Reduced parking requirements for qualifying developments overview

Most cities, towns, and counties establish in their zoning code a minimum number of off-street parking spaces that must be created for each unit in a new residential development, such as 0.5 parking spaces per bedroom. The purpose of parking requirements is to ensure that new residents have a dedicated place for their vehicles, and avoid negative spillover effects on public parking in the surrounding area.

However, there are many circumstances where a one-size-fits-all parking requirement may result in an excess supply of parking spaces, including for residents of affordable housing, who tend to have fewer vehicles per household, and in higher-density neighborhoods where many transportation needs can be met by public transit. Parking requirements can make housing more expensive to produce, particularly when land prices are very high or where expensive underground parking or parking structures are needed to accommodate the required number of spaces. By reducing parking requirements for qualifying affordable developments, cities, towns, and counties can help to ensure the amount of parking provided aligns with actual needs, freeing up subsidy dollars as well as potentially space for additional units and/or amenities. Reducing parking requirements can also help to encourage transit use and to reduce traffic congestion and carbon emissions.

Cities, towns, and counties can also reduce parking requirements for ALL housing units, helping to lower development costs and increase the overall supply of units in the market. Click here to access a description of this broader policy option.