

Montgomery County Parking Policy Study – Spring 2011 – ZAP Summary

The purpose of this summary is to give the Zoning Advisory Panel (ZAP) an overview of the Montgomery County Parking Policy Study that was released in the spring of 2011. The study can be found [here](#).

I. Study Background

In December 2008, the County Council’s Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) published a report titled, “Transportation Demand Management Implementation, Funding, and Governance”. One of the key findings of the report was that the County’s parking policies and practices should be revised to better align with other policies that promote travel by modes other than the single-occupant automobile.

In the spring of 2009, the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) and the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) contracted with Nelson\Nygaard to complete a Parking Study for the purpose of reviewing both the County’s Parking Lot District (PLD) program and its codified parking requirements for urban, mixed-use districts.

In the spring of 2011, the Parking Study was completed. The study represents the advice of the consultant, as developed in conjunction with the sponsoring agency staffs and reflecting interviews with key stakeholders. Recommendations from the study can only occur through formal amendments to the County Code, namely Article 59-E, where parking requirements are established, and Chapter 60, where the County’s current Parking Lot District program is established.

II. Study Objectives

The study has the following objectives:

- Updating the County’s parking requirements for urban, mixed-use districts to:
 - Reduce current requirements, if found appropriate
 - Promote a shared parking (i.e., “park once”) focus
 - Support local business
 - Increase flexibility of standards
 - Make standards clear and predictable
- Updating the County’s Parking Lot District (PLD) program to:
 - Assess performance
 - Identify opportunities for improvement
 - Assess vulnerability to 59-E changes

III. Scope Overview

Based on the objectives, the consultants approached the study by:

- Examining the Parking Requirements
 - This was based on a review of leading and emerging approaches to parking requirement reformation. It involved a four step process; identifying goals and objectives, gathering stakeholder input, identifying approach options, and assessing approach options.
 - Once a framework was selected by Nelson\Nygaard and the MCDOT/M-NCPPC Steering Committee, the approach was applied in three steps; identifying land uses, setting baselines standards and weighting mode share goal impact.
- Reviewing the Parking Lot District (PLD) Model
 - This was based on a review of peer programs. It involved a three step process; concept understanding of parking management districts, program evaluation and peer review, and application to the PLD program.

IV. Findings & Recommendations – Parking Standards

Framework Basis

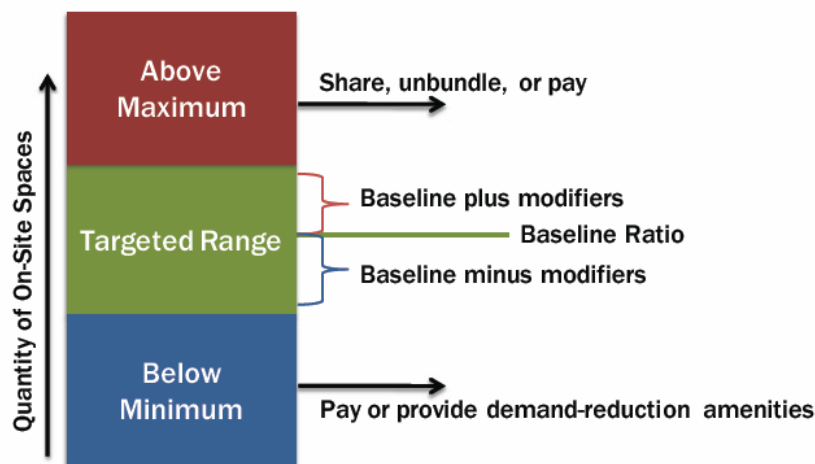
- Minimum parking requirements have been used to protect nearby streets and parking supplies from potential ill effects of uses that generate more parking demand than they can accommodate on-site.
- This has resulted in over supply of parking, as well as minimum parking requirements that erroneously assumed to predict the right amount of parking for each and every project. The proposed framework moves away from this approach.

Framework Objectives

- Create market incentives to generate efficient, flexible, shared parking supplies within Parking Lot Districts (to re-branded as Parking Benefit Districts (PBDs)).
- Increase the role of private developers in the provision of publicly-available parking.
- Make shared spaces the least expensive for a developer to provide, and excess Reserved spaces the most expensive to provide.

