

Bicycle and Pedestrian Supportive Code Language

Fact Sheet #4

August 2007

Automobile Parking to Include Pedestrian Accommodations

Background

Providing convenient parking for motorists adjacent to retail and other establishments is typically addressed through a municipality's off-street parking requirements.

These requirements, within the zoning code, provide dimensions for automobile parking spaces and specify the number of automobile parking spaces required for each land use.

In some cases, a general acknowledgement that pedestrians be considered during the design review for the parking facility is included within the off-street parking requirements.

In other cases, however, pedestrians appear not to be considered during the design review for parking lots and the resulting facilities are difficult to cross, creating barriers to pedestrian travel that could be resolved with improved design.

Benefits of Designing Automobile Parking to Include Pedestrian Accommodations

In addition to improved pedestrian safety, providing pedestrian accommodations within automobile parking facilities can provide increased aesthetic value to the site.

How It's Done

Local jurisdictions may consider the following options if they wish to include pedestrian accommodations within off-street parking facilities:

- Specific requirements within off-street parking code language; and
- Flexible requirements based on the Planning Board's determination.

Examples

Specific requirements within off-street parking code language

The Town of Warwick, New York includes specific requirement for parking lot design that improve the environment for pedestrians by: 1) breaking up large parking lots into smaller parking groves and parking courts with a significant number of shade trees surrounded by low hedges, stone walls, or attractive fencing; 2) encouraging designs that avoid placing more than 15 parking spaces in a continuous row and more than 60 spaces in any single parking area as defined by landscaping; 3) promoting landscaping that delineates vehicular and pedestrian patterns; 4) providing clear and legible signs, different color and texture paving materials, raised or inverted

areas, and other techniques to direct the flow of both vehicular and pedestrian traffic within the lot; and 5) providing separate pedestrian walkways in large parking lots to allow safe movement within the lots.

Additional design criteria specify that: 1) One walkway can serve as a collector for up to four bays of parked cars; 2) the walkway should be a minimum of four-feet wide, allowing an additional 30 inches on each side for overhanging of automobiles; 3) all walkways should be raised to a standard sidewalk height and should be constructed of different paving material than the parking lot; and 4) pedestrian and bicycle amenities such as benches, shade, human-scale lighting, and bicycle racks should be provided.

Flexible requirements based on the Planning Board's determination

The Town of Malta, New York provides that the Planning Board shall consider the maximum adequacy of interior circulation in parking and loading facilities with particular attention to vehicular and pedestrian safety.

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Summary

Communities that wish to promote pedestrian and bicycle-sensitive parking lot design can do so by including the desired design elements within their off-street parking code language. Doing so will provide developers with examples of expected design features at an early stage in the site planning process.

For communities that prefer a more flexible approach, the Planning Board can be directed and/or authorized to consider pedestrian safety within the design/site plan review process.

Resources:

Federal Highway Administration, Pedestrian Facilities Users Guide, FHWA-RD-01-102, March 2002.

New York State Department of State, Creating the Community You Want: Municipal Options for Land Use Control, June 1998.

Office of the New York State Comptroller, Division of Local Government Services & Economic Development, Smart Growth in New York State: A Discussion Paper, May 2004.

The Rockefeller Institute of Government, Local Governments in New York State, May 2003.

State of New York, Local Government Handbook, 5th Edition, January 2000.

Codes and Policies as cited.

About the Project:

The objective of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Supportive Code Language project was to develop information on and identify examples of noteworthy zoning code and site planning language and guidance that enhances access and safety for bicyclists and pedestrians.

Five Steps toward a Walkable and Bikeable Community:

- Provide sidewalks adjacent to new residential developments (Fact Sheet #1)
- Provide sidewalks adjacent to existing development (Fact Sheet #2)
- Provide bicycle parking facilities adjacent to new commercial and high density development (Fact Sheet #3)
- Design parking lots to incorporate pedestrian-friendly features that provide identifiable separation between vehicles and pedestrians on the site (Fact Sheet #4)
- Locate parking lots to the rear of commercial development sites and the storefront toward the front of the site (Fact Sheet #5)

The project is a joint effort between the Genesee Transportation Council (GTC) and the Genesee/Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council (G/FLRPC).

Project Methodology

GTC staff surveyed county planning departments in the nine-county GTC region to identify those topics related to supporting bicyclists and pedestrians that could be addressed within the scope of the project. The survey identified the following key areas: 1) sidewalk requirements adjacent to new and existing development, 2) bicycle parking requirements, and 3) automobile parking design.

Within the identified key areas, research was conducted and relevant codes obtained through the G/FLRPC library and internet-

based resources.

Fact sheets and presentation materials were developed to provide examples that may be considered by jurisdictions that seek to improve bicycle and pedestrian safety, access, and attractiveness within the community.

For further information please contact the Genesee Transportation Council, or visit our web site at <http://www.gtcmpo.org>