

## GENERAL GUIDELINES

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICE DIVISION OF PARKING SERVICES CITY OF COLUMBUS, OHIO
<b>SUBJECT:</b> Parking Variance Review Guidelines <b>EFFECTIVE DATE:</b> January 31, 2021 <b>PAGES:</b> 1 of 9 <span style="float: right;"><b>BY:</b> Jennifer Gallagher, Director</span>

**I. PURPOSE**

The Division of Parking Services is committed to providing accessible, equitable and predictable mobility and parking options for all residents, guests and visitors. The Division aims to manage congestion, increase mobility options and manage parking, while preserving the uniqueness of our neighborhoods for all to enjoy. These guidelines were created in an effort to standardize the parking variance process and provide current parking availability data to Parking Services staff to make data driven decisions about supporting or not supporting a parking variance request.

These guidelines set forth the procedure for reviewing proposed variances to parking code-requirements within the zoning review process. Variances are often required to provide context-sensitive solutions for proposed developments that are unable to meet the code-required minimum number of parking spaces, or in cases where providing required parking would contribute to overbuilding parking in the area. These guidelines outline standard protocols and process for determining staff recommendations for proposed parking variances.

**II. DEFINITIONS**

The following definitions shall apply to terms used in these guidelines:

- A. *Department* means the City of Columbus Department of Public Service.
- B. *Director* means the Director of the Department of Public Service, or designee.
- C. *Division* means the Division of Parking Services
- D. *Individual street parking space* means a portion of the paved surface approximately twenty (20) feet in length along the curb of streets and shall accommodate a vehicle when the same is parked as prescribed by Section 2151.06 of the Columbus City Code.
- E. *Parking* means the standing of a vehicle whether occupied or not, otherwise than temporarily for the purpose of and while actually engaged in loading or unloading, or in compliance with directions of a police officer or traffic control device as prescribed in Section 2155.01 of the Columbus City Code.
- F. *Parking meter* means any mechanical or electronic device used, placed, installed, or erected at or near the curb adjacent to the parking lane, or otherwise on property which is owned, leased, or operated by the city. A parking meter includes, but is not limited to, single space meters, multi-space meters, and parking mobile payment applications authorized by the city of Columbus as prescribed in Section 2155.01 of the Columbus City Code.
- G. *Parking Demand Zone* means an area of the City that has a higher population and employment density, indicating a higher demand for parking. For a map of all parking demand zones, refer to the map in Exhibit A.

**III. PARKING DEMAND ZONE**

The Parking Demand Zone (see Exhibit A) is determined through an evaluation of job and population density data, derived using 2025 projections from the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission’s (MORPC) Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). Areas with high employment and population density were considered for inclusion in the zone. Other factors such as proximity to other high demand areas, land use type, and existing parking demand data were also considered.

**IV. PROCESS**

A. Parking variance requests must provide a detailed explanation of the hardship faced due to code required parking minimums, and justification for the variance, including compliance with the City’s Strategic Parking Plan, if applicable.

B. Parking variances should be reviewed based on existing data regarding parking availability, or data should be collected, as described in Sections V(C) through V(E), to determine availability when current data is not readily available.

C. Request within a Parking Demand Zone:

1. When a parking variance request for a non-residential development is located within the Parking Demand Zone, the applicant will be required to conduct a parking study when the following conditions are met:

Number of spaces reduced		Percent reduction	Parking study required
<15 spaces	OR	<25% reduction	No
≥15 spaces	AND	≥25% reduction	Yes

2. When a parking variance request for a residential development is located within the Parking Demand Zone, the application will be required to conduct a parking study when the following conditions are met:

Number of spaces reduced		Percent reduction	Parking study required
<15 spaces	OR	<34% reduction	No
≥15 spaces	AND	≥34% reduction	Yes

3. In the situation of a mixed-use development that includes both non-residential and residential uses, the threshold described in Section IV(C)(1) would be utilized.