Recommended Framework

Figure 4 A Range of Supply Options



The proposed framework consists of setting baseline ratios per-area (for non-residential uses) and per-dwelling unit (for residential uses) for calculating minimum and maximum parking targets that are:

- Defined for an abbreviated set of land uses; and
- Based on recorded rates of short-term and long-term parking demand in shared-parking environments

Targeted Range

- The parking standards generated within the proposed framework contain low-end and high-end estimates of how much parking is suitable for each project, that is, a target range rather than a specific number.
- The “minimum requirement” estimates the number of spaces needed to support on-site uses in a shared-parking environment. The minimum requirement is based on the baseline ratio for each use, modified by any applicable NADMS target. In the case of projects within a Primary PBD the minimum requirement only considers long-term demand.

- The “maximum” estimates the greatest number of spaces that should be needed as reserved spaces without unduly burdening the local shared-parking supply within the PBD. The maximum requirement is based on the baseline ratio for each use modified by projections of overall demand – both long-term and short-term.
- The span between these two numbers creates the target range for a project — any quantity of spaces within this range can be provided and managed to suit the developer/owner.

Below Minimum

- A developer may only build below the minimum number of spaces set by the target range within in a Primary PBD. This option requires the payment of an increased Parking Benefit Charge that can then be used to provide more public parking.

Above Maximum

There are three options for building above the maximum set by the target range, each of which mitigate the impacts of over-supplied parking. To exceed the maximum, a developer or owner may:

- Share “excess” non-residential spaces (will allow provision of excess non-residential spaces only) – this ensures that spaces built above the maximum will be available for public use, increasing their efficiency. The supply of Shared spaces is not capped for any development.
- “Unbundle” all residential spaces (will allow provision of excess residential spaces only) – separate the cost of parking from the cost of housing, provide the option to rent or purchase fewer (or no) parking spaces to reduce housing costs.
- Pay a higher PBC rate to provide funding for local demand-management investments (transit shuttles, car-share parking, commuter benefits) - developments with on-site supplies in excess of a project’s maximum that are neither shared (non-residential) nor unbundled (residential) will incur a higher PBC, with the incremental revenues being directed toward the provision of local transit, car-share parking, commuter benefits, or other parking-demand reduction investments.

Parking Benefit Districts

Parking Lot Districts are to be re-branded as Parking Benefit Districts (PBDs). The study creates two classes of PBDs.

Primary Parking Benefit Districts

This class of PBD is recommended for the established PLDs and the next generation of high-level PBDs, where the County owns or can obtain property for the operation of shared public parking. The Primary PBDs are established with the following parameters:

- Minimum Parking Requirement – Based on long-term proportion of projected demand ratios, subject to reduction within areas for which the County has established a NADMS target, or for sites within close proximity to a Metrorail station.
- Parking Maximum – Based on projected demand ratios.
- PBC Liability – A pro-rata annual charge based on the proportion of the minimum parking requirement provided. If the minimum parking requirement is met, the PBC liability will be reduced to a base payment. The short-term proportion of the projected demand ratio is expected to be met by County owned and operated as public parking. All developer provided parking may be operated as private parking. Providing no on-site parking will result in full PBC liability.

Secondary Parking Benefit Districts

This class of PBD is recommended for emerging commercial and mixed-use areas within which the County’s capacity to provide meaningful publicly owned or operated shared parking resources is

substantially limited due to land-acquisition constraints. The Secondary PBDs are established with the following parameters:

- Minimum Parking Requirement – Based on projected demand ratios, subject to reduction within areas for which the County has established a NADMS target. In a secondary PBD the minimum parking requirement must be constructed. There is no means to “buy out” of this requirement;
- Parking Maximum – Based on projected demand ratios; and
- PBC Liability – As in the primary PBD, all properties will pay a base PBC. The base PBC liability can be reduced by providing Shared Parking on-site. All shared spaces can be used toward meeting the project’s minimum parking requirement. Increased liability will be levied based on any parking provided above the maximum that is neither shared (for non-residential spaces) nor unbundled (for residential space).

Applying the Framework

Identifying Land Uses

Consolidating the land use categories within the framework was an opportunity identified by the Steering Committee. The merits of consolidation are numerous and include:

- Simplifying regulations – Complicated zoning codes tend to dampen development interest and innovation and dissuade citizen involvement.
- Supporting shared parking – grouping more uses within one category reflects and supports the expectation that nearby uses will share parking supplies.
- Supporting healthy use turnover and area reinvestment – Highly differentiated parking requirements can be a common barrier to investment in vacant or under-performing properties, particularly in urban areas where expanding on-site supplies to satisfy any increased parking requirement is often physically and economically infeasible. Short of eliminating minimum requirements, consolidating use categories linked to specific parking requirements is the simplest way to reduce this barrier to healthy redevelopment and reinvestment markets.

