

Parking Standards

In response to comments made over the past several years regarding the relatively high parking requirements for residential uses in the City of Santa Cruz, City staff is considering options for reducing these requirements while still ensuring that safe and sufficient parking and driving conditions are maintained in parking lots and on public roadways. The City also has various policy goals that relate to parking, including 1) providing support and encouragement for alternative modes of transportation; 2) reducing the City's overall greenhouse gas emissions; and 3) lowering the costs of construction for housing, particularly multi-family housing. These goals are stated in the City's adopted 2030 General Plan, in the Housing Blueprint, and in the Climate Action Strategy. Finally, there are several edits that will make the code easier to read and understand, and easier to use, without changing the substance of the regulations.

The ideas discussed below are a first draft by City staff based on input from stakeholders over the past several years, and efforts to implement the policy goals mentioned above. None of these proposals are final though, and we are interested in feedback from the community, including questions, concerns, and new ideas.

The City is currently contemplating the following changes and additions:

- 1. Adding language relating to Electric Vehicle Parking and Accessible Parking that is now required by the California Building Standards Codes.*
- 2. Clarifying and consolidating existing standards for driveways, without making any changes to the substance of the regulations; adding cross-references where relevant; stating in text form standards for parking lots that are currently only stated as part of diagrams (relating to size of parking spaces, orientation of spaces in parking lots, and required back-out distances).*
- 3. Updating a few of the commercial uses in the parking chart to reflect modern uses that currently aren't listed, and to update some terminology such as replacing "institutions for the aged" with the term "assisted living facilities"; Reorganizing the parking chart so that similar types of uses, which all have the same parking requirement, are grouped together.*
- 4. Creating consistency in the regulations of Tandem parking (parking spaces one behind the other) so that the standards that the State has created for single-family parcels that include an ADU can also be used by single-family parcels without ADUs, and by multi-family housing. The state law requires the City to allow up to three tandem spaces for parcels with an ADU, so we would like to codify that, and extend that allowance to all residential uses – with the caveat that parking for separate units can't be arranged in tandem, only multiple parking spots for a single housing unit, or for a single-family home with an ADU.*

5. *Adding references to the resolution of the City Council that governs the parking requirements for all the property located in Parking District 1 – which is the Downtown area. The resolution would not be changed and the parking requirements would stay as they currently are – we are just proposing to add cross-references in a few places where the resolution supersedes the municipal code.*
6. *Creating a process for a project applicant to demonstrate that the total amount of required parking could be reduced by up to 35% without creating burdens on surrounding street parking. Current processes for reducing parking requirements allow for up to a 30% reduction using a prescribed set of options. We are interested in adding flexibility for an applicant to show creative, documented methods of reducing parking demand, and also providing applicants with a “menu” of established options that have a proven track record. As currently envisioned, this process would require an application for a permit, and review by the Zoning Administrator (ZA) during a noticed public hearing. The ZA might need a Civil or Traffic Engineer to demonstrate that the proposal won’t burden street parking. Strategies for reducing parking demand include:*
 - a. *On-site Cooperative Parking (existing) – when multiple uses share a parking lot, like in a shopping center*
 - b. *Off-site Shared Parking (existing) – when one or more uses share a parking lot that is on a separate piece of property within walking distance of the uses – like how the Boardwalk and surrounding businesses rely on the parking lot on the north side of Beach St. We are considering increasing the distance these parking lots can be from the uses that share them: the limit is currently 300 feet, and we are exploring increasing the allowable distance to 500 feet.*
 - c. *Non-Auto Use Programs (existing) – these include staggering work hours, providing bus passes, providing van pooling options, etc.*
 - d. *Additional Bike Parking (existing) – the code currently allows a reduction by up to 10% of the total required number of parking spaces, if additional bike parking is provided at a rate of 6 bike parking spaces per 1 auto parking space.*
 - e. *Unbundled Parking (proposed) – this strategy is used primarily with residential development, and refers to renting or purchasing a living unit separately from renting or purchasing a parking space. This allows people the choice of paying for parking when they pay for housing. We’re thinking about how this could work, and in order to make sure that street parking wouldn’t be overrun, we are already thinking this could only be used in areas that already have restrictions on street parking – either through meters or red curbs or residential parking permits.*

This strategy has been very effective at reducing driving in other jurisdictions, so we are interested in talking about how it could work in Santa Cruz.

- f. Other Approved Equivalents (proposed) – the application for a permit to reduce the required number of parking spaces could also include other strategies proposed by the applicant.*
- 7. Removing the requirement for covered parking (either a garage or a carport) on single-family parcels. Garages and Carports would still be allowed, but would not be required for single-family homes.*
- 8. Reducing overall residential parking requirements and simplifying the standards from the existing requirements:*

Type	Efficiency	1	2	3	4 or more
Single-family (including townhouses)	1.0	1.0	2.0	2.0	3 + 1 for ea. addl. bedroom
Houseboat, duplex, triplex, multiple mobilehome	1.0	1.5	2.0	2.0	3 + 0.5 for ea. addl. bedroom
Community housing projects	In addition to meeting above residential parking requirements, 1 additional parking space for each 4 dwelling units shall be provided				

To the following proposed requirements:

Type	Efficiency	1	2+
Single-family (including townhouses), houseboat, duplex, triplex, multiple mobilehomes, community housing projects, other multi-family dwelling units	1.0	1.0	2.0
Community housing projects and multi-family projects of 5 units or more	In addition to meeting above residential parking requirements, guest parking spaces shall be provided at a rate 10% of the above standards. Fractional spaces will be rounded up to the next whole number.		

- 9. For multi-family housing, creating a parking standard that is the same for both rental and ownership housing, and also including a guest parking requirement of 10%. Requiring fractional numbers to always be rounded up means that a minimum of one guest space will always be required with a multi-family development of four units or more.*