



Stephanie Rawlings-Blake
Mayor

PLANNING COMMISSION

Wilbur E. "Bill" Cunningham, Chairman

STAFF REPORT



Thomas J. Stosur
Director

September 2, 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 the proposed §10-406 of the Zoning Code read as follows (bold and italicized text added):
 - (A) IN GENERAL.
1 BICYCLE PARKING SPACE MUST BE PROVIDED FOR EVERY 10 VEHICLE PARKING SPACES REQUIRED BY THIS TITLE. ***AFTER THE FIRST 50 BICYCLE PARKING SPACES, ADDITIONAL BICYCLE PARKING SPACES ARE ONLY REQUIRED AT A RATE OF ONE-HALF OF A BICYCLE PARKING SPACE PER 10 VEHICLE PARKING SPACES REQUIRED.***
 - (B) VEHICLE PARKING SPACE OFFSET.
THE NUMBER OF VEHICLE PARKING SPACES REQUIRED BY THIS TITLE IS REDUCED BY 1 FOR EACH ***EIGHT*** BICYCLE PARKING SPACES PROVIDED AS REQUIRED BY THIS SECTION.
- Staff recommends that clarifying language be added to §10-302 to allow bicycle parking spaces in public rights-of-way, as the City may allow, within 100' of the property boundaries by-right. Additionally, staff recommends that §3-209(c) be amended to include a listing for bicycle parking spaces that 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 form of such language.

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 Vehicles 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:

Area-for-Area 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 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.

Tiered Requirement for Large Projects: Further, staff recommends that for larger projects, after the first fifty bicycle parking spaces are provided, additional bicycle parking spaces are only required at a rate of one-half of a bicycle parking space per ten vehicles parking spaces required.

Location of Bicycle Parking Spaces: In today’s Zoning Code, §10-302 *{Location of facilities — to be on lot served.}* in paragraph (a) requires that “...all off-street parking facilities must be located on the same lot as the use or structure served.” This bill will define parking facilities to include both vehicle and bicycle parking spaces. In some cases, it may be desirable to allow for the provision of bicycles on the sidewalks in front of certain establishments, which may be in a public right-of-way (subject to acquiring a minor privilege, franchise or other City permission as may be appropriate). Similarly, §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.

Staff recommends that clarifying language be added to §10-302 to allow bicycle parking spaces in public rights-of-way, as the City may allow, within 100’ of the property boundaries by-right. Additionally, staff recommends that §3-209(c) be amended to include a listed for bicycle parking spaces that 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 form of such language.

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 hearing was sent to 212 City-wide community organizations.

Thomas J. Stosur
Director