

Redstone

Brokerage Services
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Burlington City Councilors,

The proposed amendment to eliminate parking requirements within the Downtown Parking District is an important step in facilitating smart growth in the City of Burlington. As someone that has been working very hard for the last decade to bring thoughtful development to our community, I can tell you that every project I work on hinges on figuring out how to provide the right amount of parking for the proposed use. I know that regardless of the requirements in the Ordinance, any project I propose needs to have the right amount of parking to ensure that the project is marketable and can be financed. Eliminating parking requirements in the Downtown Parking District is about flexibility. It is a recognition that property owners and developers will figure out how to provide adequate parking for their projects regardless of City Ordinance requirements. It allows the flexibility for a property owner or developer to identify creative ways to deal with parking such as off-site CCTA shuttle service from satellite parking lots; utilizing existing off-site parking structures/lots downtown; providing incentives for tenants to carpool, use public transit, CarShare, etc. While the current Ordinance allows for parking waivers from the DRB on a case-by-case basis it creates ambiguity and opens our development review process up to challenges from project appellants. The Ordinance is a law and everything in it is open to interpretation and questions of reasonableness from a court of law in a permit appeal. Items in the Ordinance that may seem to allow flexibility often leave the DRB and Planning & Zoning staff in the tough position of having to interpret what is reasonable. Those discretionary DRB decisions have the potential to be overturned by a court if the court does not agree with the DRB's assessment of what is reasonable. This has happened on a number of good projects in Burlington and those projects have either duked it out in court for years on end or they have died on plans and were never built.

As a local developer and resident of Ward 2, I believe in a walk-able and pedestrian-friendly Downtown. This amendment will help preserve our local character and urban fabric by eliminating the mandate that projects build more parking than is necessary. This amendment will encourage more productive and valuable use of limited land in our downtown, thereby improving the tax-base.

As a supporter of PlanBTV and the current parking initiatives underway, I believe we have an obligation to manage our parking differently, like many other cities across the country. This is one important step that was prioritized in PlanBTV. Thank you for your support and consideration.

Sincerely,



Erik J. Hoekstra
Development Manager