

# Bicycle and Pedestrian Supportive Code Language

*Fact Sheet #5*

*August 2007*

## Automobile Parking Site Location

### Background

The location of automobile parking facilities with respect to buildings on a commercial development site can have a significant effect on the viability of pedestrian access to and from the site.

When the buildings are located near the rear lot line and the parking facilities are located between the front of the building and the street, pedestrians may be forced to walk through the parking lot to access the buildings from the public right of way.

This creates a potential for conflict between motorists and pedestrians that can be reduced by locating parking lots to the rear of buildings and locating buildings adjacent to the street with minimal setback.

Additionally, locating buildings near the street provides a sense of enclosure to the streetscape and provides merchants the opportunity for exposure to passersby that is lost when buildings are set behind parking facilities.

### Benefits of Pedestrian-Friendly Automobile Parking Site Location

In addition to improved pedestrian safety, locating buildings near the street can provide improved urban design and increase pedestrian traffic at local businesses.

### How It's Done

The location of parking facilities on a site can be controlled directly by:

- Parking to the side or rear of the primary use included within design criteria; and
- Parking to the side or rear of the primary use and on the same lot.

### Examples

Parking to the side or rear of the primary use included within design criteria

The City of Batavia, New York "seeks to balance the need for adequate parking with the need to minimize harm resulting from the provision of parking and to avoid the negative impacts of excessive parking requirements."

In seeking that balance, the code requires that all off-street parking be located behind or to the side of the principal building. In order to provide limited amounts of parking in front of buildings, a maximum of two rows of parking may be located in the front of a principal building in a C-2 District.

The code language also specifies that parking areas shall be designed and landscaped to avoid long, uninterrupted rows of vehicles.

Parking to the side or rear of the primary use and on the same lot

The City of Lackawanna, New York requires off-street parking to be located on the same lot as the building to which it is an accessory use and that all off-street parking facilities be located to the side or rear of the principal use building.

### Summary

Communities can direct parking to the rear of development sites and thereby support pedestrian utilization of commercial facilities located within their jurisdiction. Since parking lot and building location are closely interrelated, jurisdictions could also address this issue by revised building setback requirements.

However, including the location criteria for the parking lot within the parking regulations allows a more unified approach to managing the facilities by including criteria related to parking lot internal design within the same section of the zoning ordinance as parking lot location criteria.

### 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.

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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.

## **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)

## **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.

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>