

City of Laramie

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LARAMIE PLANNING COMMISSION September 13, 2021 STAFF REPORT

FILE: TA-21-01 Parking Standards Update

REQUEST: An amendment to Table 15.14.040-3 of LMC updating residential parking standards

APPLICANT: City of Laramie

PURPOSE: To update Laramie Municipal Code as a best practice approach to aiding housing development for the community

PREPARED BY: Matthew Cox, Associate Planner

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

Move to recommend that the City Council **approve** amendments to LMC 15.14.040 for the purpose of updating Laramie Municipal Code related to parking requirements for residential uses.

APPLICABLE CODE SECTION(S):

Text Amendments must be reviewed by the Planning Commission and City Council. Planning Commission action is forwarded to the City Council as a recommendation.

- Laramie Municipal Code Title 15, Unified Development Code
- Wyoming State Statutes Title 15 Cities and Towns, Article 5 Planning
- Wyoming State Statutes Title 15 Cities and Towns, Article 6 Zoning
- Laramie Comprehensive Plan
- Thrive Laramie Community and Economic Development Action Strategy
- Laramie Housing Strategy 2020

BACKGROUND AND SUMMARY:

The present amendment is initiated by the City of Laramie as part of the continual effort to keep the Unified Development Code (UDC) accurate, correct concerns, and remove potential avenues of confusion. All prior revisions to LMC Chapter 15 (Unified Development Code) can be found online at www.cityoflaramie.org/UDC. Additionally, these changes are focused on meeting implementation strategies found in in the 2015 Housing Study, Economic Development Plan and Laramie Housing Strategy 2020; all which are intended to improve the housing options in our community.

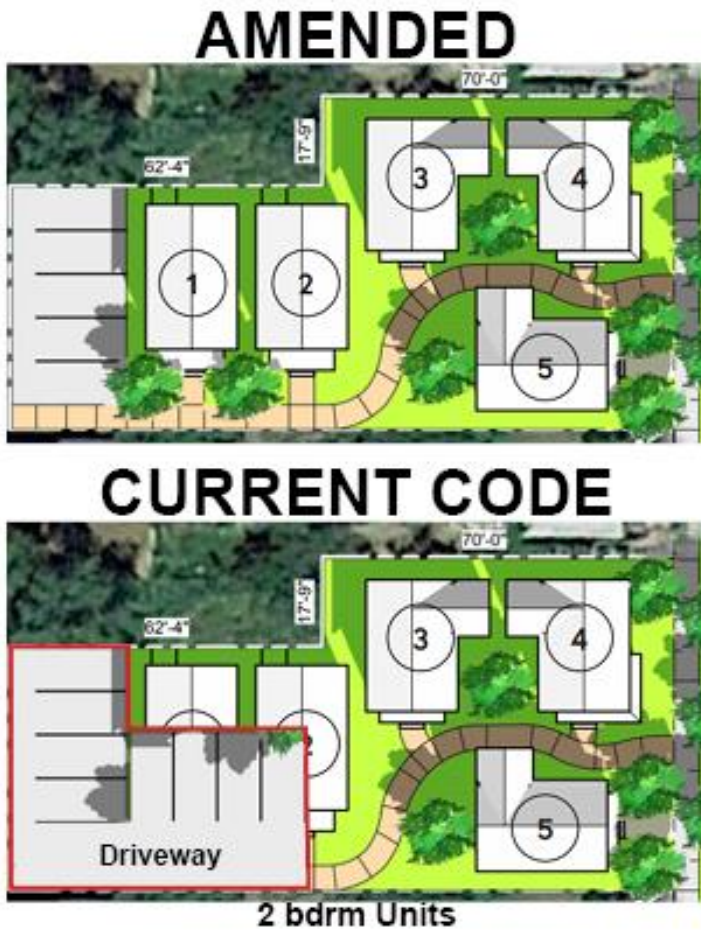


Figure 1: The above figure shows how even minor parking reductions can increase the number of units a property can fit. In this example, a reduction of 3 spaces allows for two additional units.

The proposed text updates are being proposed to encourage housing affordability. The proposed amendment will decrease the parking requirements in all residential uses that comprise of two or more units. Single family parking requirements will remain the same. Additionally these changes will allow for more sustainable land use practices, remove parking burdens from developers, prepares Laramie UDC for the autonomous automobile technology and public transit..

