

Multifamily Residential Parking Policy Best Practices

I. Introduction

This document presents a survey of best practices for multi-family residential parking policies, with a focus on King County. The survey covers regulations and codes, as well as broader strategies that apply to a wide variety of multifamily housing contexts, such as transit proximity, specific populations or user groups. Best practices include improved transit and pedestrian access, flexible parking regulations, and management and pricing strategies.

In assessing these best practices, it is important to keep in mind that every location has unique existing conditions, nuances, and key criteria, and every development proforma will be examined and weighted based on many variables. Ideally, the establishment of parking supply for developments should be market driven. Overall, it should be recognized that the successful implantation of right size parking will require careful consideration of many factors, and that the optimum solutions will vary depending on context.

The document is organized by the following subject areas in Section II: Supporting Alternative Modes; Flexible, Context-sensitive Parking Requirements; Parking Management; Parking Pricing; and Parking Financing. Each policy approach is defined, and supplemented by local examples of implementation if available (the local cases are not intended to be comprehensive).

The menu of parking policies is based on a review of academic literature and recent parking policy work in North America. In December of 2011, each jurisdiction within the Right Size Parking Project study boundary was sent a brief survey asking about their current parking policies. For jurisdictions that did not return surveys, King County staff researched the city zoning code and filled out the survey to the best of their ability. Section III summarizes the results of this survey with a matrix identifying where each policy is used in King County jurisdictions.

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II. Menu of Parking Policy Approaches

Supporting Alternative Modes

Travel by walking, biking, and transit is influenced by land use patterns and urban design. Policy that fosters pedestrian-friendly environments, a well-connected street grid, bicycle infrastructure, a compact mix of uses, and convenient transit access can reduce trips taken by car, and thereby reduce the need for parking. In less urban areas that are developing over time, these environments can also support "park once" systems, in which walking and bicycling are viable alternatives for many secondary trips after users first arrive by car.

Pedestrian	Parking lots can severely degrade the	Mercer Island Town Center Master Plan adopted 20 years ago and										
Friendly	pedestrian environment. Many cities	implementing regulations encourage Transit Friendly Parking Design.										
Parking	include requirements for pedestrian	Kent : MFR & Downtown Design Review – connect to transit, provide										
Design	friendly treatments to parking garages and	convenient pedestrian circulation, screen parking facilities, create										
	surface lots, including screening, buffering	Kent: MFR & Downtown Design Review – connect to transit, provice convenient pedestrian circulation, screen parking facilities, create TOD, retail-oriented facades. Also PUD requirements and Midway Design Guidelines Mercer Island's current regulations support transit; opportunities for more aggressive measures may present themselves when East Link opens. Kent: DCE, MU, Midway Transit Community; PUD density bonus when 50% parking is in small landscaped 16-stall groups. Seattle: There is "no minimum" parking requirement in urban center and no minimum parking extended to residential uses in commercial										
	lots, visible walkways, and buffering a	implementing regulations encourage Transit Friendly Parking Design Kent: MFR & Downtown Design Review – connect to transit, provice convenient pedestrian circulation, screen parking facilities, create TOD, retail-oriented facades. Also PUD requirements and Midway Design Guidelines Mercer Island's current regulations support transit; opportunities for more aggressive measures may present themselves when East Link opens. Kent: DCE, MU, Midway Transit Community; PUD density bonus when 50% parking is in small landscaped 16-stall groups. Seattle: There is "no minimum" parking requirement in urban center and no minimum parking extended to residential uses in commercial and multi-family zoned areas in urban villages where frequent transit service exists with ¼ mile. A new proposal would extend that to any location where frequent transit exists within ¼ mile.										
	minimum of space with active or leasable											
	space.											
Transit	A transit overlay zone modifies the	Mercer Island's current regulations support transit; opportunities for										
Supportive	underlying land use regulations in response	more aggressive measures may present themselves when East Link										
Land Use	to existing or planned high-capacity transit.	opens.										
Regulations		Kent : DCE, MU, Midway Transit Community; PUD density bonus										
	Modifications often allow new	when 50% parking is in small landscaped 16-stall groups.										
	development types that leverage the	Seattle: There is "no minimum" parking requirement in urban center										
	proximity of transit. Regulations may	TOD, retail-oriented facades. Also PUD requirements and Midway Design Guidelines Mercer Island's current regulations support transit; opportunities for more aggressive measures may present themselves when East Link opens. Kent: DCE, MU, Midway Transit Community; PUD density bonus when 50% parking is in small landscaped 16-stall groups. Seattle: There is "no minimum" parking requirement in urban centers and multi-family zoned areas in urban villages where frequent transit service exists with ¼ mile. A new proposal would extend that to any location where frequent transit exists within ¼ mile.										
	apply to a building's physical attributes,	and multi-family zoned areas in urban villages where frequent transit										
	such as distance between entrances, mix of	service exists with ¼ mile. A new proposal would extend that to any										
	uses, or incentives for desired uses such as	1 1										
	friendly treatments to parking garages and surface lots, including screening, buffering lots, visible walkways, and buffering a minimum of space with active or leasable space. A transit overlay zone modifies the underlying land use regulations in response to existing or planned high-capacity transit. Mercer Island's current regulations support transit; opportunities for more aggressive measures may present themselves when East Link opens. Kent: DCE, MU, Midway Transit Community; PUD density bonus when 50% parking is in small landscaped 16-stall groups. Seattle: There is "no minimum" parking requirement in urban centers and no minimum parking extended to residential uses in commercially and multi-family zoned areas in urban villages where frequent transit service exists with ¼ mile. A new proposal would extend that to any											

