



The Elimination or Reduction of Parking in CodeNext

One of the paradoxes of the CodeNext model for density is that while it seeks to increase the number of residents on or visitors to a particular piece of property – and therefore the potential number of vehicles and vehicle trips – it decreases the required parking for that property. CodeNext does this to make room on the property for added density and for more intense uses. Your neighborhood street becomes the parking lot. These reductions are substantial, and they will congest residential streets designed for lower traffic volumes and parking loads, with a wall of parked vehicles and others circulating to find a space. The incompatibility is synergistic because without onsite parking, the densities and intensities of the uses can be larger, generating even more vehicle trips and the need for more parking. Congested neighborhood streets are less walkable (we walk in the streets because we have no sidewalks), less bike-able and less safe. They make it difficult on residents, visitors, delivery and service vehicles and emergency services trying to travel down what become one-lane streets. Congested streets should be a problem you want to solve, not a problem you plan to create.

Under Draft 1 of CodeNext, Parking is cut substantially in both Transect and Non-Transect zoning, but it is more dramatic in Transect zones which actually eliminate parking requirements for some uses.

Transect Zones

For residential uses in Transect Zones, the **on-site parking** requirement is cut to one parking space per household (unit) – half of what is required today for single-family homes. (Part I in §§ 23-4D-2080 to 2180.)

Transects also **reduce** or **eliminate parking** requirements for several non-residential (**commercial**) uses, effectively transferring parking to the neighborhood streets. (Part I in §§ 23-4D-2080 to 2140.) For example, a 2,500 sq. ft. medical office is required to provide **zero parking** for staff and patients. A 3,000 sq. ft. retail store, general office or bank is required provide only a single parking space. And, the Director of Planning, whose decision is unreviewable, may further reduce or eliminate the on-site parking requirement for a variety of reasons such as proximity to a corridor, or bike racks or off-site parking 1,000 feet away. (§23-4E-3060.) Further, the proposed off-site parking provision eliminates from the application process existing considerations such as the impact of the parking facility on traffic patterns and nearby residents. Compare current Land Development Code §25-6-502 (C) with proposed §23-4E-3060.

Non-Transect Zones

Again, in Non-Transect Zones, at the same time that CodeNext is **increasing** the volume of **traffic** generated by existing zoning districts in and around neighborhoods, it is **reducing** the **parking** requirement for those uses:

1. In **residential** Non-Transect Zones, **parking** is **cut in half** to 1 space per dwelling unit.
2. In **commercial** Non-Transect Zones, onsite **parking**, other than for restaurants, is generally **reduced**. See Table 23-4D-4050.C. For example, here are reductions in some of the most common neighborhood commercial uses:

	Today	Non-Transect	Reduced By
Retail	1 space for each 275 sq. ft.	1 space for each 350 sq. ft.	20%
Banks	1 space for each 275 sq. ft.	1 space for each 350 sq. ft.	20%
Office	1 space for each 275 sq. ft.	1 space for each 500 sq. ft.	45%
Medical Serv.	1 space for each 200 sq. ft.	1 space for each 500 sq. ft.	60%

Significantly, the reduced Non-Transect parking requirements may be eligible for **additional cumulative reductions** of 5% to 40% if, for example, the property is within a quarter mile of a corridor, or provides additional bicycle parking or a shower. (§23-4E-3060.) Further, the **Director of Planning**, whose **decision is unreviewable**, may eliminate the on-site parking requirement altogether by authorizing **off-site parking** 1,000 feet away. And, the proposed off-site parking provision **eliminates language requiring consideration of the impact of the parking facility on traffic patterns and nearby residents**. Compare current Land Development Code §25-6-502 (C) with proposed §23-4E-3060.

The CodeNext approach to parking is self-defeating. On the one hand, it promotes densification as compatible with existing residential areas and on the other it promotes parking policies that undercut that promise. And Austin’s transit infrastructure isn’t San Francisco or New York – here, most people have to drive to work and will for the foreseeable future. That new development with insufficient parking built down the street will be here long before any new mass transit system. We can’t create a parking reduction plan around wishful thinking about a transportation infrastructure we hope to have but don’t and most likely won’t ever have.

Disclaimer: While the contributors to this overview made a concerted effort to be accurate, given the code draft’s complexity, ambiguity, new terminology, and mistakes, there may be errors or misunderstandings herein. There is no pretense that this overview addresses all of the issues of importance to different neighborhoods or addresses any issue completely. The reader is encouraged to check statements in this document against the draft code, its amendments and additions.