This Text Amendment is being considered after Planning Commission and Council have participated in work sessions related to Community Builders and the work they have done for the City of Laramie in hopes of combatting the City’s housing challenges. These decreases were spurred through national best practices, observations and gathered public comments through the Thrive Laramie Economic and Housing process. In this work, Community Builders has stated that it’s reasonable to require new buildings to provide new parking spaces in neighborhoods where there is not sufficient parking already available, however setting your parking requirements even just a little too high can make it impossible or unaffordable to

build many kinds of homes – especially some of the more compact, affordable homes that are needed in Laramie. Simply put, parking competes with leasable space. The more parking required, the fewer units a site can accommodate, and a developer can build. As a result, the developer must charge more rent per unit to make the project financially feasible. These parking changes are one component of the overall approach that the City is taking to improve housing affordability. Future changes to the R2, R2M and R3 zoning districts, as well as these parking changes will complement each other in solving our housing challenges.

Parking is also expensive. These costs can be broken down into two categories. One is the initial cost of constructing parking spaces, which can make or break a small project. A typical surface parking stall costs between \$3,000 and \$10,000 to construct (including the value of the land it occupies). A parking space in a garage can cost \$25,000 to \$50,000 a space. The second of the construction cost is additional costs related to drainage infrastructure and loss of space on the lot for units, meaning that less space can be dedicated to their building square footage. These two

construction costs together end up raising rents for the units or monthly mortgage; essentially these costs are passed along to the renter or owner.

Another impact related to parking is the loss a community may feel within what would be the opportunity cost, affecting tax income, housing units, business space or even something as simple as a courtyard that could benefit the neighborhood. Jackson, WY has over 100,000 parking spaces, whose eventual replacement cost is a staggering \$192,000 per household (Quantified Parking: Comprehensive Parking Inventories for Five U.S. Cities, 2018, <https://www.strongtowns.org/journal/more-evidence-that-we-have-too-much-parking>). These high, retrofitting costs will be passed onto the home owner or tenant, increasing our unaffordable housing concern, of which has a direct effect on the sustainability of Laramie's growth.

Other future considerations related to parking must also be considered when considering these changes. Autonomous vehicles are expected to change how parking in cities will be shaped. With cars being able to park themselves with no door having to open, parking lots will need less space. Also, a typical vehicle spends 95 percent of its lifetime "parked", but with autonomous vehicles, a car may drop off a passenger and then park itself at home, rather than taking valuable space in a commercial corridor, downtown, or a large, surface parking lot that could be used as another business or the car may just cruise around in order to avoid paying for parking. It is difficult to imagine this future, but a step in this direction is already here with companies such as Lyft and Uber. Also, vehicle ownership is down, with less and less people, especially younger people opting not to even own a car. While these trend may not be being observed in Laramie at the moment, our reliance on vehicles is changing and we should be prepared.

PROPOSED CHANGES

As shown below and in the amended table in Attachment A of the ordinance, these changes are only affecting residential developments with two or more units, single family units will remain the same. Code defines multi-family as any property with 3 or more residential units, of which would then require these units to comply with all multi-family design requirements, including parking. These requirements include perimeter landscaping, parking, building design and building layout. No matter how the units are constructed, cottages, apartments, townhomes, etc., they will fall under the multi-family design requirements. Based on these proposed changes, new parking spaces will still be required for any additional units placed on a property, including units added onto existing single-family home properties.

Finally, the proposed parking changes are minimal, but impactful to housing affordability. Changes to two-family units (i.e. duplexes), will now be 1 space per unit vs. by bedroom. In most cases this will not necessarily mean that there will be less parking, as many duplexes currently being built have 2-4 parking spaces per unit, but will now provide the option to create product with less parking. Additionally, staff notes that parking for multi-family will be similar to what we require for single family and two family, except for the added requirement of visitor parking for each development.

TABLE 15.14.040-3: OFF STREET PARKING STANDARDS		
DU – Dwelling Unit Sq. Ft. – Square Feet GFA – Gross Floor Area		
Use Category	Use Type	Required Spaces
RESIDENTIAL USES		
Household Living	Dwelling, Single-Family Detached	1 per DU
	Dwelling, Single-Family Attached	1 per DU
	Dwelling, IBC/IRC Modular Home	1 per DU
	Dwelling, HUD Modular Home	1 per DU
	Dwelling, Mobile Home	1 per DU
	Dwelling, Two-Family	1 for each efficiency or 1 bedroom unit, 1.5 for each two bedroom unit, and 2 for each unit in excess of 2 bedrooms. In addition, 1 visitor parking space per structure 1 per DU
	Dwelling, Multi-Family	1 for each efficiency or 1 bedroom unit, 1.5 for each two bedroom unit, and 2 for each unit in excess of 2 bedrooms. In addition, 1 space for every 5 units for visitor parking. 1 per DU, and 1 visitor spot for every 10 units
	Dwelling, Townhouse	1 per DU
	Dwelling, Live/Work	1 per DU
	Dwelling, Commercial	1 per DU
	HUD Modular Home Community	1 per DU
	Manufactured <u>home Community</u>	1 per DU
	Group Living	Boarding and rooming house
Fraternity or sorority		3 for each 5 occupants at capacity
Group Homes		0.5 per 1 bedroom and one visitor space DU
Retirement home, nursing home, hospice or assisted living facility		0.5 per <u>1 bedroom</u> unit, 1 per 2 bedroom unit, 1.5 per 2 and above bedroom units

