



City of Sunnyvale

Memorandum

To: Planning Commission
From: Diana O'Dell, Senior Planner
Date: August 3, 2012
Re: Non-Residential Parking Requirements

This study issue responds to concerns that commercial and office parking standards require more parking than necessary, limiting re-use of older properties and inhibiting infill and activation of commercial and office spaces (See Attachment B, Study Issue Paper).

While the parking regulations have been tweaked repeatedly since they were first adopted in 1963, a comprehensive modernization has not yet occurred. This study issue will take a fresh look at the parking ratios for non-residential uses, minimum dimensions, bicycle parking, and related standards. This study will not be addressing mixed use or residential parking standards. Mixed use parking standards will be considered as part of the broader "Mixed Use Toolkit" project in conjunction with the Lawrence Station Area Plan.

Purpose of the Parking Requirements

Currently, the purpose of the zoning code's parking chapter is to "ensure that all uses of the property provide sufficient on-site parking to handle demand" (SMC 19.46.005). The high-level question about parking is: What demand are we parking for? Traditionally, parking ratios have been set to handle "design day." Design day is essentially the most intense parking use for the entire year, traditionally a two to three week period during the November-December holiday season. Parking for this period can be important for retailers, as much of their revenue is brought in during this short period of time.

The unfortunate side effect is that most parking lots have between 30-40% of their spaces unused for the remaining 50 weeks of the year. In the 1960s through the early 1980s, the pattern of suburban development and the availability of land made these demanding parking ratios possible. However, as a city with very high land values, Sunnyvale may want to be more strategic about how much parking is needed to balance with the need for intensifying development in key areas and facilitating economic development.

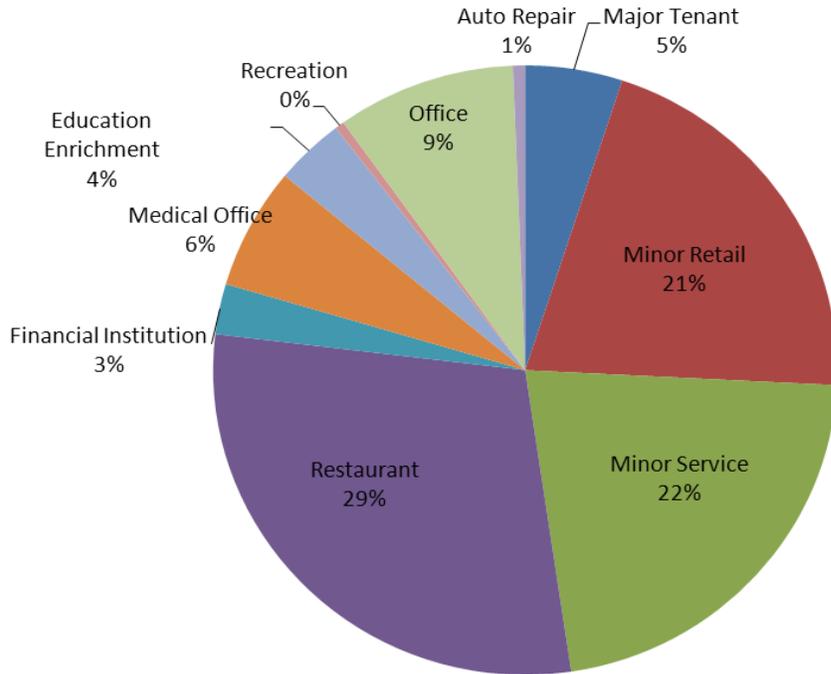
KEY QUESTION: What is the purpose of the parking regulations? What type of parking demand do we want to accommodate as properties develop or redevelop?

Shopping Centers

Shopping centers have undergone a significant change since the 1970s. Shopping centers traditionally contained primarily retail uses, with a grocery store anchor and (possibly) a drug-store secondary anchor. Today, retail sales are typically less than 30% of a shopping center floor area, and combined with retail services such as dry cleaners, repair, or salons, make up less than 50% of the center area.

Restaurants, fitness centers, recreation, medical offices, dance studios and banks combined make up a significant percentage of the space. These are no longer purely “retail” shopping centers.

Breakdown of Shopping Uses, as a Percentage of Total Tenant Spaces



Minor service includes uses such as dry cleaners, shoe repair, salons, etc.

