


FROM	NAME & TITLE	CHRIS RYER, DIRECTOR	CITY of BALTIMORE MEMO	
	AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS	DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING 8 TH FLOOR, 417 EAST FAYETTE STREET		
	SUBJECT	CITY COUNCIL BILL #25-0065 / ZONING – ELIMINATING OFF-STREET PARKING REQUIREMENTS		

TO The Honorable President and
Members of the City Council
City Hall, Room 400
100 North Holliday Street

DATE: September 5, 2025

At its regular meeting of August 28, 2025, the Planning Commission considered City Council Bill #25-0065, for the purpose of repealing requirements for providing a minimum number of off-street parking spaces per use type; setting certain parking maximums; and correcting, clarifying, and conforming related provisions and tables.

In its consideration of this Bill, the Planning Commission reviewed the attached staff report, which recommended approval of City Council Bill #25-0065 and adopted the following resolution, with six members being present (six in favor):

RESOLVED, That the Planning Commission concurs with the recommendation of its departmental staff, adopts the findings and equity analysis outlined in the staff report, with consideration for testimony and facts presented in the meeting, and recommends that City Council Bill #25-0065 be **approved** by the City Council.

If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Eric Tiso, Division Chief, Land Use and Urban Design Division at 410-396-8358.

CR/ewt

attachment

cc: Ms. Nina Themelis, Mayor's Office
The Honorable John Bullock, Council Rep. to Planning Commission
Ms. Rebecca Witt, BMZA
Mr. Geoffrey Veale, Zoning Administration
Ms. Stephanie Murdock, DHCD
Ms. Hilary Ruley, Law Dept.
Mr. Francis Burnszynski, PABC
Mr. Luciano Diaz, DOT
Ms. Nancy Mead, Council Services



Brandon M. Scott
Mayor

PLANNING COMMISSION

Jon Laria, Chair; Eric Stephenson, Vice Chair

STAFF REPORT



Chris Ryer
Director

August 7, 2025

REQUEST: City Council Bill #25-0065/ Zoning – Eliminating Off-Street Parking Requirements:

For the purpose of repealing requirements for providing a minimum number of off-street parking spaces per use type; setting certain parking maximums; and correcting, clarifying, and conforming related provisions and tables.

RECOMMENDATION: Approval

STAFF: Justin Walker

INTRODUCED BY: Councilmember Blanchard

SITE/GENERAL AREA: Citywide

HISTORY

Legislation that would have similarly eliminated minimum parking requirements citywide, along with other changes to permitted automobile-oriented uses, was introduced in 2020 as City Council Bill 20-0561. The ordinance did not pass before the end of the legislative term.

CONFORMITY TO PLANS

The 2024 Comprehensive Master Plan for the City of Baltimore was enacted by Ordinance #24-426 on December 2, 2024. The proposals in this legislation are recommended on multiple occasions throughout the Comprehensive Master Plan.

Under the section on Environmental and Climate Justice, Goal 2 is to “Reduce the exposure of frontline, overburdened, and Environmental Justice Communities to environmental pollutants.” Recommendation 1.10 under this goal calls for the removal of parking minimums for new development projects, which would be achieved through this bill.

Under the section on Transportation Equity, Goal 2 is to “Increase investment in and development of TOD throughout the City.” Recommendation 2.04 calls for reducing or eliminating parking minimums, particularly in areas near transit. This bill advances that recommendation.

Under the Trees and Forests section, Goal 2 is to “Increase the survival rate of trees planted by the City to better maintain the tree canopy and its cooling effects.” Recommendation 2.07 calls for amending parking requirements, such as removing parking minimums, to mitigate the impact of vehicles on the urban tree canopy.

ANALYSIS

Summary: This bill eliminates the requirement to provide a minimum number of off-street vehicular parking spaces based on land use. Title 16 of the Zoning Code, which sets standards for off-street parking and loading, along with the related tables, will be repealed and re-ordained as outlined below.

