



TRANSPORTATION & PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE MEETING

~ MINUTES ~

Tuesday, April 5, 2022

12:00 PM

Sullivan Chamber

The Transportation and Public Utilities Committee will meet to conduct a public hearing on Ordinance #2022-8, an ordinance amending Parking minimums and maximums.

Attendee Name	Present	Absent	Late	Arrived
Burhan Azeem	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Marc C. McGovern	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Patricia Nolan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Paul F. Toner	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Quinton Zondervan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Transportation and Public Utilities Committee April 5, 2022

Thu, 6/9 9:50AM • 1:37:48

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

parking, minimums, zoning, Councillor, people, city, question, cdd, special permit, cambridge, development, parking requirements, policy, required, requirements, housing, street parking, hearing, chair, maximum

SPEAKERS

Councillor Burhan Azeem, Councillor Marc McGovern, Joe Barr, James Zall, Councillor Patricia Nolan, Iram Farooq, Jeffrey Roberts, Director of Zoning and Development, Vice Mayor Alanna Mallon, Stephanie Groll, Councillor Paul Toner, Daniel Hidalgo, Neil Miller, Councillor Quinton Zondervan, Christopher Schmidt, Megan Bayer, Assistant City Solicitor, Anthony Wilson

Anthony Wilson 01:48

Councillor Azeem, the time of the meeting has arrived.

Councillor Burhan Azeem 04:25

With quorum present, I'd like to call this meeting of the Transportation and Public Utilities Committee to order. The call of the meeting is to conduct a public hearing on ordinance eight of the year 2022, an ordinance amending parking minimums and maximums. Pursuant to chapter 20 of the acts of 2021 adopted by the Massachusetts General Assembly and approved by the governor, the city's authorized to use remote participation at this meeting of the Cambridge City Council. To watch the meeting, please tune in to channel 22 or visit the Open Meeting portal on the city's website. Today's meeting will be conducted in a hybrid format. If you would like to conduct public comment, please go sign up at cambridgema.gov/publiccomment to sign up. We

will not be allowing any additional public comment sign up after 12:30. With that, all of today's votes will be roll call. Clerk Wilson, will you take roll call of members present?

Anthony Wilson 05:21

Councillor McGovern

Councillor Marc McGovern 05:23

Present and audible.

Anthony Wilson 05:25

Present. Councillor Nolan.

Councillor Patricia Nolan 05:27

Present and audible.

Anthony Wilson 05:29

Present. Councillor Toner. Councillor Toner. Absent, Councillor Zondervan.

Councillor Quinton Zondervan 05:37

Present and audible.

Anthony Wilson 05:39

Councillor Azeem.

Councillor Burhan Azeem 05:41

Present and audible.

Anthony Wilson 05:42

There are four members present.

Councillor Burhan Azeem 05:45

Wonderful, so to call for the agenda, I was planning on having CDD share their presentation first.

Anthony Wilson 05:52

Pardon me Councillor Azeem, I just want to make note that Mayor Siddiqui is present and the Vice Mayor is also present.

Councillor Burhan Azeem 06:00

Thank you. So, I wanted to start with the CDD presentation, and then open it up for clarifying questions forwarding by my own presentation, and then we will go to public comment and further questions. With that, Assistant City Manager Farooq would you like to share?

Iram Farooq 06:21

Thank you, Chair Azeem. Iram Farooq, Assistant City Manager for community development. And I'm joined by a number of staff from CDD from the Traffic Parking and Transportation Department and from the law department. We will start with a presentation where the bulk of it is going to be given by Stephanie Groll who works on parking transportation demand management and, and a lot of general TDM type issues and has been working on a parking policy analysis and outreach into the community. And Jeff Roberts, of course, is our director of zoning and development. We are also joined by Mason Wells, Suzanne Rasmussen from CDD. And we're

joined by Joe Barr and Adam Shulman from TPT. And Megan Bayer from the law department. And, Jeff, if you wouldn't mind throwing up the presentation. Thank you. So we can advance to the next slide, please. Yeah, so I have already mentioned much of this. Except just to add that, you know, we did have a conversation about parking minimums and maximums a little bit and setting the stage for this last year. So we've tried not to repeat too much of that information in this presentation, but have touched on it just for background. And we have these number of policy orders that focus on both parking minimums and maximums. And we will do both a summary of the work that that is underway in terms of policy analysis and supplement with information about how parking maximums and minimums are dealt with in the ordinance right now. And then talk a little bit about particularly about the maximums, you know, additional work that could be done. So with that, I'm just going to turn it over to Stephanie Groll to take us to through the first piece of this.

Stephanie Groll 08:48

Thank you. So you can go to the next slide. So I'll just jump right in we're doing we're doing a parking policy study right now to evaluate our parking regulations together as a whole. So this includes the PTM ordinance zoning, commercial parking, which is parking available to the public for a fee, resident parking and our traffic regulations. Next slide. So the purpose of this study is to look at how well those policies support our city goals. We have goals for equity, traffic, greenhouse gas emissions, climate resilience, affordability and economic development. Next slide. And we've been describing these goals for many years in policies and plans that prioritize sustainable transportation, like walking, biking, transit, and carpooling. These, this list of plans is essential to our climate future. But some people find some elements of these policies hard to live with, and they feel like they were left out of the decision making process. So in order for these policies to succeed, we have to involve people so they can have a say in how we move forward together as a city. Great. The parking study will take about a year. So first, we want to understand what people experience today as they go about their lives in Cambridge. And next we'll analyze our current regulations. And lastly, we'll propose a set of changes to those regulations. And we're looking to complete this work by November of this year. Because policy should always be grounded in the effects that it has on people's lives. The entire process of developing the draft and final recommendations will be rooted in community engagement that we expect there to be learning in many directions. So we will learn from community members, they will learn from us, and we also expect community members to learn from each other during this process.

Councillor Burhan Azeem 11:01

Apologies, pause for one moment. I think Councillor Toner has joined as an attendee, would we be able to promote him to a panelist?

Anthony Wilson 11:11

Yes.

Councillor Burhan Azeem 11:13

Thank you, you can continue with the presentation. Sorry for the interruption.

Stephanie Groll 11:17

Thank you. So here's what we've done so far. In the fall, we began interviewing residents and business owners and property owners, as well as the Board of the Commission for People with Disabilities. And these early conversations really helped us shape the discussions we had with six communities in focus groups that were hosted by the community engagement team. It was really important to us that we focus our time and attention on reaching underserved

communities. So these are people who experienced barriers to participate in city planning processes and whose needs and opinions may not have been heard in past discussions on parking and transportation policy. Next, we will launch a transportation questionnaire to be able to hear from the broader community, and we will put that on our website, which should be up hopefully quite soon, hopefully within the week. So here are a few comments of what we're hearing so far. People were, just to remember, the people were specifically asked about parking and many people also spoke about their experience with other modes. So there's a really big range of opinions that we're hearing from parking is way too hard to find and it's just not a vehicle friendly city, to I prefer to walk or take the bus and train because it's good, it's easier and good for my health, and I'm so glad I don't have to think about parking because I don't have a car. You'll be able to see many more of these quotes and questions that people ask on our website. But we're also hearing a lot of common values from people who have completely opposing views. So people are saying things like, we need to be able to easily receive visitors in our homes, because we want a deeper sense of community in Cambridge. They're saying, we need to know we can get, we can get to important places without too much stress. They're saying no matter what mode they take, they're saying, we need to be able to make our own personal choices about how we get around and we want other people to respect that. People are saying we need to see that everybody is held accountable for their behavior on our streets, and that was coming from people who take all different modes. People say we need to feel safe no matter how we get around. And they're also saying we need to have some hard conversations, even if we disagree. So I love this quote from a person in the American-born Black community focus group, so I'm just going to read you the whole thing. It says, this person said, how do we do this in a cohesive manner so that we can see progress and we have a voice, a part of it? We're not going to all agree, definitely, but how do we reach middle ground so we can all live cohesively in the city? So everything we're hearing during community engagement, all these comments and questions, they'll be informing a bigger policy discussion, so we can propose a comprehensive set of parking changes. So we see this study as not just about parking maximum requirements and zoning, but ultimately we're going to need policies that respond to people's needs while still making progress on our city goals. So right now, we're sorting comments to be able to look at what are the community needs, who was impacted by when those needs are not met, what policy changes can help meet those needs, and what other benefits can those changes bring beyond addressing the original need? For example, we have a lot of parking that already exists in the city, and one change could be to make it easier for people to use that parking. So that even if the number of spaces is reduced, it doesn't make people's daily lives any harder. Other ideas that people offered, were about better information for where to find parking, making sure that people with disabilities have a place to park, and making it more convenient to take a bus, train, or bike or walk around the city. So you'll be hearing from us again, and we will come back to propose a set of policy changes that grow out of the community engagement process.