Minor retail are retail spaces less than 10,000 sq. ft. in size.

Major tenants are spaces greater than 10,000 square feet in size. These are typically grocery store anchors.

Source: Economic Development Brochure, City of Sunnyvale. November 2011

This shift and expansion in the variety of uses has created a challenge for managing parking. Staff typically requires a staff level permit for any shopping center use that is not retail or retail service. The purpose of this permit is primarily to ensure adequate parking. However, parking count data from 2007 along with some preliminary parking counts from this year indicate that most of the shopping centers have between 40% - 60% vacancy rate at peak times.

Those over-parked centers don't receive a lot of attention from the public. Centers that are full or close to full capture the attention of community members and generate complaints. One of the most common cases discussed is the Cherry Orchard Shopping Center, but other centers along El Camino Real or Fremont Avenue also have had parking concerns. As part of this study, staff is investigating what makes these centers different. Is it the popularity of use, which can be a huge determinant in available parking? Is there a particular ratio of uses that form a “tipping point” where parking becomes unavailable?

Staff has a few theories which we are testing. Our theory is that shopping centers begin to have a parking problem when they are taken up with a high-impact, low-turnover use. These uses include

- A restaurant with a bar (such as P.F. Chang's), or
- A fitness center (24 Hour Fitness, Fitness 19)

Centers with one or more of these uses tend to be occupied at a higher rate, particularly at lunch or after-work times. It is not uncommon for customers to be in the center for more than an hour, reducing the amount of spaces that turn over in a given period. While these land uses are not the only determinant of parking impacts, they appear to be correlated.

Commercial and Office Uses, Generally

We are doing a use-by-use analysis for everything from restaurants, banks, manufacturing, medical office, child care, recreation, and warehousing. Time constraints at our study session will not allow us to discuss these uses in depth, but I attached information about medical offices and restaurants that you might find interesting. For help our discussion on Monday, please think about the following questions:

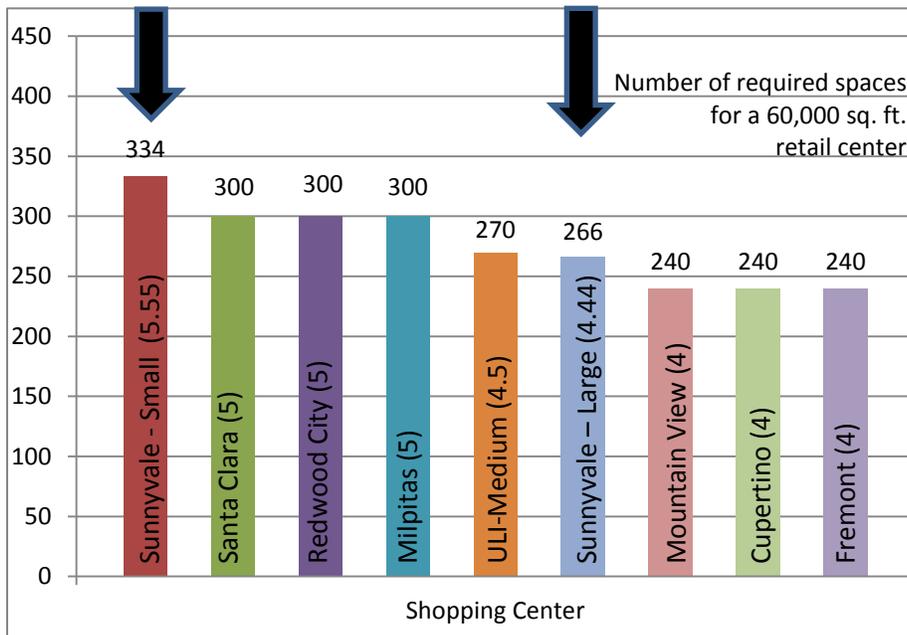
KEY QUESTIONS:

- 1. Which businesses or centers do you think have a parking problem? Is it the uses, the location of the parking areas, or a particular time of day?**
- 2. Has anyone talked to you about "not being able to park" in Sunnyvale? What location were they discussing?**
- 3. Which businesses or centers do you think have more parking than they need? Why?**

Attachments

- A. Parking Information for Shopping Centers, Restaurants and Medical Offices
- B. Study Issue Paper

RETAIL / SHOPPING CENTER



- Parking rate per 1,000 sq. ft. of building is shown in parentheses on the chart.
- Sunnyvale uses three different classifications to establish parking requirements for shopping centers. Only two classifications are shown as they offer the greatest range compared to other cities.
- In this example, the difference between the highest and lowest rate for retail (not counting Sunnyvale's small retail rate) is 60 spaces or approximately 19,500 sq. ft. of paved area.