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	Reduced parking minimums or density bonuses may be granted if alternative mobility strategies are implemented, such as Transportation Demand Management (TDM).	routes may be required to provide transit shelters, bus turnout lanes or other transit improvements. Also, off-street parking requirements may be reduced, depending on peak-hour transit service.
Transit	Transit pass programs encourage the	Kenmore requires preferential parking for rideshare for some non-
Incentive	choice of transit over driving by reducing	residential uses (KMC 18.40.040.090A)
Programs	cost and increasing convenience.	Many cities in King County have Commute Trip Reduction programs
		that promote transit use.
	Within King County, the implementation	Private Residential Developments : Some developers have partnered
	of transit incentive programs varies from	with King County Metro to offer residential transit passes to residents.
	passive and indirect, to planned and	Some developers have used the transit passes as incentive rewards for
	mandated through local ordinance, law or	those who opt to not use parking.
	promulgated rulemaking; programs are	GreenTRIP Certification: GreenTRIP is a certification program in
	often employer based.	California that rewards multi-family, mixed-use, in-fill projects that
		apply comprehensive strategies to reduce traffic and greenhouse gas emissions. Projects meeting GreenTRIP certification criteria provide
		appropriate amounts of parking and incentives, including transit
		passes, for new residents to drive less and own fewer vehicles.
Design for	The application of physical design	Burien 's new Complete Streets Ordinance accommodates pedestrians,
Bike and	improvements can enhance a street's	cyclists and transit users.
Pedestrian	aesthetics, and ensure broad user safety and	Kenmore requires multifamily developments of five or more units to
Comfort,	comfort for pedestrians. These	include pedestrian circulation.
Safety and	improvements reinforce a positive	Mercer Island: Walkability is a core element of the Town Center
Accessibility	perception of the physical environment	Plan; and has recently adopted a Bike/Ped plan.
	which, in turn, influences travel choices,	Kent : Downtown Design Review – 8-foot sidewalks, pedestrian
	making it easier to create a "park once"	amenities; reduced transportation impact fees in downtown.
	environment.	Seattle: The City's Design Review program often promotes
		wayfinding and transit-oriented features in multifamily developments.



