

## D#33 PARKING STANDARDS

### SUPPLEMENTAL STAFF REPORT

**SUMMARY:** This Supplemental Staff Report provides responses to issues that were raised at a Planning Commission meeting regarding amendments to the Renton Municipal Code Development Regulations (Title IV). It also includes additional information that staff has identified as being necessary to include in the analysis for amendments.

#### **General Description**

This docket item looks at realigning the City's minimum parking standards with actual parking demand and includes an evaluation of whether the City should provide for bicycle parking standards in Title IV.

Planning Commission Issue: *Could staff provide additional analysis of other jurisdictions for bicycle parking, other than Olympia, Seattle, and Portland?*

Staff Response: Staff furthered their analysis of bicycle parking to include, Shoreline, University Place, Spokane, Battle Ground, and Liberty Park. After additional analysis, staff identified two themes for bicycle parking in the Northwest. The first theme is to provide for specific use related regulations that include short-term and long-term standards (proposed in the first staff report). The second theme was to be less prescriptive, utilizing a percentage of vehicle parking spaces to calculate the number of required bicycle parking spaces. These jurisdictions typically had some level of exemption or minimum parking space requirement. Find below a synopsis of the bicycle parking standards for the additional jurisdictions:

*Shoreline:* One bicycle parking space is required for every 12 spaces required for motor vehicles and one indoor bicycle storage space shall be provided for every two dwelling units in townhouse and apartment residential uses. Additionally, when more than 10 people are employed at a site, enclosed locker-type parking facilities for employees shall be provided.

*University Place:* The number of bicycle parking spaces shall be 10 percent of the number of required off-street parking spaces for non-residential uses.

*Spokane:* The number of required bicycle parking spaces shall be five percent of the number of required off-street auto parking spaces. Any development with less than twenty parking spaces is exempt from this requirement.

*Battle Ground:* Commercial developments in excess of thirty-five thousand square feet of gross floor area and all multi-family development of fifty units or more shall provide bicycle parking at a ratio of one space per five thousand square feet of gross floor area for commercial and one space per five units for multifamily.

*Liberty Park (Draft):* For all uses, at least one bicycle parking space shall be supplied per 50 required vehicle parking spaces with a minimum of 2 spaces provided unless specific standards apply to the use. Liberty Park has proposed prescriptive requirements for Multi-Family Residences, Park & Ride Facilities, Elementary, Middle, and High Schools, Colleges, and Mixed Use Zones. In addition, this jurisdiction exempts single-family type development and developments with fewer than 10 required vehicle parking spaces.

If Planning Commission feels a less prescriptive standard would meet the policies identified within the Comprehensive Plan, staff could draft language that would be similar to the above jurisdictions instead of the short-term/long-term language originally proposed. Both methods would be similar in that they would only apply to new development and would provide an “end-of-trip” place for bicyclist to lock their bikes in a safe and secure location.

Planning Commission Issue: *At some elementary schools, children are not allowed to bike to school. Would it be appropriate to require bike parking at elementary schools, if students are not permitted to bike to school?*

Staff Response: Staff’s additional analysis of this particular aspect of bike parking included an assessment of the existing policies at a number of elementary schools within the Renton School District. This survey indicated that the majority of elementary schools within the Renton School District allow students in fourth and fifth grade to ride their bikes to school with a helmet, bike lock, and permission from their guardian. These schools include: Benson Hill Elementary, Tiffany Park Elementary, Talbot Hill Elementary, Bryn Mawr Elementary, Hazelwood Elementary, and Kenndale Elementary. Renton Park Elementary and Sierra Heights Elementary not only permit fourth and fifth graders to ride their bikes to school but also allowed third graders to ride their bikes to school. In contrast, Maplewood Heights and Cascade Elementary schools do not permit students to ride their bikes to school. At these two elementary schools, the reason for this restriction was their proximity to busy streets, including 144<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE and 116<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE, as such there is no existing safe way for students to ride their bike to school. Lastly, Highlands Elementary has no age restrictions on students riding their bikes to school, as long as they have a helmet, lock, and permission. Staff concludes that the majority of elementary schools in Renton permit at least a portion of their students to ride their bikes to school. In addition, it is important to the schools that their students have a place to lock their bikes as well as a safe riding route. As such, providing for minimum bike parking requirements for new elementary schools would be consistent with existing school policies.

Furthermore, at the State level there is a program titled “Safe Routes to School” which is a funding program administered by the Washington State Department of Transportation. It is designed to increase the number of children walking and biking to school safely. In 2009, the Washington State legislature codified the Safe Routes to School Program into law. Currently, this program focuses on walking, although the 2010 Draft “Safe Routs to School” document includes a section on bike routes. In the 2010 Draft (which is subject to further review and may change), the following new RCW language is proposed (page 12 of Draft):

RCW 47.04 (New Section) Alternative Student Transportation  
Concurrent with the federal safe, accountable, flexible, efficient  
transportation equity act of 2005, a safe route to school program is  
established within the department. The purpose of the program is to:

- (1) Enable and encourage children, including those with disabilities, to walk and bicycle to school;
- (2) Make bicycling and walking to school a safer and more appealing transportation alternative, encouraging a healthy and active lifestyle from an early age; and
- (3) Facilitate the planning, development, and implementation of projects and activities that will improve safety and reduce traffic, fuel consumption, and air pollution in the vicinity of schools.

