

City of Watertown Zoning Code Rewrite

Overview of Draft Parking Requirements Table

Content Included in the Draft Parking Requirements Table

The draft Zoning Code provides parking requirements based on land uses. The first draft of the new parking standards has been completed and will be discussed during the Plan Commission meeting.

- Column A lists the Land Uses within the draft Zoning Code where the parking requirements apply.
- Column B lists the comparable existing parking requirements for each land use.
- Columns C and D list the proposed new minimum and maximum parking requirements for each land use.

The proposed new parking standards are designed to generally require less parking than today (lower minimums) and potentially provide a cap on the amount of parking that can be provided (maximums).

The parking requirements generally fall into one of the following types of ratios. These ratios were chosen to reduce the administrative burden of calculating overcomplicated formulas:

- Parking spaces per dwelling unit
- Parking spaces per square feet of gross floor area
- Parking spaces per employee on the largest work shift
- Parking spaces per person at the maximum capacity

This memo contains four big picture topics for Plan Commission discussion to obtain feedback on the approach to these requirements.

Topics for Discussion

1. Creating Parking Maximums

Wisconsin communities have begun to adopt parking maximums in addition to minimum requirements. Watertown’s existing Zoning Code does not require maximums. This leaves the City with no mechanism to prevent a project from having excessive parking. The draft Zoning Code generally allows 50% more parking than the required minimum and also includes language that allows the Plan Commission to reduce minimums or exceed maximums depending on additional data being provided such as a parking study. This approach gives the City another tool to make sure the parking provided on site is right-sized for the project. A potential downside to this approach is that minimums and maximums together create a narrow window associated with how much parking is permitted for a given land use, which some communities view as too restrictive.

Please circle your opinion on the following approach:

Keep Approach

Remove Approach

Need To Modify Approach

Comments: _____

2. Reducing Parking Minimums for Residential and Commercial Uses

The draft parking requirements lower the minimums for residential and commercial uses. This is a widely recognized best practice for zoning code reforms and has many positive effects, including:

- Promote walkability of key commercial and residential areas
- Reduce impervious surfaces, runoff, and stormwater issues.
- Increase the tax base (parking lots are among the lowest taxable value in the city)
- Reduce costs of new construction and development delays
- Address housing affordability issues

Reducing minimum parking standards for **residential land uses**. Please circle your opinion on the following approach:

Keep Approach

Remove Approach

Need To Modify Approach

Comments: _____

Reducing minimum parking standards for **commercial land uses**. Please circle your opinion on the following approach:

Keep Approach

Remove Approach

Need To Modify Approach

Comments: _____

3. Downtown Parking Requirements

The existing Zoning Code does not require minimum on-site parking standards for any property within the downtown zoning district. Most comparable communities do not have a parking minimum in downtown districts. The draft zoning code carries forward this same approach (no change). The benefits of this approach include:

- Flexibility for infill development, redevelopment, and land use changes within existing buildings
- Lower cost for new projects
- Higher tax base
- Ability for developers to customize their project to the parking needs based on the overall market

Please circle your opinion on the following approach:

Keep Approach

Remove Approach

Need To Modify Approach

Comments: _____

Should projects located within the **Downtown & Riverfront Residential (DRR)** District that exceed a certain number of dwelling units be required to provide a minimum amount of on-site parking?

Please circle your opinion on the following approach:

Keep Approach

Remove Approach

Need To Modify Approach

Comments: _____

4. Bicycle Parking

Bicycling serves both as a mode of transportation and a recreational activity for residents. As part of future development considerations, the community may wish to evaluate whether bicycle parking should be required for new multi-family, commercial, industrial, or institutional projects. The intent is not simply to introduce an additional regulation, but to ensure that individuals who choose to bike have access to safe, convenient, and functional parking options. Incorporating bicycle infrastructure can provide several community benefits, including:

- Supporting local businesses through increased accessibility
- Connecting regional and city-wide recreational and business assets
- Improving access for residents, employees, and visitors
- Reducing vehicle trips and overall parking demand
- Encouraging physical activity and promoting public health

Choose one of the following (multi-family)

- Require bicycle parking for multi-family, at least 1 bicycle space per unit and guest parking
- Require per unit parking, but not guest
- Do not require minimum bicycle parking for multi family

Choose one or both of the following (other uses)

- Require 4 spaces flat per commercial, industrial, and institutional uses
- Require more bicycle parking for larger lots such as: 1 space per 10 vehicle parking stalls up to a total of 20 bicycle spaces

Comments: _____

Additional Comments:

Do you have any additional questions or concerns about the draft Parking Requirements?