Jeffrey Roberts, Director of Zoning and Development 15:45

Great, so I think it goes to me now. Jeff Roberts, the director of zoning and development. And so the work that Stephanie discussed is just a great overview of the work that we're doing more broadly and looking more holistically at our parking policy. And for this next part, we're going to focus a little bit on the nuts and bolts of the policy orders that are being discussed at this hearing that's focused specifically on the accessory parking requirements in our zoning ordinance, the maximums and minimums. And the purpose of this is to provide a little bit of background information on what our current zoning requirements are, how they work, and what the potential outcomes would be of changing them. There's a lot that we put in the slide deck, so I'm going to try to move through fairly quickly for the sake of time, but I'm always happy to go back if we want to talk about anything in more detail afterwards. As Iram said, some of this is a

repeat of what we talked about back in July of last year. For those who were there, we just, you know, we always like to start with an overview of how zoning works. It's about what types and intensities of land uses are allowed in what different parts of the city. And then, in addition to that, it establishes what the development standards are that are applied to the various land uses where they're allowed. And from a parking standpoint, first, it's important to note that zoning deals only with off-street parking. So on-street parking, the parking where you kind of pull up to the curb, that's not something that's regulated by zoning. So whenever I'm talking about parking with respect to zoning, I'm focusing on off-street. And also just as a land use, parking kind of splits into two different types. It can be accessory, which is parking that's attached to some other kind of use, so that parking that's for an office use or for residential use. Or parking can be a principal use, meaning that it's just there for the sake of providing parking on its own. If it's accessory, it can only be used for the use that it's attached to, so residential parking is only for residential use. Accessory parking is where, in zoning, we tend to have the maximum and the minimum requirements associated with them, which we're going to talk a little bit more in the next section. And principle use parking on the other hand, it's not required. It's something that is regulated by the zoning map. So it's generally allowed in non-residential districts, generally not allowed in residential districts. And just as kind of a reminder from the last time that these requirements for parking that we've had in zoning we've only had for about the past 60 years. We started requiring minimum parking in 1961. We started putting maximum parking ratios in place in 1981. Some of those requirements were lowered citywide in 2001. And we've done a lot of work since then changing the zoning in specific places to kind of tighten down and adjust our parking requirements. And just as a brief note, the Envision Cambridge comprehensive plan that was that was done a few years ago does recommend that we look at our parking requirements and lower them in some areas while also accounting for impacts on residential streets. So the policy orders that are being discussed, we've kind of split them into three basic components, which I'll focus on one at a time starting with minimum residential parking requirements, then shifting to minimum parking requirements for non-residential uses, and then finally, the maximum ratios for non-residential uses which Iram said is a little something that we were asked to study a little bit more, a little bit more completely before coming with some recommendations. So currently, the citywide minimum standard for residential parking is one space per unit. It's not the lowest parking requirement anywhere but it tends to be somewhat lower than the requirements in many other cities and towns which often require more than one space per unit. The way these requirements work, parking is only required for creating new housing units. So all the housing units in the city that predate the parking requirements and don't have parking associated with them, they're not required to add parking if they want to make renovations, modifications, alterations, as long as it remains the same housing unit, the parking isn't required. But anytime a new housing units created, a new parking space would be required for that unit. And if you have a housing unit that has accessory parking associated with it, that parking has to be maintained, you can't get rid of it as of right under zoning. So these requirements can be reduced by special permit. Again, it's a little bit unique. It's a little less onerous than needed to get a variance which is a case in a lot of communities, but it does require going through a hearing and review process. In some districts of the city, particularly in some overlay districts, the residential parking requirements have been reduced to a lower ratio, usually not all the way to zero, although in some cases, like in Kendall Square, a lot of the zoning for our PUD districts don't require any additional spaces for residential use, but allow for a shared parking arrangement between the residential and commercial uses that are there. Also, many of the larger residential projects in the city have been approved for reduced parking ratios of less than one space per unit. That has been through the special permit process that I mentioned. Only in a few cases have proposals have had all of their parking requirements waived. That's happened with some smaller scale residential projects, cases where there's been conversions of existing buildings into residential use where there isn't room to fit parking on the

site. We did have one relatively recent development approved right in the heart of Central Square that has a larger number of units and was approved without being required to build any off street parking spaces. The demand for residential parking is something that we pay a lot of attention to and has also been looked at a lot by planners regionally. So the MAPC has been collecting data on residential development parking utilization in areas, including data from Cambridge. One of the findings is that demand for parking in many communities tends to be less than one space per unit. Maybe as interesting or more interesting is they're finding that demand tends to be closely related to supply. So in other words, if there's developments that have more parking spaces, they tend to have more cars parked in them. If they have fewer parking spaces available to begin with, there tends to be fewer cars parked there and less demand for parking. So there is some sense of induced demand when it comes to the demand and the supply of parking on a site. We rely on a lot of information in Cambridge from a variety of sources, to assess what parking demand might be. I won't go through all of this, this is something that Traffic Parking and Transportation spent a lot of time looking at and can talk more about it in detail. So one of the things that we like to do when we're looking at zoning changes is to think about what are the immediate effects of a zoning change, as well as what are the potential long term implications of making that change. So in the case of the policy order, which essentially says that it would eliminate all the minimum accessory parking requirements for residential use, the two immediate effects would be that housing that currently exists and has accessory parking wouldn't be required to maintain that parking anymore. So it could remain as accessory parking, but it could also be converted to something else. And then the second immediate effect is that for any new housing units that are created, the owner of that housing could choose to create as much new parking as they wanted, or could choose to not create any parking at all. So the potential kind of long term effects of that, in general, when the zoning changes being made, you would expect land use to shift over time, not immediately, but gradually in the direction of that zoning change. So if there's no required parking, accessory parking, then there might be a gradual reduction over time in the ratio of off street parking spaces to housing units. And that would potentially mean fewer cars, so not as many cars parked in neighborhoods, less auto traffic, and less demand or reliance on automobile travel could also mean potentially more demand on the public on-street parking resources that would serve the remaining parking demand that does exist. In some districts, if principal use parking is allowed, that's mostly in commercial districts as I mentioned before, then if you no longer require the accessory parking, some of that parking might be converted to principal use parking, meaning the owner of the lot could say, "Okay, I'm just gonna now make parking that is generally available and not only for this residential use." And in terms of economic effects over time, there's sort of an interesting dynamic due to the fact that when you, due to the way accessory parking works where it's attached to a particular use, by removing the requirement part of what would happen is kind of a detachment of parking from housing. So if parking is no longer required to be attached to housing, then the cost of housing would no longer include the cost of parking. So potentially, that could mean that, you know, relatively speaking, if you're looking at, you know, housing with parking versus housing without parking, the housing without parking can become lower in cost. The trade off of that is that with fewer parking spaces available, over time, the demand for that parking might go up and the cost of that off street parking might go up. So it's a little bit of a tricky thing to get one's head around, but we can, we can sort of talk about that more. We thought it made sense to point out some different ranges of approaches that could be taken, including to reduce the minimum parking requirements without eliminating them, or to eliminate parking requirements, but only in certain districts. Another thing to look at, we'll talk about this a little bit in the next section, if there are specific objectives in mind, there could be special exemptions, such as, you know, letting people use parking spaces for other things if they have a parking space, but they don't have a car park there. And also, when parking is reduced by special permit, it's typical to have mitigation requirements, like