	Furthermore, multiple studies have shown that people living and working in areas with better connected street networks are more likely to use transit or walk, and drive less. Research in King County found that residents in the most "interconnected" areas travel 26 percent fewer vehicle miles per day compared to those that live in the least connected areas of the county, and that a 10% increase in intersections per square mile reduces Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) by about 0.5.	Sammamish: Residential uses of five or more units shall provide for non-motorized circulation between cul-de-sacs or groups of buildings to allow pedestrian and bicycle access within and through the development to certain adjacent uses. Bellevue: Frontage improvements required with new development citywide. More extensive requirements apply in Downtown, Bel-Red, & Factoria. Projects in Downtown may be required to build out segments of mid-block pedestrian routes (see, e.g., BCC 20.25A.060.C). Pedestrian wayfinding in place in Downtown. SeaTac's TMP includes walkability component – planned sidewalks where deficient; initiated installation of new wayfinding signs as a pilot project. Des Moines: Marked walkways, separated from traffic lanes and vehicle overhangs, shall be provided from parking areas to the entrances of establishments and from parking areas to right-of-way
Bicycle Parking	Support of non-motorized modes of transportation such as cycling can help reduce the demand for parking. Cities can require minimum bike parking standards similar to those for automobile parking.	kenmore requires 1 bike parking slot for every 12 vehicle parking stalls in <i>any</i> development with 6+ required vehicle parking stalls (KMC 18.40.030E). Mercer Island's Town Center Design Standards support bike parking, storage, lockers and showers. Kent: Through design review or CTR program Renton requires (0.5) bicycle parking space per one (attached) dwelling unit. (F11) The code also includes detailed design standards for bicycle parking. Bellevue: Current requirements and actual supply are very limited.



Flexible, Context-sensitive Parking Requirements

Exploring how to reduce multifamily parking requirements according to a site's unique context is one of the primary goals of the Right Sized Parking project. When applied appropriately in areas with development opportunities, the following strategies may enable better use of parking resources, especially in locations with shared parking opportunities, or in communities with high levels of transit service. In lower density car-dependent areas, these changes can be incrementally introduced over time as the areas redevelop.

transit, types of usage, etc.

Reduced Parking Requirements

Cities can reduce or eliminate parking requirements to avoid overbuilding and allow the market to determine the correct amount of parking. Changes to required parking ratios should be based on market evidence and engineering studies.

The reduction or elimination of parking requirements is most appropriate for areas that can provide workable mobility options for a variety of trips, and are often tied to the provision of high-quality transit service, parking pricing, parking management and an existing compact, walkable environment. These characteristics reduce the demand for parking, and spillover parking becomes less of a problem.

Parking codes can reduce parking requirements outright, or require a developer to conduct a transportation study to justify reductions. Other codes **Burien** allows applicants to request modifications to standards by submitting a study of anticipated parking demand (BMC 19.20.040.3). **Kenmore** City Manager may allow reduction of up to 50% (KMC 18.40.040.030B) upon demonstration by applicant or due to nearby frequent peak period transit service (KMC 18.40.040.090B) **Federal Way** allows any project to propose project-specific parking requirements based on parking analysis, considering proximity of

Kent: Reduction allowed if in proximity to transit; if shared parking; also through CTR program; further reduced in Midway Transit Community.

Renton: A Transportation Management Plan (TMP) guaranteeing the required reduction in vehicle trips may be substituted in part or in whole for the parking spaces required. (E3 and F10c(ii))

Bellevue: Parking requirements for Downtown and Bel-Red are lower than general, citywide requirements for MF residential, as well as other types of development. Factoria also has different requirements intended to calibrate supply to demand and be lower than general requirements. **Redmond** may allow reductions based on parking study by qualified expert.

SeaTac allows up to fifty percent (50%) reduction of off-street parking for uses meeting the definition of "small, resident-oriented uses," by each use.