From this, six land use categories are recommended:

1. Residential
2. Office and General Work Space
3. General Commercial
4. Restaurant and Bar
5. Events-Based Commercial
6. Hotel

Uses classified as “Institutional and Large-Scale Commercial Uses” are a special exception to the baseline standards and will be determined during the subsequent review of Article 59-E.

Identifying Baseline Standards

- The framework and standards work together to encourage efficient supply options and discourage under- or over-supplying any project, rather than specifying a pre-determined ratio.
- For this purpose, previous measures of demand in comparable environments (with similar densities, uses, and transit options) were reviewed to identify consistent patterns of demand-generation for the land uses identified for the framework. Where previous measures were limited, relevant code precedents and industry-standard demand-generation models were employed to check that those measures were in line with expectations.
- Parking ratios were then established for Primary and Secondary PBDs:

Figure 7 Primary PBD Ratios

Land Use Category	Metric	Minimum	Maximum
Residential	Dwelling Unit	1.2	1.2
Office & General Work Space	1,000 SF of GFA	2	2.25
General Commercial	1,000 SF of GFA	0.25	1.25
Restaurant	1,000 SF of GFA	0.25	1.75
Events-Based	1,000 SF of GFA	0.15	1
Hotel	Guest Room	0.33	0.33

Figure 8 Secondary PBD Ratios

Land Use Category	Metric	Minimum	Maximum
Residential	Dwelling Unit	1.20	1.20
Office & General Work Space	1,000 SF of GFA	2.25	2.25
General Commercial	1,000 SF of GFA	1.25	1.25
Restaurant	1,000 SF of GFA	1.75	1.75
Events-Based	1,000 SF of GFA	1.00	1.00
Hotel	Guest Room	0.33	0.33

Assessing Impacts

- The study used Silver Spring CBD as an example of a Primary PBD and White Flint as an example of a Secondary PBD. Using the County’s NADMS (Non-Auto-Driver Mode Share) goals, the parking requirements were adjusted for each district:

Figure 9 Applying Framework to Existing Silver Spring Developments¹

Land Use Category	Metric	Min. Ratio	Max. Ratio	Measure	Minimum	Maximum	Measured Demand
Residential	Dwelling Unit	1.2	1.2	7,094	8,513	8,513	5,675
Office & General Work Space	1,000 SF	1.3	2.25	6,451,564	8,515	14,737	12,452
General Commercial	1,000 SF	0.23	1.25	1,526,895	358	1,909	1,679
Restaurant	1,000 SF	0.23	1.75	62,248	15	109	76
Events-Based	1,000 SF	0.14	1	54,168	8	54	1
Hotel	Guest Room	0.3	0.33	2,368	717	781	411
				All	18,125	26,103	20,294

Figure 10 Applying Framework to White Flint Build Out

Land Use Category	Metric	Min. Ratio	Max. Ratio	Measure	Minimum	Maximum
Residential	Dwelling Unit	1.2	1.2	13,430	16,116	16,116
Office & General Work Space	1,000 SF	1.46	2.25	8,063,333	11,793	18,142
General Commercial	1,000 SF	1.17	1.25	3,558,730	4,174	4,448
Restaurant	1,000 SF	1.64	1.75	67,897	111	119
Events-Based	1,000 SF	0.94	1	67,897	64	68
Hotel	Guest Room	0.3	0.33	2,444	740	807
All					32,998	39,700

V. Findings & Recommendations – PLD Review

PLD Background

The County currently has four Parking Lot Districts (PLDs) -- Bethesda, Montgomery Hills, Silver Spring, and Wheaton. Combined these districts provide over 20,000 public parking spaces. Each PLD has its own “enterprise” fund separate from the County’s general fund. All public parking revenue collected within the PLD boundaries – from individual meters, electronic pay stations, cashiered facilities, sale of parking permits, parking fines, etc. – are received by the enterprise fund for that PLD. In addition, developers in PLD have the option of paying an annual Ad Valorem tax to the County as an alternative to providing on-site parking requirements, and this is a significant revenue source that underwrites PLD costs.

PLD funds can be used for the following purposes:

- Parking investments
- Program administration
- Finance mixed-use development projects in the PLD
- Support additional County programs that provide and promote transit services, alternative mode benefits, and lighting and streetscape improvements

Peer Review of PMD Programs

This study presented an opportunity to assess the current performance of the PLD program compared with leading, peer PMD programs, including their cost-effectiveness and their capacity to realize the many potential benefits of this parking management approach. The peer programs selected for this purpose were:

- Ann Arbor, Michigan
- Boulder, Colorado
- Santa Monica, California.

Additional case studies and PMD practices were also examined from the following jurisdictions; San Francisco, California, Pasadena, California, Redwood City, California, and Arlington County, Virginia.