Address	Description	Building (sq. ft.)	Parking / 1,000 sq. ft.	Total Spaces	Comment
776 E. El Camino Real	Best Buy / PetSmart	59,000	4.76	281	
150 W. El Camino Real	Cherry Orchard	60,763	4.7	287	Restaurant percentage has been between 24% - 30%.
1243 W. El Camino Real	Los Cedros	28,000	5.5	155	
150 E. El Camino Real	New Safeway. 24 hour fitness plus two retail buildings	226,650	4.5	1,022	Includes Petco
1601 Hollenbeck Ave.	Loehmann's Plaza	157,310	5.2	816	
1040 E. El Camino Real	Bell Plaza	19,974	5.5	111	Fitness 19 (Recreation and Athletic)

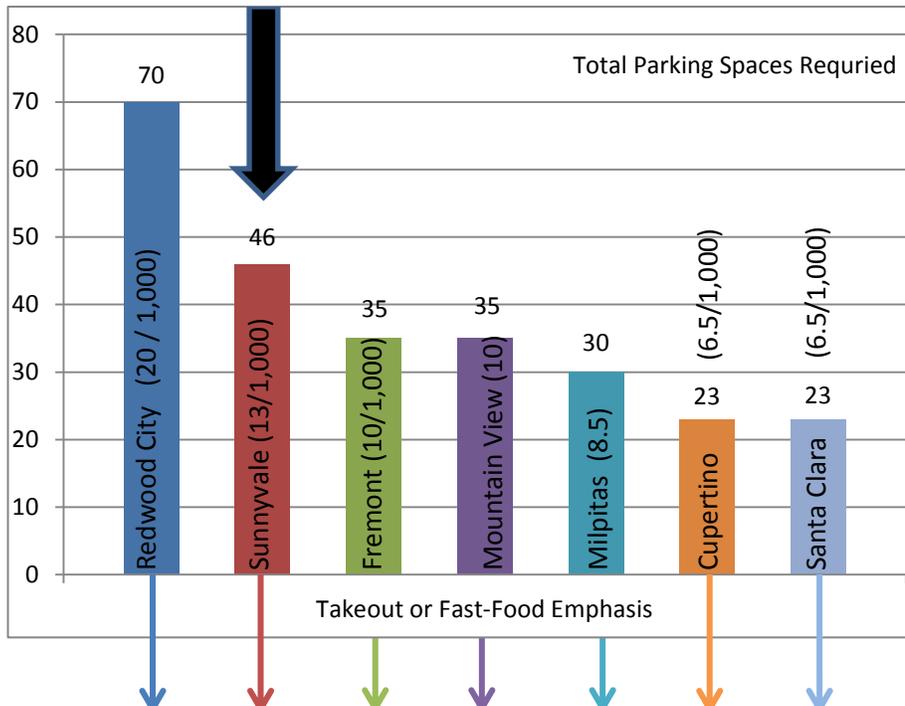
Parking Surveys done in 2007 surveyed 17 different shopping centers throughout the City. The surveys found that over 80% of the surveyed centers were more than 20% vacant on average at peak times, with half being 50% vacant and 5 centers being over 70% vacant.

The highest-occupied centers were Bell Plaza at 1040 E. El Camino Real, Wolfe-Reed Corner at 704 S. Wolfe Road and 670 N. Fair Oaks Avenue at about 90% occupancy at peak.

The lower-occupied centers were Loehmann's Plaza at 1601 Hollenbeck, Cala Center at 1111 W. El Camino Real and Market Center at 833 W. El Camino Real.