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	provide reductions according to a set of pre-determined criteria, such as the provision of bike parking/shower rooms, or pedestrian improvements. To be effective for the private sector, reduced parking requirements must typically take into account the overall district wide supply of parking as well as the areas offering of walkable services and retail. Other strategies include shared parking, parking pricing, and residential permit parking zones to limit spill over impacts.	Shoreline : Up to 20% when multiple parcels are treated as one development w/binding agreement to share; and primarily nighttime uses. Up to 50% through proximity to transit routes, commuter trip reduction programs, on-site non-motorized and high occupancy vehicle facilities, or shared parking agreement.								
Parking	Parking Maximums establish limits or	Renton stipulates both minimum and maximum parking requirements								
Maximums	"caps" on the quantity of parking that can	for all land uses.								
	be provided for a given development.	Bellevue has parking maximum for MF development in three areas:								
	Typically they are only appropriate for relatively high density, transit rich urban	 Downtown (BCC 20.25A.050) Bel-Red (BCC 20.25D.120). 								
	areas, in which car ownership levels are	• Factoria (BCC 20.25F1.060, 20.25K.020).								
	low. They can also be applied in lower	Seattle: Limited use of parking maximums, (23.54.015.C), most notably								
	density areas to limit surface parking.	a 145-space per lot limit for surface parking lots in commercial zones, &								
	density areas to mint surface parking.	Downtown zones (23.49.019.C) at 1 space/1,000 sq ft of non-residential								
	Parking maximums have the potential to	uses).								
	help developers negotiate lower parking	Issaquah: Rowley Development Agreement, Urban Village Zone								
	ratios with conservative financiers, and	applied a parking maximum for a mixed-use development at the end of								
	can provide a policy basis to shift capital	a thirty year term.								
	investments towards non-motorized									
	transportation.									



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Shared Parking

Rather than reserving each space for one user per day, an off-street shared parking policy allows a percentage of spaces to service multiple users, effectively reducing the parking requirement.

Cities can incorporate language in local ordinances to permit and encourage shared parking. Shared parking arrangements permit off-site shared parking to meet on-site parking requirements for complementary uses within a defined area. Shared parking improves the land use efficiency and economics of new parking by providing greater utilization per space.

Allowed off-site, shared parking locations are typically based on acceptable walking distances. Detailed analysis from qualified transportation & parking consultants are often helpful or required to rationalize the percentage and day/night use assumptions.

Enumclaw allows shared use parking agreements.

Burien encourages shared parking between sites and different uses. (BMC 19.20.050) Shared parking is handled though a covenant, easement, or contract that is recorded with King County Records to ensure long term availability of the shared parking.

Kenmore allows limited shared parking with approval of City Manager (KMC 18.40.040)

Mercer Island allows for 25% reduction in "cooperative" parking (MICC 19.05.020 (E))

Lake Forest Park: 18.58.040

Off street parking may be reduced when common parking facilities for two or more buildings or uses are designed and developed as one parking facility (LFPMC 18.58.040)

Kent: If within 500 feet; 10% reduction for joint use; also through CTR program.

Renton: Joint use of parking facilities may be authorized for those uses that have dissimilar peak-hour demands or when it can be demonstrated that the parking facilities to be shared are underutilized. (4-4-080 E. 3.)

Seattle: Shared, cooperative, tandem parking and similar parking opportunities are indicated in 23.54.020.

Auburn: Allowed, up to a 25% reduction from the original requirements.

Bellevue: Shared and off-site accessory parking is broadly permissible. Conditions and limitations apply and vary by sub- area.

Redmond: Cooperative parking facilities may be provided subject to the approval of the Technical Committee where two or more land uses can be joined or coordinated to achieve efficiency of vehicular and pedestrian circulation, economy of space, and a superior grouping of buildings or uses.

Shoreline: In commercial zones w/evidence of agreement. Up to 20%



		when multiple parcels are treated as one development w/binding agreement to share; and primarily nighttime uses.
		Tukwila: Tandem parking is allowed in multi-family districts.
Reductions For Special Populations	Cities can reduce or eliminate parking requirements for senior or low-income populations to avoid overbuilding and allow the market to determine the correct amount of parking.	
		affordable housing unit plus no additional guest parking is required. (Chapter 112.20)



Parking Management

Long-term strategies that apply at the district scale or beyond can help promote reduction in the need for parking by enabling more efficient resource utilization. Although many of the strategies apply to on-street parking, they also have application or influence on residential off-street parking. These strategies have the potential to integrate well with shared parking programs; some may require community commitments or capital investment strategies.