D. Request outside the Parking Demand Zone:

1. When a parking variance request for a non-residential development is located outside the Parking Demand Zone, the applicant will be required to conduct a parking study when the following conditions are met:

Number of spaces reduced		Percent reduction	Parking study required
<30 spaces	OR	<25% reduction	No
≥30 spaces	AND	≥25% reduction	Yes

2. When a parking variance request for a residential development is located outside the Parking Demand Zone, the applicant will be required to conduct a parking study when the following conditions are met:

Number of spaces reduced		Percent reduction	Parking study required
<30 spaces	OR	<15% reduction	No
≥30 spaces	AND	≥15% reduction	Yes

3. In the situation of a mixed-use development that includes both non-residential and residential uses, the threshold described in Section IV(D)(2) would be utilized.
- E. The parameters described in Sections IV(C) and IV(D) are intended to provide the general framework for the Division to require a parking study to be performed. However, the Division may require a parking study to be performed for a project that would be outside of these parameters in order to ensure a specific development project does not overburden the public streets.
- F. In a case where a parking study is not required, the recommendation of the Division will be to support the requested variance.
- G. The Division of Parking Services staff will review the parking study and existing parking demand and make a recommendation for support or nonsupport of the variance, as described in Section VI.

## **V. PARKING STUDY REQUIREMENTS**

- A. Parking occupancy must be counted for all on-street and off-street parking locations as determined by the Division on a project-by-project basis.
- B. Parking occupancy counts shall be taken on a typical day so as best to determine parking demand under normal conditions. Counts are not to be taken during special events, poor weather conditions, holidays, or any other condition that may have a significant impact on parking.
- C. One (1) parking occupancy count is required at a single point in time, on one (1) weekday, Monday through Friday, during each of the following time periods:
  1. Between the hours of 5:00 AM and 7:00 AM;
  2. Between the hours of 11:00 AM and 1:00 PM; and
  3. Between the hours of 6:00 PM and 8:00 PM.
- D. One (1) parking occupancy count is required at a single point in time, on one (1) weekend day, to be a Saturday unless otherwise specified, during each of the following time periods:
  1. Between the hours of 5:00 AM and 7:00 AM;
  2. Between the hours of 11:00 AM and 1:00 PM; and
  3. Between the hours of 6:00 PM and 8:00 PM.
- E. Photographs or video of each block/off-street parking area studied shall be provided, including time stamp, to validate counts.
- F. Presence of mobility options proposed within the plan or existing adjacent to the project site should be noted. Examples of mobility options include the presence on-site or adjacent to a COTA transit stop, bike share station, and/or car share vehicle.
- G. Provision of comparable projects may be requested as part of a parking study where there is limited data available for the proposed use or significant pressures on parking supply and demand.
- H. Data shall be provided to the Division using the provided template and meeting data standards as outlined in Exhibits B, C and D.
- I. In the event that the study area is adjacent to or includes streets within a municipality other than the City of Columbus, the Division will contact staff from that municipality to gather input on parking conditions in the area. This input will help to inform the Division's support or nonsupport of the variance.
  1. For the purposes of this evaluation, the streets within another municipality will, not be considered as providing capacity for overflow demand not managed on site,

though they may be required to be studied in order to understand existing parking demands in the area.

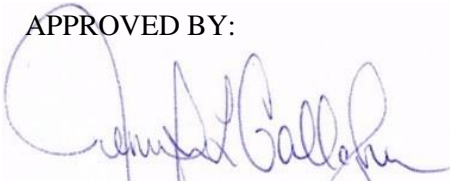
## **VI. STAFF DECISION MAKING PROCESS**

- A. Division staff shall review all submitted and required parking study data to render a decision to either support or not support of the requested parking variance within thirty (30) days of receiving a completed parking study.
- B. As outlined in the Strategic Parking Plan, staff review of parking variances aims to consider system impacts in order to provide adequate parking supply and limit spillover impacts on residents and businesses. A target range of 60%-80% on-street occupancy is preferred.
- C. Current parking occupancy will be compared with the increased demand for on-street parking created by the requested reduction.
  1. The provided Parking Study Template (see Exhibits B, C and D) gives a framework for counts and the analysis of the projected demand for on-street parking that will be caused by the requested variance. Staff will review projected impacts of additional cars parking on-street equivalent to 50%, 75% and 100% of the requested variance.
  2. If the requested variance creates parking demand that would not raise on-street occupancy above 80%, support of the variance is encouraged.
  3. If the requested variance creates parking demand that would raise on-street occupancy above 80%, support of the variance is discouraged without additional supporting documentation, including but not limited to:
    - a. Letter(s) of support from neighborhood organizations such as civic associations or area commissions;
    - b. Demonstration of mobility options existing adjacent to the site, and/or provided within the plan, including but not limited to:
      - 1) COTA bus stop(s);
      - 2) Bicycle share station;
      - 3) Bicycle parking;
      - 4) Car share parking;
      - 5) Shared parking agreements;
      - 6) Transportation demand management strategies.

