


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 #23-0468 / OFF-STREET PARKING – AFFORDABLE HOUSING		

TO

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

DATE: January 29, 2024

At its regular meeting of January 25, 2024, the Planning Commission considered City Council Bill #23-0468, for the purpose of eliminating off-street parking requirements for a residential project that is subject to inclusionary housing requirements.

In its consideration of this Bill, the Planning Commission reviewed the attached staff report, which recommended approval of City Council Bill #23-0468 and adopted the following resolutions, with eight members being present (seven in favor, one recused):

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 #23-0468 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 Eric Costello, Council Rep. to Planning Commission
 Mr. Colin Tarbert, BDC
 Ms. Rebecca Witt, BMZA
 Mr. Geoffrey Veale, Zoning Administration
 Ms. Stephanie Murdock, DHCD
 Ms. Elena DiPietro, Law Dept.
 Mr. Francis Burnszynski, PABC
 Mr. Liam Davis, DOT
 Ms. Natawna Austin, Council Services



Brandon M. Scott
Mayor

PLANNING COMMISSION

Sean D. Davis, Chair; Eric Stephenson, Vice Chair

STAFF REPORT



Chris Ryer
Director

January 25, 2024

REQUEST: City Council Bill #23-0468 / Off-Street Parking – Affordable Housing:

For the purpose of eliminating off-street parking requirements for a residential project that is subject to inclusionary housing requirements.

RECOMMENDATION: Approval

STAFF: Matt DeSantis, AICP

PETITIONER: Councilmembers Dorsey, Conway, Schleifer, Ramos, Burnett, Cohen, Bullock, Porter

SITE/GENERAL AREA: Citywide

HISTORY

The Zoning Code (Article 32 of the Baltimore City Code) was adopted by Ord. #16-581 and #17-015, which became effective on June 5, 2017. The Zoning Code was last amended by Ordinance #22-181 effective February 8, 2023. The current version of the Zoning Code was published on June 2, 2023.

ANALYSIS

This proposed amendment to Article 32: Zoning would eliminate any required vehicle parking for residential projects that are subject to the City's Inclusionary Housing requirements, as defined by Article 13: Housing and Urban Renewal, § 2B-21 "Inclusionary Requirements". Section 16-601 of the Zoning code already has vehicle parking exemptions and/or reductions for a number of situations, including:

- Exemptions/reductions for certain commercial districts
- Exemptions for certain infill rowhouse dwellings, Neighborhood Commercial Establishments, structures over 50 years old or that received historic tax credits
- Reductions for affordable and senior housing

This amendment represents a natural evolution of the City's trend to reduce required vehicle parking. The adoption of Transform Baltimore's new zoning code introduced a number of new vehicle parking exemptions and/or reductions, in addition to generally requiring less vehicle parking overall based on land use. Also, the provision of new parking lots or garages has higher standards than under the former zoning code, either through their prohibition in certain contexts or through the requirement to provide higher design through minimum buffer landscaping features.

From a wider point of view, parking reform has been steadily gaining steam across the country. Over the past ten years, what used to be viewed a highly technical topic far from public consciousness has been increasingly thrust into public debate, as increasing numbers of cities and counties have reduced or outright eliminate their vehicle parking requirements. Research has shown that minimum vehicle parking requirements:

- Are generally arbitrary in nature
- Lead to poor land use decisions
- Are contrary to good urban design principles
- Encourage more vehicle trips per person, which leads to increased congestion, pollution, and crashes
- Are extremely expensive and frequently subsidized by those who don't drive (pedestrians, cyclists, transit users, etc.)

This bill would not prohibit developers from letting the market dictate how much parking to provide – it would not impose a vehicle parking maximum but rather just eliminate the required minimum.

Equity:

- Impact:
 - How might the proposal impact the surrounding community in the short or long term?
 - This bill in the short term would make developments that are subject to inclusionary housing requirements less costly to construct, which is a direct benefit to future tenants. In the long-term it would serve to continue to move the City towards an environment that is less focused on and catering to the needs of private vehicles.
 - How would this proposal impact existing patterns of inequity that persist in Baltimore?
 - City residents who have lower incomes are statistically less likely to be car owners, and so the requirement to provide vehicle parking in developments where they live is inequitable as those car-free individuals are subsidizing expensive vehicle parking space for others.
- Engagement:
 - Has the community been meaningfully engaged in discussing this proposal?
 - How are residents who have been historically excluded from planning processes being authentically included in the planning of the proposed policy or project?
 - This bill would be effective City-wide and notice of this meeting agenda has been published widely, including via direct email to over 18,000 subscribers to the Department listserv.
- Internal Operations:
 - How would this bill impact staff time or resources?
 - This vehicle parking exemption would make for increased flexibility in site and architectural design, of which the Department of Planning oversees. Typical development oversight process would still apply.

Notification: Notification of this action was sent to over 18,100 recipients via GovDelivery.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Chris Ryer
Director