transit subsidies or other things to go to public improvements. That's something that could be contemplated in zoning so that there's some balance and some way to try to mitigate potential impacts on public resources if off street parking is reduced. So the next piece is about minimum accessory parking for non-residential uses. I'll go through this, a lot of the issues are similar, so I'll just point out some of the key differences. One difference is there's a lot more variability in the requirements for non residential parking. It varies by use, and it varies by zoning district. And so there's so it's not just sort of one standard city wide. Another difference with non residential parking is that there's currently a lot more exceptions for non residential use than for residential. So in many cases, like small businesses, a non residential use moving into an existing building, there's no requirement for parking at all. It can also be waived by special permit as with residential parking. And, like with the minimum residential parking, in some special districts, there are lower requirements that are based on area specific planning. In some overlay districts, particularly in Kendall Square, there's no minimum set parking requirements for non residential uses at all. So the policy order, which also proposes removing minimum accessory parking for non residential uses, has very much the same immediate effects as for residential. If you have parking that exists, you wouldn't need to have it anymore, so you can convert it to something else. If you have a new use, you wouldn't have to add more parking, but you could add more parking. The long term implications, there's a couple of key differences. One is that this wouldn't necessarily be as significant a zoning change, because there are already a lot of waivers and exemptions for non residential parking, so there are already a lot of situations where the parking wouldn't be required. And I think the second difference is that the market tends to have a stronger say in how much parking is provided for a non residential use. We find that it's more often the case that a commercial developer will insist on building parking without it having to be required. And that's partly because employees and customers don't have the same public parking option of resident permit parking, and those needs would need to be accommodated somehow by the market. There are certainly cases where developers choose to do less parking. We might see that more often in the same kind of economic impacts of separating parking from the principal use, where the cost of parking might go up, but the commercial rents or commercial space costs might go down compared to if they were required to have parking. And then the same alternative approaches could be looked at, you know, changing you know, reducing or changing in some areas and not others. So the final piece, which I'll try to go through quickly, we were asked to look at the maximum ratios on non residential parking. There is no specific proposal for us to look at, but we started to think about how that might work. Just again, to start with what our current requirements are in zoning, usually for commercial uses there's a maximum parking ratio in base zoning that's about double the minimum parking ratio. And these were all set in 1981, and some were produced as recently as 2001. Again, there's a large variation by zoning district and by use types. And in many cases, the maximum ratios that we have in Cambridge are kind of similar to what minimum ratios tend to be if you look at more suburban communities. Areas that have been subjected to more recent planning have established lower maximum ratios. And I'm gonna talk a little bit about how these ratios are derived. But the main focus of these maximum ratios is that they're intended to manage the traffic impacts that would result from expected redevelopment in these areas. There are also some special districts in our zoning that take the approach of setting a total cap on the number of parking spaces. And it's a slightly different approach, but the logic is similar that by capping the amount of parking, it helps to limit the auto traffic going to and from an area. This is just a simple overview of the kind of information that goes into coming up with these recommendations. And when I say we, in this sense, I really mean our transportation planners. So I'm going to just do this very briefly and look to the transportation planners to answer any questions if there are any questions going forward. So it starts with basic information about existing conditions, what the expected future growth is in trips, and it focuses a lot on will be call mode share, which is the percentage of people who would be driving to an

area compared to using other forms of transportation. The next slide kind of gives a little bit of a visual of how to sort of look at that that kind of sequence of of logic of looking at development in terms of building space, generating a number of trips, which are called person trips, or transportation planners call person trips, which then translates into a number of car trips. And the way to come up with a parking ratio is to look at, if you look at the little chart there, employee density, which is another way of looking at person trips, and then to look at what the percentage of people who are expected to drive to a site might be. And if you kind of put those two things together, you come up with a parking ratio, like in that first column, you know, the 0.9 parking ratio, which is, which is a maximum that's been applied in a lot of areas of the city for office use, like in Kendall Square. So again, we'll, if there's questions, we can go back to this and the transportation staff can help. But back to the zoning piece, just to wrap up. So in the case of the immediate effects of setting a lower maximum parking requirement is kind of the inverse of what happens when you lower the minimum parking requirement. So in the case of new development, rather than having more choice and more flexibility, property owners would have less choice and less flexibility. They would be more constrained by the zoning requirements. Existing development would be a little bit tricky to work with, because while our zoning clearly lays out what happens in cases where you have an existing land use with less than the minimum required amount of parking, it doesn't say as much about cases where an existing land use has more than the maximum required amount of parking. So that's a little complicated, but an example would be a commercial building with 10 parking spaces. If the zoning were to say, only five parking spaces are now allowed for this, then there could potentially be an issue if a new use wanted to move into that building, or if there was a proposal to expand or enlarge the building. That might cause an issue with nonconformity because it would have more than the required number of spaces, and it might require removing spaces or doing something that would have to bring it into conformance. So that's an issue that would need to be considered. In terms of long term outcomes, I think the overall implications would be somewhat similar. It would be a gradual reduction in parking spaces over time for residential uses, resulting in less reliance on on auto trips, more reliance on other modes, and potentially, you know, changes in the relative cost of the building space compared to the parking spaces. And a couple of other things that might be looked at either as an alternative or a supplement to looking at maximum parking ratios would be considering kind of impact mitigation that would be based not just on reducing below the minimum, but in exceeding a maximum. So there might have to be mitigation requirements that come into play for exceeding a particular maximum parking ratio. This is kind of something that we've been looking at in some parts of the city where we're trying to get to a lower parking supply and less auto traffic over time. Another approach, which we talked a little bit about last year, would be moving away from an accessory parking based system to something that would be more based on principle use parking. So rather than having parking associated with each particular use, have parking that is sort of complementary to a lot of other uses, but kind of exists on its own as a separate land use. And that's that's a concept that's been increasingly embraced by other communities that are looking at mixed use redevelopment. So that's that in a nutshell, I'll turn it over to Iram to wrap up.

Iram Farooq 36:17

Thank you, Jeff. We just, well, we've presented a lot of information. We're happy to answer any questions. Chair, I know you wanted to maybe go to public comment. So at whatever point, committee members have questions, we're happy to be here, and I can be the air traffic control person.

Councillor Burhan Azeem 36:45

Wonderful. Any clarifying questions at this time from the council? Otherwise, I'll go to a presentation and go to public comment. No? All right. So my turn for the presentation. Hope you guys are excited!

Councillor Marc McGovern 37:00

Uh, Councillor Nolan has her hand up, Mr. Chair.

Councillor Burhan Azeem 37:03

Councillor Nolan.

Councillor Patricia Nolan 37:06

Thanks. I'm not sure if this is a clarifying question or for later. The kinds of things I wanted to ask about where there are some things in the... First of all, thanks so much. It was a really good presentation. There was a very extensive presentation by the city at the meeting last July, which had some of this information, but there's some others in that, that were not included. So I'm not sure when we'll get to that. But one of the, you know, many of the concerns were laid out some of the, for instance, the demand responsive parking permits, which other cities have used, there was some discussion of that. So I'm just curious as to when we will be bringing that in to this discussion. That was, if people haven't seen it, it was an even more extensive report on exactly this issue about car storage policies. So again, I'm not sure if that's a clarifying question, or we can hold it off. But there were a couple of examples from other cities that were included in that presentation that I didn't see in this one, because you were trying to hold to the very respectful limit. Chair Azeem, it is up to you. We can talk about this later, that's fine.

Councillor Burhan Azeem 38:09

Sure. Let's just hold on to it for later. You can have the first question once we're done with public comment. Thank you. All right. Great. So... my slide. Can you all see the screen? See the PowerPoint? Great. Thank you. So I just wanted to talk a little bit about the policy order introduced by myself, Councillor McGovern and Zondervan on parking minimums. So you know, I think that this is a little bit simplified compared to CDD's presentation. But just to start off the, you know, what are parking minimums? They are requirements for new commercial and residential development to provide off street parking. So in this example, you can kind of easily imagine how you are requested to have like one parking unit or multiple per dwelling unit here. We have quite an extensive use table. So we have about 140 categories, and then within those categories, depending on the district and the base zoning, the changes use is changed. So you know, for example, for like food stands or kiosks, you have N/A, which is like, if it was an open space. So that's the missing, comment here. If it's in a smaller district, you have these buildings, and then it kind of goes on and on and lists for various other use cases as well. That's all just to say that we have an extensive list of categories and what the minimums are for many different use cases. You know, so our proposal calls to make the parking minimums simply zero and to really simplify the case. There's also the piece about parking maximums, which I think CDD was requested to do a study on, and I think they'll come back at a later time, as they've mentioned today. But today, we're really just focusing on the minimums piece. You know, just to share a little bit about context, you know, there's a lot of evidence that has been upcoming as cities have started moving away from parking minimums. That parking requirements can be too high and suggests that cities are forcing developers to build parking that people don't want at a cost of housing units that people do want. Or this other quote, Seattle developers built 40% less parking than they would have before their parking reforms in 2012, resulting in 1800 fewer parking spaces and saving an estimated \$537 million. And I think that, you know, sometimes it can be easy, it can be nice to see numbers for it. It's hard to find Cambridge's exact numbers. But in this review on Policy Genius for New York, which has very similar housing and land cost.