FAST FOOD RESTAURANT

A 3,500 sq. ft. McDonalds with 52 indoor seats, 16 outdoor seats, 6 employees and 200 sq. ft. of take-out area:



- It should be noted that not one single city in the survey has the same standard. In fact, the 7 comparison cities use **5 different methods** of parking calculation (employees, floor area, take-out area, percent employees, etc.).
- Parking rate per 1,000 sq. ft. of building is shown in parentheses on the chart.
- Using a per seat rate can be difficult to implement. Unless the seating is 100% fixed (bolted to the floor), seats can be added or subtracted as the business changes over time. Very few restaurants have seats and tables bolted to the floor.

0.33 spaces per seat OR 1/50 sq. ft., which-ever is greater	1/75 sq. ft.	0.29 spaces per seat PLUS 10% for employee Parking OR 1/100 sq. ft., which ever is greater	0.25 spaces per seat OR 1/100 sq. ft., which-ever is greater	0.4 spaces per seat PLUS 1/60 sq. ft. for ordering and take-out area	0.33 PLUS 1 per employee	0.33 spaces per seat OR 1/200 sq. ft., which-ever is greater
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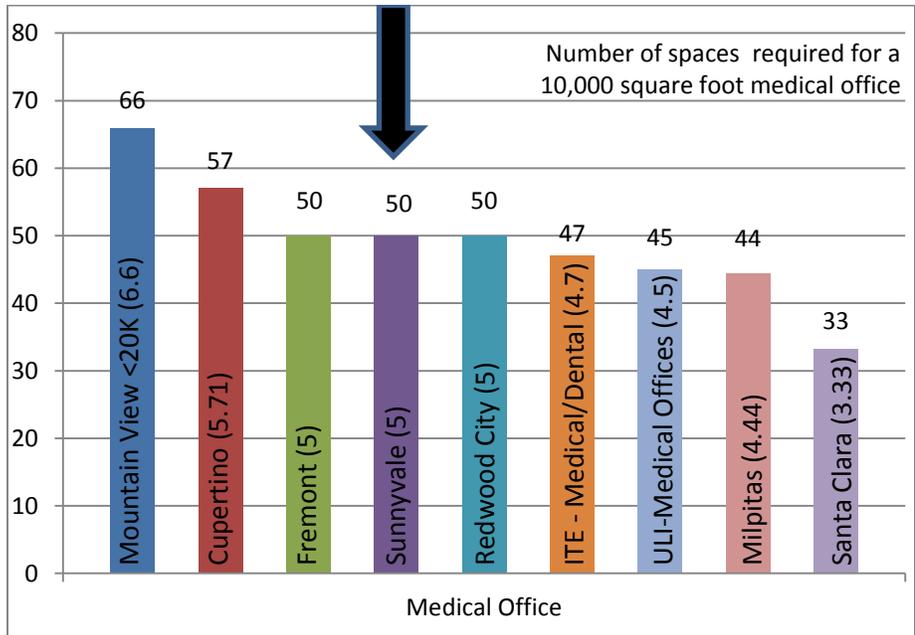
PARKING COUNTS – Friday, noon, July 2012

Jack in the Box – 40% vacant
McDonald's - 41% vacant
In n' Out Burger – 0% vacant

Address	Description	Sq. Ft.	Parking / 1,000 sq. ft.	Total Spaces	Comment
604 E. El Camino Real	In and Out Burger	3,912 (includes outdoor seating)	13	52	
813 W. El Camino Real	Jack in the Box	3,063 plus 16 outdoor seats	12	37	14 vacant spaces (37%) at 12:15 p.m. Friday, June 29
550 Lawrence Expressway	McDonalds	3,560 (includes outdoor seating)	14.3	51	

- Redwood City has the highest square footage rate of 1/50. However, they have a process to adjust parking through a Use Permit process.

MEDICAL OFFICES



- Parking rate per 1,000 sq. ft. of building is shown in parentheses on the chart.
- Mountain View has a different rate for medical greater than 20,000 sq. ft., of 4/1,000 sq. ft.
- Santa Clara requires a minimum of 5 spaces per doctor or dentist
- In this example, the difference between the highest and lowest rate is 33 spaces, or approximately 10,700 sq. ft. of parking area.