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND EQUALITY

From what we have heard from the public and council, there is a parking problem in neighborhoods around the University during class hours and other single-family residential neighborhoods where resident’s trailers, extra cars and toys take up spots on the street. These amendments do not affect single-family residential units, but instead are only affecting residential developments with two or more units, who for the most part will be required to provide surface parking lots, where storage of extra vehicles are not generally placed. These amendments will make parking requirements more equal across the housing typology spectrum. As stated above, a single-family home, which could have 10 bedrooms, only requires one parking space, while a two-bedroom apartment in a multi-family complex currently requires 1.5 parking spaces. In the end, the cost of the extra parking space will trickle down to the buyer or the tenant, which impacts the housing affordability goal the City is trying to achieve, as stated in the Thrive Laramie Housing Study.

Community Builders: Laramie Housing Strategy 2020

To help further evaluate the housing issue the City of Laramie has been working with a planning organization called Community Builders for the past 3 years to address barriers to housing and economic development issues in our community. Staff believes that decreasing parking requirements allows for more economic vitality through added residential units and creates a more aesthetic public realm, by activating the street and properties with a use versus parking. Another point made by Community Builders, relating to housing is, "Parking competes with leasable building area. The more parking you require, the fewer units a developer can build. This requires a developer to charge more for rent to make up the difference." Community Builders, among many others has written a letter of support for these text amendments stating that they are accomplishing community-driven reform, expanding supply and diversity of housing and improving affordability. Letter is attached to the staff report.



Figure 2 Shows the how much parking affects the affordability of housing. This figure is pulled from the Laramie Housing Study 2020.

HARD COSTS	
COST TYPE	COST
Residential Construction	\$140 - \$175 / SF
Commercial Construction	\$230 / SF
Parking Construction	\$3,000 / space

Figure 3 Describing the costs associated with construction. Pulled from the Laramie Housing Study 2020

As staff has noted in multiple work sessions, parking requirements are only one of the barriers to affordable housing in our community. While it's reasonable to require new buildings/units to provide new parking spaces in neighborhoods where there is not sufficient parking already available. Setting your parking requirements even just a little too high can make it impossible or unaffordable to build many kinds of homes – especially some of the more compact, affordable homes that are needed in Laramie. Also when a community like Laramie is competing for “development dollars”, even these small differences can make the choice “easy” for a developer to look to another community to invest; thus Laramie misses out on housing opportunities.

Thrive Laramie

Thrive Laramie was adopted in 2020 as Chapter 9 of the Laramie Comprehensive Plan and is the City's Economic Development Plan. The recommendations in Thrive Laramie are designed to enact a future vision of Laramie as a welcoming cultural capital, education hub and center for economic opportunity for all current and future residents. Part of these recommendations are to relieve developers and business owners of cost prohibitive and restrictive codes, such as cost associated with parking. The plan also calls for the City to enhance the role it plays in respect to code development and enforcement and the planning and policy environment related to housing development/redevelopment. This text amendment decreases the required amount of parking needed for housing, meaning lower construction costs, which then can allow for more affordable housing options.

Community Development Liaison Committee (part of LCBA)

Staff routinely meets with the Community Development Liaison Committee (CDLC), a volunteer body that is part of the Laramie Chamber Business Alliance, created to review and recommend code changes that may be helpful to the development community in the City of Laramie. Staff presented parking changes to CDLC and they felt that these changes would be a benefit to the overall economic development in our community. CDLC has provided a letter of support for these changes and is attached to this staff report.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

This amendment was legally advertised in the Laramie Boomerang on August 28, 2021. Staff has received no comments regarding this proposed amendment to Laramie Municipal Code.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

The amendment is found to be in accordance with substantive and procedural requirements and necessities in City of Laramie code, best planning practices, The Laramie Comprehensive Plan, Thrive Laramie Community and Economic Development Action Strategy and the Laramie Housing strategy 2020.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

The amendment is proceeding in accordance with applicable law, including LMC Title 15.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Move to recommend that the City Council **approve** amendments to LMC 15.14.040 for the purpose of updating Laramie Municipal Code related to parking requirements for residential uses.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Draft Ordinance (2 pages)
2. Attachment A for Draft Ordinance (1 page)
3. Thrive Parking (4 pages)
4. Support Letters (6 pages)