## **VII. SPECIAL REVIEW**

- A. There may be instances when enforcement of these guidelines would create a gross inequity of new cultural, institutional, or affordable housing uses or expansions of cultural, institutional, or affordable housing uses are proposed. Qualifying affordable housing is defined as housing that has its affordability requirements monitored by a government agency, or other housing as determined on a case by case basis. When it is determined that the application of these guidelines would create a gross inequity for such uses, the Director shall have the authority to waive the requirement for a parking study.
- B. Per recommendations from the Strategic Parking Plan, residents of multifamily developments that receive a variance to off-street parking requirements are not eligible to receive on-street residential parking permits.

APPROVED BY:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jennifer Gallagher", is written over a light blue rectangular background.

JENNIFER GALLAGHER, DIRECTOR  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICE



Exhibit A: Map of Parking Demand Zone

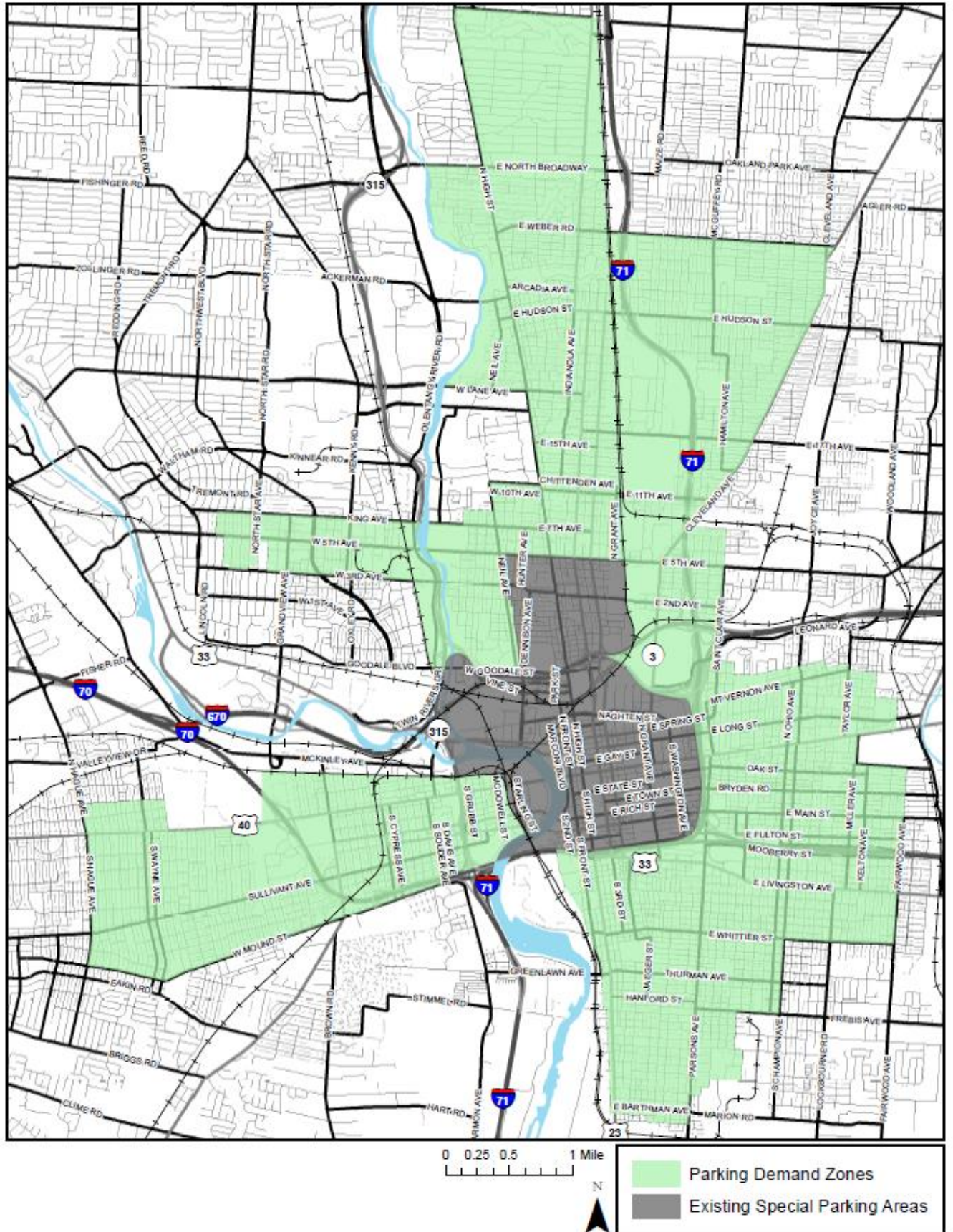


Exhibit B: Parking Study Template (On-Street)

Example Counts											
Street (name of street segment being counted)	Blockface	From	To	Total Existing Spaces	Example Count	Available Spaces	Example Occupancy %	Day of Week	Date	Time	Photo Taken?
FRONT ST (Example)	W	W BROAD ST	W LONG ST	14	14	0	100% (Count total/Existing Spaces)	Wednesday	1/2/2019	6:30 AM	Y
FRONT ST (Example)	E	W BROAD ST	W LONG ST	14	7	7	50%	Wednesday	1/2/2019	6:45 AM	Y
Morning Counts - Weekday											