Off street parking costs between 500,000 and 100,000 units per spot when going under development. And this equates to roughly an additional 200 to 400 dollars in rent paid or 2000 to 5000 extra rent paid by residents. Just to answer some questions just off the bat. You know, if we remove parking minimums, developers can still build the same amount of parking, they just, they can also choose to build less parking, but they would not be prevented from building the same amount of parking that they would now. And will developers stop building parking altogether? That's not the case. Parking is still valued by a lot of homeowners and tenants and financial requirements, as we've seen, heard from CDD on businesses often require it for new developments. And commercial tenants, in particular, have a lot of employees that come from out of the city and don't have a residential parking permit, and so, often have a huge incentive to build parking along with their development. Just a little bit of the history, you know, we added parking minimums in the 1960s. Many cities did during that time in the mid-century. And in the 21st century, we've seen a lot of cities slowly tried to repeal them. The most, you know, the first ones in the modern time were Buffalo and Hartford, Connecticut, which repealed parking minimums. And then, since then, a lot of cities have followed: San Francisco and Minneapolis, Berkeley. And a lot of bigger cities have also repealed them in their centralized districts, or their development districts, including Chicago, New Orleans, Pittsburgh, Lexington, Spokane, Santa Monica, among many others, but just from this quote. There's a really great analysis, a paper that was done, where I can bring in my like wonky researcher hat about what happened in Buffalo. And so what they found at a high level was that, you know, parking minimums produce more traffic congestion, higher levels of air pollution, sprawling land use, and that costs were passed along to consumers in the form of higher rents, higher prices of goods and lower salaries for workers. When they got rid of their parking requirements, rather than, you know, building parking per unit, developer sometimes would share parking. So you know, in one mixed use project, you know, one building actually built a lot more parking than was required. And that was intentional, because they had entered a shared parking unit where they had decided that, you know, for their site, it made sense to build more parking, and the next few sites, it didn't make sense. So the other units would build less parking in exchange for them having a little bit more centralized parking. But the results overall was 71 less units in total of parking being built because they were able to share, and not required for each unit to specifically account for its own residents. And in general, they were, you know, a lot of experiences of like, developments being built with no parking using this shared parking experience. And it also gave a huge boost to transit oriented development. You know, two mixed use projects along the main street were built in Buffalo creating hundreds of student housing. And that, you know, in specific, the researchers found that the cost of the old parking requirements would have been so high that it just would not have been possible to make this development in general beforehand. And that goes for adaptive reuse projects as well, where they had some small scale developments that were near a light rail station where they were able to take an old structure and convert it to 10 apartments, but they were only able to do so because they didn't have the parking requirements, because it just added a level of cost was prohibitive for these sorts of developments. So it's really about sometimes the choice is between getting any redevelopment at all, without parking, versus nothing happening in those locations. And so this is a short summary of the proposal as we see it. And I really want to emphasize it allows for greater flexibility for housing and more sustainable development. But it is optional, developers can still build assuming amount of parking if they want to. Without any clarifying questions at this point, I'll go to public comment and then we can generally go around the city council. I don't see any hands at this time. So with that, Clerk Wilson, can we go to public comment?

Anthony Wilson 45:00

The first speaker is James Zall.

James Zall 45:08

I think, sorry, you caught me eating lunch. James Zall, 203 Pemberton Street. I am just speaking in support of ending parking minimum requirements in our zoning laws, especially on residential uses. We've certainly heard lots of complaints about the alleged lack of parking in the city, but it seems that actual reality based counts of parking tell a different story. There's the MAPC study that CDD staff just mentioned, showing that here in Cambridge and surrounding areas, many residential developments have overbuilt parking and the space was going unused. Here in Cambridge, we found that studies in connection with specific proposed developments of housing found that the parking situation was not as dire as residents would have us believe. And we should not be in a position where the law requires us to add to the cost of housing with parking spaces that are going unused. The Council and the city government as a whole, as CDD has mentioned, has agreed on a number of goals and started efforts to reduce auto traffic and increase housing. But neither of these goals will be easy to attain. They require a change in direction that Cambridge has followed for several decades. But there's no way that we can claim to be working towards those goals of more housing, less expensive housing, and fewer auto trips, while maintaining zoning laws that mandate more parking and less housing. Glad to see that this committee is beginning to steer our zoning in the right direction, and I hope this process continues expeditiously. Thank you.

Anthony Wilson 47:21

Our next speaker is Neil Miller.

Neil Miller 47:28

Neil Miller, 102 Pearl Street. Thank you so much for having this hearing. Just wanted to give a comment about off street parking in Cambridgeport where I live. Building on the first part of CDD's presentation, it would absolutely be a bad thing if neighbors who rely on off street parking spaces are suddenly not able to find them. At least in Cambridgeport, however, it seems like, it seems more likely that changes to how much parking is available off street would take place over decades, not in the near term. So in Spring 2014, city hired consultants did an off street parking study on Pearl Street and the side streets next to it. The consultants counted 1348 spaces, and on average, 20% of those spaces were empty at peak parking hours, which are overnight. This study didn't include Magazine Street, which has parking on two sides of the street, or Brookline St., which has one side of parking and as you go up the street, there's a couple of adjacent parking lots. So just on Pearl Street and side streets, that's 274 open on street spaces. Based on current stats, that means that we can build about 411 additional units of housing, or roughly 900 people, and not run out of on street parking. Even if all 400 units have absolutely no off street parking, even if new residents own as many cars as existing residents, and even if there's no change in how we use off street parking, because it's maybe more available or if we share parking spaces. For comparison, 900 people is more than four times the population of my whole block here in Cambridgeport. If you cloned my block four times, got rid of the off street parking, then squished in into the other parts of Cambridgeport up and down the street, then we'd still have overnight street parking to spare, and infill development in existing neighborhoods hasn't happened that quickly. If we remove parking minimums today, it will be decades before we use up the existing parking supply in Cambridgeport. And, you know, I hope for the sake of our climate crisis, that by 2040 or 2050, our reliance on cars will be less than it is today. So thank you for the time.

Anthony Wilson 50:09

The next speaker is Daniel Hidalgo.

Daniel Hidalgo 50:16

This is Daniel Hidalgo from 79 Norfolk Street, I'm calling in to support the ordinance, particularly on removing the parking minimums for residential developments. And I just really think that this brings flexibility to adapt to the needs of specific neighborhoods and really would remove artificial limits on things and other things that parking competes with. And I really became aware of the harm that parking minimums can bring to Cambridge in the context of the planning board discussion around a development, a mixed use development at 600 Massachusetts Avenue. This is right next to the Chipotle or the where the mattress store used to be. So this is a mixed use development, 46 residential units and right in the heart of Central Square. It has excellent connections to transit, and kinda, I think it is the multifamily housing that we should be encouraging. But if you watch the planning board discussion, first of all, it was really quite heated. And many of the objections by the planning board members were to their request for waiver on parking requirements. It did pass, but only only barely. And even though it did pass and doesn't have any required parking, the project was only able to use 90% of their floor area ratio, their FAR limits, because if you go past 90%, according to the Central Square overlay, they would have had to pay for at least some of the parking that they that they were forgoing, and that wasn't economically feasible. So as a result of these minimum parking requirements, a multifamily development in the heart of Central Square literally right next to the MUNI, didn't build all the housing that zoning would have permitted it to. We could have had, I don't know, maybe 5, 6, 7, 8 more units. And in places like Cambridge, I think every little bit helps. So I really love to see these minimums removed, and to allow for more housing in places where we have great transit connections, and there's gonna be less need for this kind of parking. Thank you very much. I really appreciate it.