- § 16-101: Removes language stating that the purpose of this title is to provide the appropriate number of parking spaces based on land use. Retains language stating the purpose of providing accessible, attractive, secure, and well-maintained off-street parking facilities.
- § 16-201: Removes the language stating that existing parking may not be reduced below the requirements of the Code, as those requirements are being eliminated. Renumbers current § 16-206 to § 16-201, which addresses prohibited uses of off-street parking and loading spaces. This section is also updated to remove two references to required off-street parking. Specifically, the prohibitions on storing for-hire vehicles in required off-street parking and on using required off-street parking for loading are removed.
- § 16-202: Removes language regarding the procedures for reestablishing the required off-street parking after a structure is damaged or destroyed. Renumbers current § 16-207 to § 16-202. Updates the section to revise the reference from the computation of off-street parking and loading facilities to the computation of bicycle parking and loading facilities.
- § 16-203: Removes language regarding the procedures for providing required off-street parking when a use or structure is expanded. Renumbers current § 16-208 to § 16-203. This section addresses requirements for accessible off-street parking spaces and is updated to remove references to the Zoning Code's off-street parking requirements. It now states that accessible parking spaces must comply with the Maryland Accessibility Code, as set forth in COMAR 09.12.53.
- § 16-204: Removes language regarding procedures for off-street parking requirements when there is a change in use. Revises the section to serve as the subtitle for off-street parking maximums. The section now references new Table 16-204, which establishes the maximum number of off-street parking spaces permitted based on land use. Previously, the maximum was calculated as double the minimum requirement. With the elimination of minimum off-street parking requirements under this bill, the new table assigns specific maximums based on land use factors.
- § 16-205: Removes section related to additional spaces and parking maximums, which is now addressed in § 16-204, above.
- § 16-206: Renumbered to § 16-201
- § 16-207: Renumbered to § 16-202
- § 16-208: Renumbered to § 16-203
- § 16-302: Updates language stating that off-street parking must be completed before a use permit is issued to instead require that bicycle parking must be completed before use permits are issued.

- § 16-401: Clarifies language regarding the location of off-street parking in front yards. It now states that, in R-1 through R-8 zoning districts, off-street parking is prohibited in required front or corner side yards and is also prohibited forward of the front building line. Also removes location requirements for required off-street parking in PC subdistricts.
- § 16-403: Removes the word “required” from the access standards for off-street parking.
- § 16-404: Removes Section C, which addressed the location of parking spaces for single-family dwellings, as this is now covered in § 16-401.
- § 16-406: Updates requirement that drive-throughs provide at least four stacking spaces and removes reference to required off-street parking table 16-406.
- § 16-501: Removes provisions for collective and shared parking, as there will no longer be minimum parking requirements to satisfy. Renumbers current § 16-505 to § 16-501 regarding cross-access easements and updates that section to remove language related to off-street parking requirements.
- § 16-502: Removes provision to reduce required off-street parking through land banking for future parking.
- § 16-601: Removes, in its entirety, provisions regarding exemptions and reductions from the off-street parking minimum requirements
- § 16-602: Removes compact space reductions for required off-street parking.
- § 16-705: Removes the ability to offset the required off-street parking spaces with bicycle parking spaces.
- Table 16-204: Creates a new table, Table 16-204, which establishes the maximum allowable off-street parking by use. The numbers in this table are set at twice the current off-street parking minimums, which will be removed. The table as recast essentially keeps its function the same.
- Table 16-406: Removes Table 16-406, which provided the minimum number of off-street parking spaces based on land use factors.

Background: This legislation was introduced to eliminate the requirement for a minimum amount of off-street parking based on a property's land-use category. Removing this requirement is intended to streamline the development process for both new construction and the reuse of existing buildings. Variance requests for relief from off-street parking minimums are commonly submitted to the Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals (BMZA). Eliminating the minimum will allow parking decisions to be guided by market conditions and individual project needs, rather than fixed city requirements. It is important to note that this bill does not remove the ability of developers to provide off-street parking as they see fit, provided it does not exceed the maximum standards, which already exist in the current Zoning Code. Maintaining the parking maximums will continue to require variances in certain cases. The table establishing these maximums is based on doubling the current minimums, rather than being derived from observed demand or parking utilization data.

Equity:

- Impact:
 - This proposal will have both short- and long-term impacts on communities and development. The removal of required off-street parking may lead to increased demand for on-street parking, which is already limited in some areas of the city. This could create hardship for residents who rely on on-street parking. As changed, the amount of voluntary parking to be provided is left to the market to decide.
 - The proposal will remove barriers to the development of both market-rate and affordable housing, increasing opportunities for housing to be created through new construction or the reuse of existing buildings.
 - According to the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey, approximately 27% of Baltimore households had no vehicle available in 2023. Under current regulations, housing for these residents may still be required to provide off-street parking for vehicles they do not own. This requirement can create inequities for car-free households, who may end up bearing the collective cost of providing parking without receiving any benefit.
- Engagement:
 - Community Planners engaged residents about this legislation at numerous community meetings throughout the city.

Notification: Information on this bill was provided to residents and stakeholders via GovDelivery.



Chris Ryer
Director