Street (name of street segment being counted)	Blockface	From	To	Total Existing Spaces	Morning Count	Available Spaces	Morning (5-7am) Occupancy %	Day of Week	Date	Time	Photo Taken?
TOTAL MORNING COUNT + OCCUPANCY											
Mid-Day Counts - Weekday											
Street (name of street segment being counted)	Blockface	From	To	Total Existing Spaces	Mid-day Count	Available Spaces	Mid-day (11am-1pm) Occupancy %	Day of Week	Date	Time	Photo Taken?
TOTAL MID-DAY COUNT + OCCUPANCY											
Evening Counts - Weekday											
Street (name of street segment being counted)	Blockface	From	To	Total Existing Spaces	Evening Count	Available Spaces	Evening (6-8pm) Occupancy %	Day of Week	Date	Time	Photo Taken?
TOTAL EVENING COUNT + OCCUPANCY											
Additional Mobility Notes:											

Exhibit C: Parking Study Template (Off-Street)

Example Counts								
Parking Lot Studied	Total Existing Spaces	Example Count	Available Spaces	Example Occupancy %	Day of Week	Date	Time	Photo Taken?
Kroger	125	50	75	40% (Count total/Existing Spaces)	Tuesday	10/29/2019	6:30 AM	Y
E Spring and N Pearl	200	180	20	90%	Tuesday	10/29/2019	6:45 AM	Y
Morning Counts - Weekday								
Parking Lot Studied	Total Existing Spaces	Morning Count	Available Spaces	Morning (5-7am) Occupancy %	Day of Week	Date	Time	Photo Taken?
<b>TOTAL MORNING COUNT + OCCUPANCY</b>								
Mid-Day Counts - Weekday								
Parking Lot Studied	Total Existing Spaces	Mid-day Count	Available Spaces	Mid-day (11am-1pm) Occupancy %	Day of Week	Date	Time	Photo Taken?
<b>TOTAL MID-DAY COUNT + OCCUPANCY</b>								
Evening Counts - Weekday								
Parking Lot Studied	Total Existing Spaces	Evening Count	Available Spaces	Evening (6-8pm) Occupancy %	Day of Week	Date	Time	Photo Taken?
<b>TOTAL EVENING COUNT + OCCUPANCY</b>								
Additional Mobility Notes:								



