



City of Laramie

Community Development Department
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LARAMIE PLANNING COMMISSION November 23, 2020 STAFF REPORT

FILE: TA-20-03 Parking Standards Update

REQUEST: An amendment to sections within 15.14.040 of LMC as a code update to citywide parking standards.

APPLICANT: City of Laramie

PURPOSE: To update Laramie Municipal Code as a best practice approach to updating codes for a 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 as a necessary, regular practice.

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

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.

The proposed text updates will encourage more sustainable land use practices, remove parking burdens from developers, prepares Laramie UDC for the autonomous automobile technology and public transit and corrects calculation confusions for parking requirements.

Part of this Text Amendment corrects confusing language within portions of 15.14.040. Included within these text corrections was clearer language around the standard that parking requirement studies should be based off of, which is the ITE Trip Generation Manual, of which is a manual that includes parking averages from around the nation based off of a number of uses, such as retail, pet stores, restaurants, factories, etc.

The other part of this text Amendment focuses on decreasing parking requirements by 30-50 percent for most uses. These decreases were spurred through national practices, observations and gathered public comments. Parking is a major factor in how cities are laid out and determines how much land is available for commercial or residential activity, rather than using a large portion of land for parking, which will always be a temporary use.

Parking is 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 \$5,000 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. On top of these construction costs, a developer's drainage will be less affected, more space can be dedicated to their building square footage and these together end up raising rents for these spaces.

The larger cost is the Opportunity Cost, which occupies land that could have been put to another beneficial use, and/or is often built at the expense of another beneficial activity. 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 business owner, home owner or tenant, increasing our unaffordable housing concern and office space prices, of which has a direct effect on the sustainability of Laramie's growth.

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. While there are not many in Laramie at the moment, this reliance on other people or what could be machines, has become evident in other cities.

Comprehensive Plan:

Chapter 3 of the Comprehensive Plan points out the effect of large expansive of parking lots on our commercial corridors and to how this blurs the neighborhood edges by placing the back of buildings facing the residential units and uses space that could be used for business growth on our main corridors. Under this same chapter, it states, auto-urban uses, with very few exceptions, consume more land for streets, parking and other vehicular use areas than is covered by buildings, which commonly exceeds a two-to-one ratio. This type of development design demands large sites and proximity to a high-volume arterial roadway, which diminishes the importance of architecture and results in reduced open space and commonly, elimination of natural features.

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 parking cost. 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 and businesses, meaning lower construction costs, which then moves to the sale price, allowing for more affordable housing.

Community Builders

The City of Laramie has been working with a Planning Organization called Community Builders for the past 2.5 years to address barriers to housing and economic development issues. One strategy being recommended by Community Builders is removing barriers and finding a balance of parking required to support economic vitality and creates a great place. Staff believes that decreasing parking requirements allows for more economic vitality and creates a more aesthetic public realm. Another change that Community Builders are recommending is Additional Dwelling Units and part of the good policy recommendations for this change is Reducing parking requirements for smaller, more constrained sites. Again, a 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 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.

CDLC

Staff met with CDLC, a volunteer body created to review and recommend code changes in the City of Laramie. Staff presented the changes to CDLC and some changes were recommended and made. The changes were a parking requirement match between single-family attached and two-family dwelling units, as well as a call-out to the responsible commissions and body's for these

decisions. CDLC has provided a letter of support for these changes and is attached to this staff report.

PROPOSED CODE CHANGES:

- The proposed code changes include amendments to clean up language, to be more specific on parking studies, to create easier parking calculations and to reduce parking space requirements between 20-30 percent across the City. **These changes are attached as a draft ordinance as well as Attachment A under the draft ordinance:**

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

This amendment was legally advertised in the Laramie Boomerang on November 7, 2020. 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 and best planning practice.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

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

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the City Council **approve** amendments to LMC 15.14.040 for the purpose of updating Laramie Municipal Code as a necessary, regular practice.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Draft Ordinance (5 pages)
2. Attachment A for Draft Ordinance (5 pages)
3. Community Builders Support Letter (2 pages)
4. CDLC Letter of Support (XX pages)