Challenges and Opportunities for PLD Program

Three key challenges and opportunities confront the PLD program as its directors seek to maintain its effectiveness within a rapidly evolving transportation environment:

- Addressing the long-term viability of relying upon Ad Valorem revenue while also implementing zoning best practices that continue to de-emphasize reliance upon minimum parking requirements in transit-accessible, mixed-use districts
- The population and demographic shifts in existing and emerging commercial centers in the County
- Incorporating leading practices from the growing number of innovative PMD programs across the United States to further the County’s environmental and social policy objectives

Recommendations for PLD Program

Following are a series of recommendations for addressing these challenges and opportunities.

- Manage curbs to deliver performance and customer service
- Formalize currently supply-expansion policies
- Coordinate PLD, TMD, and Urban District Programs
- Re-brand as parking benefit districts
- Restructure the Ad Valorem Tax
- Create a Program Expansion Plan

- Additional Recommendations
 - Provide parking for car-share vehicles
 - Increase access-accommodation efficiency
 - Enhance bicycle parking accommodations within PLD facilities
 - Invest in a coordinated availability information and mapping system
 - Eliminate time-limits on all, or nearly all, on-street parking once consistent availability levels have been achieved

VI. Beyond the Framework

In addition, the study recommended the following parking standards that promote a multi-modal development focus in PBDs to compliment the proposed framework:

Residential Requirements

- **Sharing residential parking** – For developers that provide shared residential parking, significantly reduce the minimum parking requirements below 1.2 spaces per unit. This can be addressed in Article 59-E.
- **Unbundling residential parking** – For developers that provided unbundled residential parking, significantly reduce the minimum parking requirements below 1.2 spaces per unit. This can be addressed in Article 59-E.
- **Non-market residential parking** - For housing developed for the elderly, the disabled, or for moderate- or low-income households reduce parking requirement to 50% that of the baseline standards — 0.6 spaces per dwelling if the recommended ratio is adopted.

Multi-modal Requirements

- **Car-share Parking** - Establish a minimum requirement of spaces for any development providing more than 50 reserved (non-shared) parking spaces, the requirement should be 1 car-share space, plus 1 more car-share space for every 50 reserved spaces.

Bicycle Parking

- Based off similar standards that exist in Arlington, VA, Portland, OR and San Francisco, the study recommended the following bicycle parking requirements:

Recommended Bicycle Parking Requirements

Land Use	Metric	Spaces Required	Required as Long-Term Spaces*
Residential	Dwelling Unit	4, or 0.5 per dwelling unit, up to a maximum of 100 required spaces.	95%
Office and General Work Space	GFA	2, or 1 per 5,000 SF, up to a maximum of 100 required spaces	85%
General Commercial	GFA	2, or 1 per 10,000 SF, up to a maximum of 100 required spaces	15%
Restaurants and Bars	GFA		15%
Events-Based Uses	GFA		15%
Hotel	Guest Room	1 per 10	100%
County/ Commercial Parking Facility	Vehicle Spaces	5 per 100	0%

* Indoor or covered outdoor facilities, see facilities standards below

Multi-modal Credits

To further promote the private provision of shared, multi-modal infrastructure enhancements in PBDs, it is also recommended that the following transportation amenities be encouraged through reduced PBC rates.

- Car-share parking above what is required

- Bicycle parking above what is required
- Transit amenities – such as bus stop shelters or seating, information and vending kiosks, and participation in transit benefits programs
- Additional motorcycle and Scooter Parking
- Rideshare Parking
- TDM Commitments - commuter benefits, parking cash-out programs, parking charges, etc.

Facility Design Standards

The following recommendations are proposed to compliment the design standards currently in place:

All Facilities

Restrict automobile entrances and exits on primary pedestrian, bicycle, and/ or transit route streets.

- Require active, commercial uses to occupy no less than 75 percent of any above-ground facility's most commercially-active primary frontage, to a minimum depth of 25 feet.
- Require the following categories of parking spaces to be preferentially located in relation to placement of standard spaces within parking lots and structures — as measured by proximity to the main entrance for the primary land use associated with the facility:
 - ADA
 - Bicycle
 - Car-Share
 - Carpool/ Vanpool
 - Motorcycle/ Scooter

Shared Parking Facilities

The County should establish facility-design standards (along with operational and management standards) for any facilities in which required Shared parking is provided. At a minimum, such guidelines should identify standards for:

- Location and visibility relative to the building's primary entrance;
- Identification and way-finding signage;
- Signage identifying any restrictions on public access; and
- Provision of pedestrian and vehicle easements across adjacent facilities.