Anthony Wilson 52:37

Next speaker is Christopher Schmidt.

Christopher Schmidt 52:41

Thanks so much, Christopher Schmidt, 17 Laurel Street. I wanted, everyone's pretty much said everything that's worth saying, but thank you very much to CDD for their presentation and covering many of the things that I would have said. I think the key notes that I wanted to raise is that I think it is really, really important to note that when we build more parking, we get more cars, and when we have more cars, we get more driving, and when we get more driving, we have a lot of problems. Not just traffic, but you know, climate change. If you're obsessed like me with reading the new climate change reports and fretting about what to do, this is an opportunity for us to do something. Eliminating parking requirements is a step that will allow new structures to be built, that have less parking. Having less parking will lead to fewer cars. As has been pointed out, it's not going to be no parking. There will still be, you know, large developments will still have parking, and we know that, but it's a step that we can take and I think that we need to be taking every step that we can in that regard. It's worth noting that many, many, many households in Cambridge don't have cars today. And in fact, many, many, many households in Cambridge, you know, don't have parking today. And some places that you've been previously had parking, it's no longer parking. Near my home in Cambridgeport, there are several curb cuts that lead to fences that lead to former driveways that are now gardens. If those houses were built today, those could not be gardens, they would have to be parking, you know, forever. And I think that losing gardens is also a bad thing. When we talked about building more housing, one of the concerns that people have is loss of open space. One of the ways that we lose a lot of open space is parking and other things that support driving infrastructure. So I think that that is really a worthwhile thing to keep in mind here is that this is an improvement for not just climate change globally, carbon emissions, reducing driving, reducing traffic. It is also a change that can create more open space, can create more opportunities for gardens, can create more climate resiliency by reducing asphalt, and of course can reduce costs and other things like that. A

recent development in a small unit building of about 30 units had to pay \$85,000 per per space for an underground garage. I mean, it's not ridiculous. It's a true and accurate accounting for cost of something that is really our goal should not be to drive costs up. And I think that what we will see if we allow people to build less parking is that we will have more people who can live in the city who don't need cars. And we know that that number goes up every year in Cambridge, that is higher near transit, that is higher where we build lots of things close together. And hopefully, we can continue that trend. So please move on with this as quickly as you can. Thanks for holding the hearing and good luck.

Anthony Wilson 55:37

There are no further individuals signed up for public comment.

Councillor Burhan Azeem 55:44

Thank you for that, Mr. Clerk. So at this point, I will take questions from the committee, and then also from the Vice Mayor and the Mayor, who, thank you for them for attending this committee hearing as well.

Anthony Wilson 55:59

Councillor Azeem, would you like to close public comment.

Councillor Burhan Azeem 56:01

Yes. Let's take a roll call vote to close public comment.

Anthony Wilson 56:05

On that motion, Councillor McGovern.

Councillor Marc McGovern 56:10

Yes.

Anthony Wilson 56:11

Yes, Councillor Nolan.

Councillor Patricia Nolan 56:13

Yes.

Anthony Wilson 56:14

Yes, Councillor Toner.

Councillor Paul Toner 56:15

Yes.

Anthony Wilson 56:16

Yes, Councillor Zondervan.

Councillor Quinton Zondervan 56:18

Yes.

Anthony Wilson 56:19

Yes, Councillor Azeem.

Councillor Burhan Azeem 56:21

Yes.

Anthony Wilson 56:21

Motion passes five in favor, zero against.

Councillor Burhan Azeem 56:25

So I would love to go to Councillor Toner, and then we can go to Councillor McGovern. Those are the order in which I saw the hands. So, Councillor Toner.

Councillor Paul Toner 56:32

Thank you, Mr. Chair. Through you to the CDD officials, whoever wants to answer this. It seems to me I heard some folks talking as if we have an excess of parking in Cambridge. And that may be true in the absolute, but it seems like we have a mismatch of parking because when I hear about the excess, there's a lot of private parking available that the regular residents can access, people can't access if they're shopping in Cambridge. And there's a number of zoning and regulatory issues around that. Maybe it was in the presentation in July that Councillor Nolan talked about, and I'll go back and try to find that. I know that we are looking at opportunities to rethink our zoning, in order to allow people to access that private parking, possibly. But I would just like to hear from you folks from CDD about that situation. Because it seems like there's just a... I don't want people thinking there's all this available parking for everybody in the city of Cambridge when it's behind closed doors, in many cases.

Iram Farooq 57:40

Yes, thank you. Through you, Chair, to Councillor Toner. That assessment Councillor Toner, is accurate that there, you know, areas where parking has been overbuilt is typically on private property. There are zoning constraints to being able to have that available more broadly. And that's a little bit of what Stephanie was referring to in her opportunities slide. In terms of as we have these conversations, there is opportunity to think about how the supply that has been built can be more effectively utilized to serve the needs of folks. But you're right that that is not currently permitted. I'm going to turn it over to Jeff if you want to add anything more specific from a zoning perspective. And Stephanie, if you want to add more as well.

Jeffrey Roberts, Director of Zoning and Development 58:46

Sure, this is Jeff. I don't have much to add, but I think what you said, Councillor Toner, is correct. That in fact, in some ways, it's the minimum parking requirements that makes it difficult for the parking that's available to be used for other things. I do think, you know, and part of the reason for looking at this at a larger, kind of more holistic policy level, is that there are both opportunities to think about other ways that parking can be used aside from the way that our zoning conventionally thinks about it as being parking just for one particular use. But also that, you know, looking at what the potential implications of that might be. You know, if you have, you know, parking that's been over built and it becomes used for other things, what are the potential impacts that might have on traffic is one of the questions that we sort of look to answer for that. I don't know if you want to add to that, Stephanie.

Stephanie Groll 59:51

I think that covers it.

Councillor Paul Toner 59:54

And just one more comment... I'm generally supportive of the idea of having no parking minimums, I just, as we go through this process, want to make sure that, you know, we allow for some oversight so that we don't see people abusing it. Especially in compact residential

neighborhoods, where it'll just mean that... I know we dream of a future where nobody's driving cars, but that future is not in the immediate present. And, you know, we'll just see people spilling out and further overcrowding of what's available in the public roadways. Thank you.

Councillor Burhan Azeem 1:00:34

Do you yield, Councillor Toner? Going to Councillor McGovern. And then I just wanted to point out, I'd said this earlier, but Councillor Nolan, I remember you had asked a question originally. So we'll go to you next. So Councillor McGovern.

Councillor Marc McGovern 1:00:48

Thank you, Mr. Chair, through you. First of all, thank you both to the city and to you Councillor Azeem for your presentations... very thorough. I was gonna ask a similar question to Councillor Toner in terms of the parking that is already built that is not being used. I think of, you know, that there's a lot of there are parking garages up by Alewife where there's a lot of empty spaces there. And one of the, some of the pushback that the Cambridge Housing Authority has received around Jefferson Park is that they're going to be adding all these new units and no parking. And I think God, there are these empty spots a block away, and they can't access them because the law doesn't allow them. They don't even have the option to say, "Can we rent 50 spaces?" if they wanted to. So I do, I do think that's something we need to think about. When you do, I guess this is for Ms. Farooq or your team: When parking studies are done, either by the developer or if the city does them, what's the radius that you, that you look at?

Iram Farooq 1:01:56

Through you, Chair, I'm actually gonna ask Joe Barr to speak to that, because TPT is typically the one most involved in coming up with that.

Joe Barr 1:02:07

Sure, excuse me. Thanks. Through you, Councillor Azeem. Yeah, I think it really depends on the specifics of the project. So each project that requires a traffic impact study, for a planning board special permit, gets a specific scope for that project. And so we'll look at the size and trip generation and other factors and decide, you know, if a parking study is required, and if so, you know, kind of what the general radius of that is. So, I think it's, it's really depends on the specific project. I would say, it's not necessarily the case that every project requires its own separate parking study, because oftentimes, they are providing off street parking, you know, particularly for commercial or non residential developments. And so, you know, we would typically not sort of have to look as closely at on street parking studies. But for example, the project that was mentioned during public comment, at 600 Mass Ave, which, which was proposed and was approved with with no accessory parking there, their parking study was done in order to understand the impact on potential impact on street parking.

