together in one house. It also would align the City's standards with those of other jurisdictions within Santa Clara County and throughout the Bay Area.

The recommended reduction in minimum requirements for multifamily developments would have a limited impact overall, since reduced parking requirements are already in place for certain Specific Plans, areas within one half-mile of transit, and projects utilizing density bonus reduced parking allowances. The tradeoff for such a reduction is likely fewer unassigned/guest parking spaces onsite.

Housing Element programs related to parking (Programs H21, H22 and H23) could be combined with the follow up study items on parking.

Prepared by: George Schroeder, Principal Planner
Reviewed by: Shaunn Mendrin, Planning Officer
Reviewed by: Trudi Ryan, Director of Community Development
Reviewed by: Connie Verceles, Deputy City Manager
Approved by: Kent Steffens, City Manager

ATTACHMENTS

- 1. Reserved for Report to Council

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2. Study Issue Paper, CDD 19-07
3. General Plan Goals and Policies
4. Residential Parking Requirements Timeline
5. Single/Two-Family Parking Data for Other Jurisdictions
6. Multifamily Parking Data for Other Jurisdictions
7. Demographic Data for Santa Clara County Jurisdictions
8. Demographic Data for Peer Jurisdictions