Residential Permit Programs	In order to ensure on-street parking spaces for local residents, cities can require a permit to park in designated areas at designated times. Residential permit programs can address spillover concerns when parking minimums are reduced.	Kent: Option adjacent to ShoWare Center. Seattle: Residential permit programs used extensively in 31 neighborhoods near light rail stations and major institutions. Bellevue: Residential permit parking zones are established where needed, typically near high schools and adjacent to major commercial areas in 15 zones. Redmond charges \$50/month for daily parking in RPZs.
	Permit revenue can be applied to local transportation improvements.	
Parking Access/Payme nt Technology	Installing automated access/payment technology can allow property managers to employ more sophisticated management and pricing programs. This can allow for better tracking and enforcement and promote shared/flexible use of the parking supply.	Seattle's E-Park program provides parking guidance and real-time space availability for over 4,500 spaces located in six downtown garages. The system is promoted to motorists through bus ads, coasters and java jackets. Negotiations with garages are underway to expand the program in Pioneer Square, the Central Waterfront and in other parts of downtown Seattle. A new pay by cell phone program for all parking pay stations will allowing people an additional payment option. Many newer garages in Seattle and Bellevue feature automated systems.
Car sharing	Car sharing programs provide participants with access to a fleet of centrally owned and maintained vehicles located near residences, workplaces, or	Kent: allows through CTR Program and in Midway Design Guidelines Seattle : Parking quantity exception in 23.54.020.J provides incentive to provide car-sharing and thereby reduce required amounts of parking. Bellevue : Comprehensive Plan policy TR-18: "Evaluate and promote a



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	transit hubs. By increasing the number of users per vehicle and amount of use per day, car sharing programs reduce parking demand while preserving the convenience and flexibility of travel by car.	car-sharing program in Downtown Bellevue"). Currently, there are 9 Zipcars in Downtown.
	Private car sharing programs currently have specific location criteria and are found only in relatively dense urban locations. City support would be needed in less dense locations.	
	One potential variation is shared cars that are owned by the building owner and used by residents.	
Transferable Parking Rights	Developers can choose between constructing required parking spaces on site or transferring parking spaces to	Mercer Island : Doesn't require parking space to be tied to the unit and spaces may be used for other uses including commercial.
Rights	another development site. This approach is most applicable in areas where parking maximums limit the amount of parking that can be built.	
Land Banking	Land banking addresses the uncertainty of future parking demand and is especially applicable to phased developments. The strategy reserves unpaved space for anticipated future parking demands. Meanwhile, the space can be used for amenities such as	Kent: For senior housing in CBD – reserve 1.8/DU but require 1/DU, and can be reduced to 0.5/DU if certain conditions are met.



	playgrounds or parks.	
Parking	Parking Benefit Districts assess charges	Pasadena, CA returns all parking revenue to the district that generates it.
Benefit	for on-street parking (residents can be	San Diego returns 45 percent.
Districts excluded) that can be used to fund neighborhood improvements. They are most relevant as a solution for parking spillover.		Portland, OR: Recently proposed for the Portland State University area.
Parking	When areas become urbanized,	No examples available at the time of printing. This is a potential best
Redeployment	properties with large parking capacity can be redeployed for new buildings, open spaces or parks	practice that could warrant more exploration.

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Parking Pricing

Parking pricing is an integral part of any comprehensive parking policy approach. Parking pricing is most effective when it is combined with support for alternative modes, such as transit service and pedestrian and bicycle amenities.