Councillor Marc McGovern 1:03:15

Because I think that's, you know, an important thing to think about. I think we have, obviously, if you're older, or you have mobility issues, you know, parking in front of your house is more important, you know, and harder for you to get places. But I do think that we have, there's a lot when we talk about there's a lot of folks have this expectation that they own the spot in front of their house on the street. And if they have to park a block away, or they have to park, you know, half a block away on their street, that somehow there's not enough parking. And we live in the city, and it's a dense city. And I think some of the ways we think about parking need to shift, you know, if you have to park I mean, again, if you're able bodied, I know that, you know, this doesn't necessarily apply equally for everybody. But, you know, personally, you know, if I had to park, two blocks or a block away from my house, it would not be the end of the world for me, it

would be inconvenient. Sure, I'd love to have this spot in front of my house. But it's not, you know. So I think when we think about parking, we have to think about what is the radius we're looking at, and what is the inconvenience really, right? Is it I can't park directly in front of my house, or I have to park a block away? And so, I think we have to shift our thinking. Yeah, I think Councillor Azeem pointed this out, and I think you guys did too in the city's presentation: By eliminating minimums, we're not saying that parking will not be built in these units. It is not saying that you cannot build parking. And I think when you look at what's the increased rent that someone could get if there's a parking spot available, I think if you look at the increased sale of a condo or, you know, with a parking spot available, I do think you'll still see developers wanting to add some parking, because it's financially in their interest to do that. You can sell your condo for more money if it has a parking space attached to it. So I just, you know, for the folks who are concerned that if we do this, that all of a sudden, it's going to mean there's no parking being built in any new development. I just don't think it's going to play out quite that way. But by allowing this flexibility, when you're talking about, as was mentioned, in public comment, \$80,000 for a spot, an underground spot, that is money that could be potentially used for more housing and other things better use the parking. So I really just want to thank everybody. I'm looking forward to continuing this conversation. But I do think, you know, we need to start thinking a little bit differently about parking and how we use it and what our expectations are. Thank you.

Councillor Burhan Azeem 1:05:56

Thank you, Councillor Nolan.

Councillor Patricia Nolan 1:05:59

Thank you all. I am really glad to see this work continue. It's as CDD noted, our work on demand management, while some other cities have shown examples that they're ahead of us, we've had a 20 year head start on many other cities. They're kind of copying much of what we've been doing for many, many, many years. And in this in particular, thank you all for continuing this. We had a policy order on this of June of last year, which I have to give a shout out to our former colleague, Councillor Sobrino-Wheeler, who was a lead sponsor of that, and the Mayor and Quinton and myself saying, "Let's look at our car storage policies." even broader than parking minimums and parking maximums. So I'm really thrilled that this is moving forward. And in particular, I think that started the outreach that CDD referenced at the beginning, which is critically important that we really are trying to do that broad community outreach. I really want to thank CDD that the list of all those focus groups who from people who typically are not ones that we necessarily hear from is really important to ensure that we have that community wide perspective. And those common values were really, really impressive to review, you know, the respect the accountability. I was heartened to see that we are broadening this conversation to ensure that people who are not often at the table, are at the table. The question some of my colleagues have already talked about some of the points. One of the things I want to follow up on, which I'd mentioned at the beginning, is in that very extensive document that we got last July, in response to the June of 2021, there were a number of initiatives talked about, like a demand responsive policy for parking, that other cities have implemented that I think it sounds like we should consider to that that gets at this question of how it is that you are pricing for that precious commodity of on street parking. There were also some other innovations mentioned that were not able to probably be fit into this report about really looking at the changes in zoning as a comprehensive approach, including perspective on what is the future going to look like. There's more delivery, maybe less personal vehicles, standards for those. The future mobility of will we have autonomous vehicles. We're going to talk soon about E-bikes and automobile car sharing. So, I know this is on parking minimums, but I also know that one thing we want to do, and we're all united in, is making sure that it's a comprehensive approach so that when we do

something, it takes into account those. So I think my specific question is where does that fit into the conversation? Those kinds of specifics that were mentioned, as responses to this question, that while it's been on the table in many ways for probably 10 years, it's really was ramped up with with last year, as soon as we ended that COVID stretch of not really talking anything but COVID, and then as being continued in this hearing.

Iram Farooq 1:09:12

Through you, Chair, we had a much wider range of topics that we were speaking about. Councillor Nolan, you're right in the last July, and there was this, it was almost like a toolbox that we were presenting to you that there are all of these different strategies that various cities have utilized. And in order to figure out what are the optimal strategies for the Cambridge context, we initiated the policy study that Stephanie spoke about. So for those kinds of actions, we would say it's better to conclude the study and then we bring you that set of more comprehensive recommendations. And today we really focused on the call of the meeting, which was really about the parking minimums and the commercial, the non residential, maximums and the zoning.

Councillor Patricia Nolan 1:10:14

Right now, I appreciate that. And I want to move forward with all of it. We've been talking about this for a while. And yet, also, we know that sometimes if we do one thing without acknowledging the context for others, there could be, and in fact, as CDD noted, you know, some of the presentation was "okay, here's some concerns" so that if we end up ending parking minimums, which I'm in favor of, but we don't acknowledge that that may create more of a competition for public space on the street. We just, it doesn't mean we shouldn't do it, it just means we should be aware of it. And a follow up question, again, very similar. I recognize it's not something we can solve. But we're also working on and it is tied directly to this question of enabling mode share and a change in our perspective on ensuring that people don't have to rely on cars, is including public transit in the solution to ensure that there is a widely available frequent, affordable public transit. Because that is what will allow people to, particularly the people we think are not going to get on their bikes necessarily, but to be able to understand that they actually don't need a car. So I recognize that it's related to the call of the meeting, it is not specific to minimums, but again, we need to include it because otherwise we won't have this comprehensive, almost intersectional, kind of approach to transportation if we think of it that way. So I look forward to continuing that discussion. And that the study that is being done, I think, also addresses parking minimums. I wouldn't want us to not have the benefit of all those voices at the table when we address the parking minimums and maximums. So well, I'm very happy to see moving forward and look forward to us getting wording done to change some of that zoning. I yield.

Councillor Burhan Azeem 1:11:58

Thank you, Councillor Nolan. I wanted to acknowledge that Councillor Simmons has joined the call, and then go to Councillor Zondervan for his comments.

Councillor Quinton Zondervan 1:12:07

Thanks so much, Chair Azeem, and through you, thanks to all the presenters, including yourself. I just wanted to quickly echo what Councillor Nolan said about public transit. I want to see fare free shuttle buses that ferry people around in Cambridge so that people don't have to rely on private cars. As she also mentioned, the technology is rapidly changing, so we have to factor that into our thinking and not build in lots of future parking that essentially nobody's going to need. When Councillor Toner asked the question, and I heard Mr. Roberts say that the existence of parking minimums, in fact, restricts our flexibility and exacerbates the mismatch

that Councillor Toner referred to. So I would love to hear a little bit more about that. Because if we understand that, then the natural conclusion is to eliminate the parking minimums, and then to do whatever else we need to do to enhance that flexibility and allow that parking to be used properly.

Iram Farooq 1:13:24

Jeff?

Jeffrey Roberts, Director of Zoning and Development 1:13:27

Sure, through the Chair to the councillor, I can talk a little bit more about that. So you know, say you have parking and looking at different ways to utilize that parking. One of the constraints in zoning, you know, as was mentioned before, is that if that parking is accessory parking associated with a particular use, and it's required to be part of that, that's one of the things that can be a constraint in using it. But there are other constraints to that would have to be looked at. We talked about this a little bit last year in our presentation in July. One is if you're making that parking more generally available, and no longer is used as accessory parking, then you have to make sure that the principal use parking is allowed in that zoning district. And many residential districts do not allow principal principal use parking, but they might be allowed in a commercial area. So that's something that would need to be looked at on a site-by-site basis. There's also limitations on what's called commercial parking. So if you wanted to make a parking lot just a pay lot where, you know, people could say, you know, put up a sign and come in and park here if you want and pay for it. That could fall under a category called commercial parking which is regulated not just in the zoning sense but also through other ordinances and rules that are applicable that others can speak to a little bit more intelligently than I can. But again, that's the purpose of having this kind of parking policy study that looks at how all of these different things work together, is to figure out, you know, what are the, what are the types of outcomes that we might want to try to strive for? And then how, like, what are all the things that might need to be looked at and change in order to move in, in a different policy direction? So it takes a little bit of untangling because there's a lot that goes into it. But, you know, one piece of that is the minimum accessory requirements, but it's one of many other pieces that need to be looked at.