Based on this potential new policy direction for student bike safety, encouragement for a healthy and active lifestyle, and the potential for a reduction in fuel consumption and air pollutions in the vicinity of schools, requiring bike racks at elementary schools gives the students the opportunity to ride their bikes. Staff proposes that the City develop requirements for bike parking at new elementary schools.

Planning Commission Issue: *Should the City change parking requirements for elderly housing?*

Staff Response: The current requirement for “*attached dwellings for low income or elderly*” is one space for every three dwelling units. Staff took a close look at this specific standard and compared it to other jurisdictions. After the analysis was completed, staff found that many other jurisdictions do not have a comparable standard in the parking code. Because there were few comparables, staff recommends removing this standard from Title IV and utilizing the City’s attached dwellings parking standard for all attached dwellings, without making the distinction between low income or elderly from other developments.

Planning Commission Issue: *Does the city provide for motorcycle parking? If not should this be included in the docket item as well?*

Staff Response: Current code provisions do not contain prescriptive requirements for motorcycle parking. Motorcycles are permitted to park in larger vehicle parking spaces within the City. As such, each new development would be providing parking for vehicles, which could be utilized by this particular mode of transportation. Additionally, motorcycle parking could be included in a proposal for parking reduction through the existing code provision RMC 4-4-080F.c *Alternatives*, where the option to use a Transportation Management Plan in lieu of providing for full requirements of minimum parking standards or reduce the number of full size spaces through a parking modification if additional motorcycle parking spaces were provided.

These two options would be required to be supported by a Transportation Analysis, prepared by the applicant that City Staff would review.

Furthermore, staff looked for standards in surrounding jurisdictions, including Seattle, Redmond, and Kent. Staff did not find prescriptive standards within any of these jurisdictions for motorcycle parking. The use of motorcycles and/or scooters are on the rise in the U.S. for many reasons including but not limited to fuel economy, emissions reduction, and ease of mobility, etc. The City recognizes and permits licensed motorcycles on their streets. Although, providing additional prescribe code requirements beyond the existing code requirements could potentially increases review time for staff and require additional work from the applicant when the market for their specifies use would not demand motorcycle parking. As developers will maintain the ability, if they so choose, to utilize the existing code to request modifications if the market demand for these space exist at a specific proposed new facility. Staff proposed to maintain the Parking Code as developed today and not increase the complexity by providing for prescriptive motorcycle parking requirements, when vehicle space can be utilized for parking of motorcycles.

Planning Commission Issue: *Is there a bicycle club or organization in the City that could be included in the notification of this docket proposal?*

Staff Response: There is a multi-modal transportation group called “The Renton Non-motorized Transportation Committee”. The individuals affiliated with this group have been added to the contact list for this docket item.

Planning Commission Issue: *Could staff provide the Planning Commission the documents used for the original analysis?*

Staff Response: The following is a list of documents utilized by planning staff in their evaluation of the subject docket proposal:

Attachment A: Table titled, “City of Lake Forest Park – Parking Code Comparison”

Website resources include:

- [http://www.nonprofithousing.org/pdf\\_toolkits/ParkingandHousing.pdf](http://www.nonprofithousing.org/pdf_toolkits/ParkingandHousing.pdf)
- [http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/NR/rdonlyres/6EB981D2-6A67-449F-9808-5B4F950F7B01/0/Parking\\_Management\\_where\\_it\\_can\\_take\\_you.pdf](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/NR/rdonlyres/6EB981D2-6A67-449F-9808-5B4F950F7B01/0/Parking_Management_where_it_can_take_you.pdf) (Specifically see page 9)
- <http://www.vtppi.org/>
- <http://www.bicyclinginfo.org/engineering/parking.cfm>
- [http://www.apbp.org/resource/resmgr/publications/bicycle\\_parking\\_guidelines.pdf](http://www.apbp.org/resource/resmgr/publications/bicycle_parking_guidelines.pdf)
- <http://www.mrsc.org/Subjects/PubWorks/PW-Bike.aspx>

After evaluation of the above materials, staff concluded that many of the options that exist within Title IV currently are consistent with “best practices” and should remain. The area

where staff identified needed changes was within the minimum standards for parking spaces for some uses, as identified in the original staff report.

It should also be noted that with the recent approval of Complete Streets, the Planning Commission and City Council has supported the addition of bike lanes on many of our City streets. These future bike lanes may be utilized by recreational bikers as well as commuting bikers. Every bicycle trip has two components, the route selected by the bicyclist and the “end-of-trip” facilities at the destination, such as safe secure bicycle parking. The addition of bike parking to Title IV, would require new developments to provide a place to lock your bike. If the future street pattern of Renton is to include bike lanes it would be beneficial to complete the transportation loop by providing a parking space for these users, once they reach their destination. A lack of sufficient bicycle parking could potentially result in bikes locked to trees, handrails, light poles, and fire hydrants etc., which in turn may block sidewalks or create a hazard. Designated locations for bicycles could reduce these possible future problems.