



Stephanie Rawlings-Blake  
Mayor

## PLANNING COMMISSION

Wilbur E. "Bill" Cunningham, Chairman

### STAFF REPORT



Thomas J. Stosur  
Director

September 23, 2010

**REQUEST:** City Council Bill #10-0522/Required Parking For Bicycles

For the purpose of requiring certain new or expanded structures, premises, and uses to provide bicycle parking that meets certain standards; defining and redefining certain terms; imposing certain penalties; allowing for the issuance of variances from bicycle parking requirements; providing for a special effective date; and generally relating to required parking spaces for bicycles.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Amendment and Approval, the amendments are as follows:

- That §3-209(c) be amended to include a listing for bicycle parking spaces as a new item 5A, and that they are to be permitted in all three categories of required yards. Staff would defer to the Law Department and the Department of Legislative Reference for the exact form of such language.
- That §10-301 be amended to have a new paragraph (3), and renumber the following paragraph to (4). The new paragraph (3) should read as follows:
  - (3) THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING MUST DETERMINE THE ADEQUACY OF THE DESIGN, SAFETY, AND SECURITY OF REQUIRED BICYCLE PARKING.
- That the proposed §10-406(a) and (b) of the Zoning Code read as follows:
  - (A) IN GENERAL.
    - 1 BICYCLE PARKING SPACE MUST BE PROVIDED FOR:
      - (1) EVERY 10 VEHICLE PARKING SPACES REQUIRED BY THIS TITLE, FOR THE FIRST 500 VEHICLE PARKING SPACES; AND
      - (2) EVERY 20 VEHICLE PARKING SPACES AFTER THE FIRST 500 VEHICLE PARKING SPACES REQUIRED BY THIS TITLE.
    - (B) VEHICLE PARKING SPACE OFFSET.
      - THE NUMBER OF VEHICLE PARKING SPACES REQUIRED BY THIS TITLE IS REDUCED BY 1 FOR EVERY 8, OR FRACTION THEREOF, BICYCLE PARKING SPACES PROVIDED AS REQUIRED BY THIS SECTION.

**STAFF:** Eric Tiso

**INTRODUCED BY:** Councilmembers Clarke, Middleton, Branch, D'Adamo, Curran, Henry, Welch, Spector, Reisinger, Kraft

### HISTORY

There have been no previous Planning Commission actions related to this specific subject; however this bill was introduced to accompany a group of bicycle-friendly bills.

## **CONFORMITY TO PLANS**

This action is compatible with the goals and objectives of the Baltimore City Comprehensive Master Plan, specifically the LIVE section, Goal #3 Improve Transportation Access, Accessibility and Choice for City Residents, Objective #1 Create a Comprehensive Transportation Plan to Improve Mobility, Accessibility and Choice.

## **ANALYSIS**

Purpose: This bill seeks to create a requirement for bicycle parking spaces in the Zoning Code, and specifies how they are to be provided.

Zoning Code Changes: This bill seeks to define certain new terms, and requires that bicycle parking spaces are provided in certain cases. Amendments include:

- The definitions for Bicycle and Motor Vehicle are proposed to be added to Title 1, with meanings as in the State Transportation Article. A definition for Parking Facility and Parking Space is also added to Title 1.
- References to bicycle parking spaces are added in several parts of Title 10, the Parking section of the Zoning Code, including definitions of Bicycle Parking Spaces, Parking Facility, and Vehicle Parking Spaces in §10-101.
- In §10-206, bicycle parking spaces are required to be used exclusively for bicycle parking, to mirror the existing requirement that is clarified to apply to vehicle parking spaces.
- §10-207 is clarified to apply to vehicle parking spaces throughout.
- §10-301, addressing plot plans for proposed parking areas with five or more vehicle parking spaces, is amended to include references to bicycles.
- Definitions of dimensions and requirements for bicycle parking spaces are added in §§ 10-305 and 10-311.
- §§10-307 and 10-308 are clarified to apply to vehicle parking spaces.
- §10-402 is amended to allow for calculating fractional spaces for either Bicycle or vehicle parking spaces.
- §10-402(b), (c) and §10-405 are clarified to apply to vehicle parking spaces.
- A new §10-406 is added that specifies that one bicycle parking space needs to be provided for every ten vehicle parking spaces otherwise required. It also adds a vehicle parking space offset clause such that the total of required vehicle parking spaces may be reduced by one for each bicycle parking space required. By way of example, if a potential project would normally require 100 vehicle parking spaces, it would now be required to also provide ten bicycle parking spaces. At the same time, ten vehicle parking spaces could be removed through the offset, resulting in 90 vehicle parking spaces and ten bicycle parking spaces total.
- Finally, a new §15-208(d) is added to authorize the Board to grant variances to reduce the amount of bicycle parking spaces that are required.

Amendments:

*Bicycle Parking Spaces in Required Yards:* §10-302(b) allows that “Parking spaces may be located in required yards as permitted in §3-209(c) {“Projections... into required yards”} of this article.” However, in §3-209(17) open off-street parking spaces are only allowed to encroach into required interior side yards or rear yards. There will be many instances where bicycle parking spaces would preferably be located in these required setbacks, justifying this amendment.

Staff recommends that §3-209(c) be amended to include a listing for bicycle parking spaces as a new item 5A and that they be permitted in all three categories of required yards. Staff would defer to the Law Department and the Department of Legislative Reference for the exact form of such language.

*Planning Review for Adequacy of Design:* Staff is concerned that the bicycle parking spaces that are provided should have some level of design review to ensure that they are functional and desirable for use. Without such a review it may be possible to meet the technical requirements of the code, but design the bicycle parking spaces in such a way that they are not likely to be used. For this reason, staff recommends that §10-301 be amended to have a new paragraph (3) that would add a requirement for Planning to determine the adequacy of the design, safety, and security of required bicycle parking.

*Tiered Requirement for Large Projects:* Staff recommends a tiered requirement that will reduce ratio of bicycle parking spaces for large developments. One bicycle parking space should be provided for every ten vehicle parking spaces for the first 500 vehicle parking spaces and one bicycle parking space for every twenty vehicle parking spaces thereafter.

*Revised Offset:* While staff believes that the provision of dedicated bicycle parking spaces is a great idea, and is consistent with the City’s Sustainability goals, the proposed offset of one-for-one parking spaces may be too generous. An alternate consideration would be to provide a vehicle parking space offset that is based on an area-for-area calculation. If the new dimensions for eight bicycle parking spaces would occupy almost the same area as one vehicle parking space (normally 9’ by 20’), then an offset of one vehicle parking space for each eight bicycle parking spaces, or fraction thereof would seem appropriate. In this way, a built-out urban site that changes its land use and triggers a new requirement for bicycle parking spaces could provide bicycle parking spaces in the same land area it had available in a regular parking lot without having to find additional space for bicycle parking. Otherwise, this new requirement could be perceived as an imposition, and create a practical hardship that may lead to a request for a variance. With the area-for-area offset, the new requirement appears more as a shift in the balance of facilities provided.

Sustainability: In their letter of support to the City Council, the Baltimore Commission on Sustainability listed a number of goals in the Baltimore Sustainability Plan that this bill will support, namely:

- Pollution Prevention Goal #1: Reduce Baltimore's greenhouse gas emissions by 15% by 2015;
- Resource Conservation Goal #1: Reduce Baltimore's energy use by 15% by 2015;
- Transportation Goal #2: Make Baltimore bicycle and pedestrian friendly; and
- Green Economy Goal #4: Raise Baltimore's profile as a forward-thinking, green city.

Notification: Notice of this bill was sent to 212 City-wide community organizations.

**Thomas J. Stosur**  
**Director**