Councillor Quinton Zondervan 1:15:44

Thank you for that answer. And that sounds right to me. So yeah, I think that argues for us to pretty much immediately eliminate the parking minimums, and then we can continue to work on these other aspects. One question that did arise in my mind was, because I certainly understand the challenge with, you know, people, like, you know, if I if I wanted to put up a sign that says you can park on my driveway now, that might be problematic. But would it be possible for the city, for example, to allow residents only parking on some of these lots that have been repurposed, and then to compensate the property owner so that it wouldn't be a private operation, but it would be the city actually managing the parking. I believe the city already has a couple of parking lots like that.

Iram Farooq 1:16:46

Through the Chair, I'm gonna see if Megan has any perspective of this from the law department, because I think there are legal issues involved in that question.

Megan Bayer, Assistant City Solicitor 1:16:59

Thank you, Iram. Through you, Mr. Chair. The issue that maybe one of the issues that comes up is the anti-aid amendment, which you hear about often. So the city can't use public funds to benefit specific individuals or a specific organization. So if the city was funding parking for certain residents, versus just open to anyone, we might run into anti-aid amendment issues.

And then some of the issues that Jeff touched on with some of these other ordinances in place that regulate parking, we'd have to look at all of them with the commercial parking freeze and the parking management to see if there were any issues implicated with making parking available to residents for the city, you know, leasing or buying parking spots to make available to residents.

Councillor Quinton Zondervan 1:18:12

Thank you. Mr. Chair, through you, thanks for that answer. I think it is definitely worth looking into these areas and seeing what adjustments we may need to make so that we can start to reclaim some of that underutilized car storage and reclaim some of the space on our streets or on other properties that could be put to much better use. And I'm assuming, and I guess it's a question for Jeff, that we could limit that flexibility and repurposing to existing lots in the zoning so that we're not creating an incentive for people to build new parking lots only so that they can rent them out or otherwise benefit from them.

Jeffrey Roberts, Director of Zoning and Development 1:19:02

Yeah, should I just take that? Through the Chair to Councillor Zondervan... So there's issues to think about in zoning. I think we would need to think about what the implications are for existing development and existing land uses in addition to new land uses. So there might be situations where you would want to just limit, say in some districts, if you don't want to create additional parking, then you might want to have limitations that say you can do certain things with existing parking but still limit the creation of new parking. There might be other parts of the city where new parking is being created or where there will be a demand or potential, you know, needs to create new parking, where you would want to have rules in place that would say, you know, new parking can be created and can be used in these different ways. But you know, like everything in zoning, a lot of it depends on, you know, what actual part of the city you're looking at and what the particular planning objectives are for that area of the city. But yeah, you can make the regulations sort of more nuanced and treat existing development that's in place, you know, and have certain rules that apply to something that's pre-existing compared to something that's new.

Councillor Quinton Zondervan 1:20:29

Thank you, Mr. Chair, I have one final question slash comment which is related to earlier comments about the residential areas. There often is a lot of contention around the resident parking slots on the streets in some of the neighborhoods. I think that tends to intersect with the curb cuts and I was surprised to see that the curb cuts were not mentioned in this study that's being undertaken, because it was explicitly mentioned in the policy order that Councillor Nolan referred to from the previous term, where we had asked about that. And we saw a recent case where the council denied a curb cut, because, among several other reasons, it was, I certainly considered it excessive, because the property already had one curb cut on one street, and then they wanted to add another one on the side street. And that would, again, interfere with some of the residential parking on the streets. So, you know, there's policy implications, I think, from the curb cuts and how we manage that resource as well. And I think it particularly speaks to the issues in the residential neighborhoods, because, you know, the parking minimums and so on. I don't think that's going to have a huge impact in the residential neighborhood. I mean, I look at the developments in my neighborhood, and they almost always add parking, because you know, people want that, right? So in those units, I don't think just because we eliminate the parking minimums that those units will suddenly be built without parking, but the curb cuts is potentially an area where we can regulate some of that activity. So I would definitely urge the staff to consider that in their study as well. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Councillor Burhan Azeem 1:22:45

Thank you, Councillor Zondervan. I see Councillor Toner had his hand up earlier. I was wondering if anyone who's not part of the committee, either the Mayor or the Vice Mayor or Councillor Simmons, had any questions at this time? Vice Mayor Mallon?

Vice Mayor Alanna Mallon 1:23:01

Thank you, Mr. Chair, through you. Thank you for the presentation. And thanks to CDD, I found the presentation really, really helpful. There was obviously a lot of work that went behind it. And getting an update on the parking study was very, very helpful. I'm glad to know that this is going to be coming forward in November. We can talk about other interesting ways to start thinking about mitigating transportation, congestion, and the broader issues around parking. The one thing I just wanted to clarify with CDD related to that parking study is that it seems to me that we can move forward on eliminating parking minimums at this time and not have to wait until after that parking study goes forward in November, right? Is that my understanding?

Iram Farooq 1:23:49

Through you, Chair. Yes, I think that adjusting the parking minimums is something that can certainly happen now. And we can we can build that into the communication that we have with the community as part of the study. Is that fair? Stephanie, would you like to add something to that?

Stephanie Groll 1:24:20

Through you, Mr. Chair, I would just add that we could certainly do that, and that may be the direction that people come to consensus on. And that it just creates just one more element of constraint for what we're working with with the community. So as we talk with people in the community, they'll just know that this was an action that was taken and we are open to talking about the rest of universe but that this action has been completed.

Vice Mayor Alanna Mallon 1:24:57

Okay, thank you. Thanks to both of you for clarifying that. I didn't mean to put you on the hot seat, but I just wanted to make sure. The other thing I wanted to just quickly touch on, and I think Councillor Zondervan touched on it a little bit as well, is around land use policy. Miss Farooq, you and I were discussing my favorite topic, which seems to be the Intercontinental parking lots in Central Square, which are empty, every single day. And the constraints right now around them converting that that use to anything else, right, like, let's say we wanted it to be housing or we wanted it to be parking for other things. Those parking minimums went away, and then different rezoning and they have never come back to just rezone their parking lot to be able to do something else with it. I'm just curious around, you know, when we were talking about this parking study, and what we're looking at, like talking about mechanisms by which property owners can go back and think about land use and think about repurposing, whether it's for housing or whether it's for other private or public parking... Is that part of the conversation at all right now about repurposing land use and making it easier for property owners to do that once there isn't a parking minimum, say?

Iram Farooq 1:26:16

Through you, Mr. Chair, this is an extremely complicated question, Vice Mayor. I'm gonna lean on both Jeff and Megan to supplement what I say, but just use that particular example to start off. But you know, I am not 100% sure if that project actually has a special permit, or if it was built with just a building permit because it predated some of the special permit provisions that we have for large development. And if somebody has a special permit, they can come back and get an amendment to their special permit, but it's like getting a new special permit. So it requires a lot of investment for the financial design and timewise community process for them. So

typically, that happens if somebody is planning a redevelopment of their property. So there's some incentive that brings them to the table in order to seek that amendment. If it's not a special permit, and just a building permit, I would think that is a lot more complicated, and I would have to rely on on Megan's expertise on that one. So maybe I'll turn it over to Megan and Jeff... Doesn't look like anybody wants to go first. Jeff, would you like to go first and then Megan can go second?

Jeffrey Roberts, Director of Zoning and Development 1:27:59

Oh, I thought we were going in the order that you said. So I think Megan can start, maybe?