SAMPLE OF MEDICAL OFFICES IN SUNNYVALE

Address	Description	Building (sq. ft.)	Parking / 1,000 sq. ft.	Total Spaces	Comment
301 Old San Francisco Road	Palo Alto Medical Foundation - Medical Clinic	120,000	5.71	685	Still under construction.
877 W. Fremont	Large collection of diverse medical, dental and optometrist offices.	75,250	4.3	325	Parking count estimated from old site plan.
1555 Sunnyvale Saratoga Road	Smaller dental office adjacent to residential	5,568	4.3	24	Built in 1997.
1010 W. Fremont Avenue	Optometrist with retail sales of glasses	7,833	3.83	30	

PEAK PERIOD: 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. with high intensity use between 10:00 a.m. and noon. (ITE) PHOTOS:



PARKING COUNTS – 10 to 11 a.m. Monday, July 2012

- 895 E. Fremont – 70% vacant (27 spaces total in lot)
- 1555 S. S. Road – 47% vacant (30 spaces total in lot)
- 877 W. Fremont – 45% vacant (291 spaces total in lot)
- 1010 W. Fremont – 50% vacant (30 spaces total in lot)

2012 Council Study Issue

CDD 12-10 Consideration of Non-residential Parking Requirements**Lead Department** Community Development**History** **1 year ago** None **2 years ago** None**1. What are the key elements of the issue? What precipitated it?**

Concerns have been raised that the commercial and office parking standards of the zoning code are too restrictive (require too much parking), and that properties with long-standing uses cannot feasibly meet current zoning code parking requirements. Parking standards are typically determined by the area of the use; for instance, a free-standing general office use would require one space per 225 square feet of space. Only off-street parking is counted towards required parking requirements.

The intent of parking standards is to capture the majority of successful uses within a specific category of use. While less successful or demanding uses may need fewer spaces, more demanding uses in the same building may require more parking. There is a further challenge to determine appropriate parking requirements for new developments where the initial use may have less demand for parking than would potential future uses. Standards are meant to apply to current and future businesses since it is difficult to add parking years after a property is developed. Over time, the character of the use may change (e.g. banks used to have higher peak periods on thursday and Friday evenings- which is not the case given today's use of electronic banking).

This study would complete a comprehensive review of parking standards for commercial and a variety of office uses. Current planning data, other city approaches, sampling of existing parking conditions in the city, standards for mixed-use commercial projects, and public and business input will be used in reviewing and considering potential parking standards. The goal is to balance the needs of the business community with the goal of providing parking necessary for current and future tenants of property.

2. How does this relate to the General Plan or existing City Policy?

Goal LT-1 Coordinated Land Use Planning — Protect and sustain a high quality of life in Sunnyvale by participating in coordinated land use and transportation planning in the Region.

Policy HE-6.2 Promote neighborhood vitality by providing adequate community facilities, infrastructure, landscaping and open space, parking, and public health and safety within new and existing neighborhoods.

3. Origin of issue**Council Member(s)** Spitaleri, Moylan**4. Staff effort required to conduct study** Major**Briefly explain the level of staff effort required**

Parking studies of existing properties will be required, which will be staff intensive. The research and data collecting for parking standards is significant, as is the public and business outreach necessary to complete this effort.

5. Multiple Year Project? No **Planned Completion Year** 2012**6. Expected participation involved in the study issue process?**

Does Council need to approve a work plan? No
 Does this issue require review by a Board/Commission? Yes
 If so, which? Planning Commission
 Is a Council Study Session anticipated? No

7. Briefly explain if a budget modification will be required to study this issue

Amount of budget modification required

Explanation

8. Briefly explain potential costs of implementing study results, note estimated capital and operating costs, as well as estimated revenue/savings, include dollar amounts

Are there costs of implementation? No

Explanation

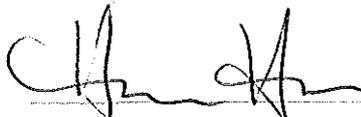
9. Staff Recommendation

Staff Recommendation Support

If 'Support', 'Drop' or 'Defer', explain

The Sunnyvale parking requirements for non-residential uses have not been overhauled in many years, and current needs may have changed, or community standards may have adjusted over the years. Completing this study would clean up the parking requirements and provide more current standards more in line with other cities and business needs.

Reviewed by



Department Director

12/5/11

Date

Approved by



City Manager

12/6/11

Date