Coordinated Off-street and On-street Pricing	Off-street and on-street parking prices should be coordinated. This encourages commuters to use alternative modes while still providing short term parking for customers.	Mercer Island: Time limits for on street parking are coordinated with property owners and businesses in the Town Center. Kent: Considered in parking reductions. Seattle: In 2011, the City Council directed SDOT to set paid parking rates by neighborhood to achieve the policy objective of providing an average of one or two open spaces per blockface throughout the day, with rates ranging from \$1 to \$4 per hour, in twenty-three paid parking areas.
Unbundled Parking	Typically, parking is bundled or absorbed into tenant leases, hiding the true cost of parking. Unbundling parking is an essential first step towards getting people to understand the true cost of parking and providing the opportunity to opt out of parking and make alternative travel choices. When parking is bundled, tenants experience parking as free, as compared to transit which costs them money. Unbundled parking provides a foundation for additional parking pricing strategies.	Seattle's TMP Director's rule (9-2010) highly recommends unbundling parking from building leases as a TMP element. San Francisco: A 2008 ordinance requires the unbundling of parking spaces in condo developments of 10 or more units; the City also encourages unbundling in apartments.
Parking Tax	Taxes on paid parking increase the cost of travel by car and encourage the use of other modes, which reduces parking	Seattle : Parking tax (currently at 12.5%.) is required Downtown. The tax is levied as a percentage of all parking transactions and for any parking stalls where a fee is charged to motorists for the act of parking a



demand as well as the economic value of
keeping land in a parking use. This
strategy can further reduce parking
demand if the tax revenues are invested
in non-motorized transportation.

motor vehicle. (Taxes on non-revenue generating parking is prohibited by state law.)

Des Moines has a commercial parking tax collected as 25% of short term parking gross proceeds and 10% of long term parking gross proceeds. Revenues contribute to the CIP.



Parking Financing

Financing parking can be one of the most challenging parts of parking development. Cities can incorporate policies that provide financing alternatives to the status quo. Public sector ownership and financing of public parking spaces is one measure jurisdictions can take to create a business friendly environment.

In-Lieu Fees	In some cities, developers are allowed to buy out of minimum parking requirements. The in-lieu fee is set at a level below the cost of constructing parking spaces and can be used to fund future parking facilities or other transportation improvements in the project area, including shared parking facilities. These fees can be a good solution for the redevelopment of older and historic properties that cannot incorporate parking.	Burien allows in-lieu fee of \$7,000 per parking space to fund purchase of land/ build a lot or structure for shared parking. (BMC 19.20.030.3.) Kirkland : Applicants may meet all or a portion of the parking obligation by paying a \$20,000 (in 2006 dollars) fee-in-lieu of parking for each required parking stall or fraction of a stall into a special fund that will be used to provide and upgrade municipal off-street parking. (KMC 50.60 4) Redmond has fund created by its Comprehensive Parking Plan.
Developer	In environments where parking is not	No examples available at the time of printing. This is a potential best
Built,	adequate to make local businesses	practice that could warrant more exploration.
Financed &	competitive, the developer can build	
Owned Public	extra spaces that are available to the	
Parking	public, paid for by the jurisdiction.	



III. Summary Table of RSP Best Practices Utilized in King County, WA

	Auburn	Bellevue	Burien	Des Moines	Enumclaw	Federal Way	Issaquah	Kenmore	Kent	Kirkland	Lake Forest Park	Mercer Island	Redmond	Renton	Sammamish	SeaTac	Seattle	Shoreline	Tukwila
Supporting Alternative Modes																			
Pedestrian-Friendly Parking Design				•					•	•		•	•	•		•	•		•
Transit Supportive Land Use Regulations		•	•			•	•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•		•
Transit Incentive Programs																	•		Ш
Design for Bikes and Pedestrians		•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Bicycle Parking		•	•				•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	
Parking Requirements	_																		
Reduced Parking Requirements	•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Parking Maximums		•					•						•	•		•	•		Ш
Shared Parking	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Reductions for Special Populations	•	•				•	•	•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Parking Management																			
Residential Permit Programs		•							•			•	•				•	•	Ш
Parking Access/Payment Technology										•				•			•		Ш
Carsharing		•							•								•		
Transferable Parking Rights												•							
Land Banking									•										
Parking Benefit Districts																			
Parking Redeployment																			
Parking Pricing																			
Coordinated Off-street and On-street Pricing									•	•		•	•	•			•		
Unbundled Parking																	•		
Parking Tax				•													•		
Parking Financing																			
In-Lieu Fees			•							•			•						
Developer Financed Public Parking																			

^{*} This table reflects code or policy utilized as of December 2011. Information was compiled from a brief survey to jurisdictions and supplemental research from King County staff. The table may contain inaccuracies due to lack of information.