Megan Bayer, Assistant City Solicitor 1:28:07

Through you, Mr. Chair. So I'm not positive I understand the question. Building on what Iram said, if, and this may not be exactly what you asked, but from what Iram said: If a project has a certain number of parking required by special permit, and even if we now change the zoning so that there is no longer a parking minimum, but their special permit had a condition that they have a certain amount of parking, they would have to go back to the planning board or BZA to amend their special permit because at the time they got the special permit, there was some parking requirement and there was a condition imposed on their special permit for a certain amount of parking, and that condition stays with the project that was built pursuant to that special permit for the life of the project unless they invent a special permit. So if that was the question, that's my thoughts on that. But if there was something else you were looking for, I'm happy to help.

Vice Mayor Alanna Mallon 1:29:25

Mr Chair? Thank you. Um, I don't want to belabor this point, because it might be outside of the purview of this conversation. However, I do wonder, as we're moving forward, if we can think about a way to either expedite a process for updating a special permit or a building permit on the life of a new ordinance that would state no parking minimums, or if there was a way, while we're thinking about this ordinance, to eliminate past building permit and special permits. I just think there's a way for us to be creative to think about this so that we can really take advantage of those places and spaces that we see every day that have nobody there, ever, when we know that we have a housing crunch, when we know that we need more parking in some of our business districts. There has to be a way for us to be creative in this moment, while we're reimagining parking minimums, to allow for that possibility so that we can regain and recapture either that land for more cars storage, or for housing, or for a million other needs of the city. So I'll yield back at this time, but I just wanted to say that and put that on the record. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Councillor Burhan Azeem 1:30:37

Thank you, Councillor Mallon. Councillor Toner, I know you had your hands up earlier.

Councillor Paul Toner 1:30:41

I pass, thank you.

Councillor Burhan Azeem 1:30:44

Wonderful. At this time, does anyone else have any other questions? Councillor Nolan.

Councillor Patricia Nolan 1:30:56

Thanks. I just have one. I don't know if the comment and encouragement, as has been noted before. One of the issues in the parking study that should be done outreach to the community is the difference geographically. I live in an area where it is much easier to find on street parking

than other parts of the city. And so as we do this community outreach, again, that doesn't mean I'm in favor of much of the changes we're talking about. But as we do this community outreach, are we also take into account not just the groups we've talked about in terms of who owns a car, who doesn't own a car, who has challenges with language access to the city, but also geography so that we understand, as we've seen in different areas, the parking situation is dramatically different, even in a really small city like Cambridge. So is that part of the lenses through which we'll be looking at this, this overarching parking study?

James Zall 1:31:52

Stephanie, would you like to address that?

Jeffrey Roberts, Director of Zoning and Development 1:31:55

Thank you, through you, Mr. Chair. Yes, we're certainly looking at how parking needs and experiences change across the city, and we'll bring that into our analysis as well as our recommendations.

Councillor Patricia Nolan 1:32:10

Thank you. That was my question. I yield.

Councillor Burhan Azeem 1:32:15

Thank you, Councillor Nolan. Seeing no other questions at this time, I wanted to make a motion to send this back to the city council with a favorable recommendation from the Transportation Committee. Can we do a roll call vote? If there's any other questions at this point, we'll take that first, then we'll proceed to the roll call vote. Councillor Nolan, and then Councillor Toner.

Councillor Patricia Nolan 1:32:40

Yeah, do we actually have zoning language we're sending back, or are we sending back the report, or what? Are we talking about sending back the zoning language about the parking? I just want to be clear on what, which I'm in favor of, I just wanted to make sure which part of the zoning language are we sending back?

Councillor Burhan Azeem 1:32:56

So the zoning language, specifically, it's a great question, the zoning language specifically, containing the parking minimums, which was the zoning language permitted to setting the minimums to zero. The maximums CDD will have a committee hearing on at a later time once this parking study is done. And the report will be sent to the city council as well. Councillor Toner?

Councillor Paul Toner 1:33:21

Thank you, Mr. Chair. Before we vote, I, I just wanted to make sure that there's going to be some way to assure, again, I'm generally supportive of the having no minimum, but as Councillor Nolan mentioned, different neighborhoods have different needs. I want to figure out a way to make sure that we get the input and feedback from those communities when projects are being discussed. Currently the process is if you want to get a reduction in parking, you have to go and make your case and why you can live with that. So, you know, I don't know if the process we have now is the best process, or if it's saying no minimum and you still have to come in and prove that you don't need a minimum.

Councillor Burhan Azeem 1:34:12

Great point. Councillor Toner, perhaps you and I can also have an offline discussion about this, but also Zondervan, Clerk Wilson first and then we'll go to Councillor Zondervan.

Anthony Wilson 1:34:23

I just wanted to, through you, Mr. Chair, respond to the question that I believe was from Councillor Nolan. So, what's in the committee right now is a policy order directing the City Manager to remove all references to parking minimums in the zoning ordinance and to come back with language for the council. So what's going back to the council is this policy order that will then request ordinance amendment language and then ask the City Manager to return ordinance amendment language to the Council.

Councillor Burhan Azeem 1:34:58

Thank you, Clerk. Councillor Zondervan?

Councillor Quinton Zondervan 1:35:02

Thank you, Mr. Chair. I believe that there's two separate pieces: the parking minimums, the policy order actually included the language. And then for the parking maximums, that's a more open ended conversation, but I believe the correct motion is simply to refer this matter back to the city council, and then, you know, as chair of ordinance, I'm happy to schedule an ordinance committee hearing where we can dive into the topic further and and we can address some of the questions like Councillor Toner has raised before we move forward with ordination.

Councillor Burhan Azeem 1:35:47

Wonderful, on a motion to refer the parking minimums policy orders presented to us today back to the city council. Seeing no other hands at this time, Clerk Wilson, can we do a roll call vote?

Anthony Wilson 1:36:04

Is this gonna be with no recommendation, or with a positive or negative recommendation

Councillor Burhan Azeem 1:36:07

With a positive recommendation.

Anthony Wilson 1:36:09

On that motion, Councillor McGovern.

Councillor Marc McGovern 1:36:16

Yes.

Anthony Wilson 1:36:17

Yes, Councillor Nolan.

Councillor Patricia Nolan 1:36:19

Yes.

Anthony Wilson 1:36:20

Yes, Councillor Toner.

Councillor Paul Toner 1:36:21

Yes.

Anthony Wilson 1:36:22

Yes, Councillor Zondervan.

Councillor Quinton Zondervan 1:36:24

Yes.

Anthony Wilson 1:36:25

Yes, Councillor Azeem.

Councillor Burhan Azeem 1:36:26

Yes.

Anthony Wilson 1:36:27

Motion passes, five in favor, zero against.

Councillor Burhan Azeem 1:36:32

Anyone else have questions at this time? Otherwise, we can entertain a motion to adjourn the committee hearing. Seeing no other hands, on the motion, can we do a roll call vote, Clerk Wilson?

Anthony Wilson 1:36:52

On that motion, Councillor McGovern.

Councillor Marc McGovern 1:36:55

Yes.

Anthony Wilson 1:36:56

Yes, Councillor Nolan.

Councillor Patricia Nolan 1:36:58

Yes.

Anthony Wilson 1:36:59

Yes, Councillor Toner.

Councillor Paul Toner 1:37:01

Yes.

Anthony Wilson 1:37:02

Yes, Councillor Zondervan.

Councillor Quinton Zondervan 1:37:03

Yes.

Anthony Wilson 1:37:04

Yes, Councillor Azeem.

Councillor Burhan Azeem 1:37:06

Yes.

Anthony Wilson 1:37:07

Motion passes five in favor, zero against.

Councillor Burhan Azeem 1:37:12

Thank you guys, have a great day.

That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to direct staff from the Community Development and Law Departments to examine the Zoning Ordinance and provide amendment language for consideration by the City Council to remove all other references to parking minimums, including in Articles 13.000, 14.000, 15.000, 16.000, 17.000, and 20.000. CHARTER RIGHT EXERCISED BY COUNCILLOR SIMMONS IN COUNCIL FEBRUARY 7, 2022 REFERRED TO COMMITTEE FEBRUARY 28, 2022 (Ordinance #2022-8)

A communication was received from Assistant City Manager, Community Development, Iram Farooq, AICP, LEED-AP, transmitting a presentation for the April 5, 2022 meeting.

A communication was received from Councillor Burhan Azeem, transmitting a presentation for the April 5, 2022 regarding Parking Minimums.