



PLANNING & CODE ENFORCEMENT

DATE: February 28, 2025

Senator Chip Curry
Representative Traci Gere
Members of the Committee on Housing and Economic Development - Room 206

RE: LD 427 - An Act to Prohibit Mandatory Parking Space Minimums in State and Municipal Building Codes

Senator Curry, Representative Gere, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Jennie Poulin Franceschi. I am the Director of Planning and Code Enforcement for the City of Westbrook. I would like to provide testimony regarding LD 427, with the recommendation of OUGHT NOT TO PASS.

LD 427's language blanketly prohibits all municipalities from requiring any parking standards. **A one size fits all approach for land use standards never works**, and further this approach is inconsistent with the demands of a rural state like Maine where cars are the predominate form of transportation.

Parking standards are a necessity to ensure adequate site management and public safety. Even in the MOST urban environments, parking requirements are necessary as Maine residents own cars and there must be space afforded to place them. Eliminating parking standards, which is what this language effectively does, would create potentially unsafe situations along highly trafficked roads where parking is not permitted, but the standards would not require a development to address their parking needs on the site. Further, with the cost of housing increasing, more people are sharing spaces to afford their rents, which only exacerbates this issue with more cars per unit.

We have real time examples of projects that were approved of at a "1.5 parking spaces to 1 unit" standard for a 72-unit project and the project is under parked and is creating problems for the residents. Cars are parked on lawns and in access driveways, blocking needed safety access to the structures. In this instance, there is no neighboring on-street parking to utilize and the thought that "the market will take care of parking" is just not reality. The development community will build the minimum even to the detriment of their future customers, because once the project is sold the developer leaves your community and your community is left dealing with the safety problems created.

Communities already allow for variable parking standards depending on the location within the community. Allow the locality to make these types of detailed requirements as they have the best handle on the implication of the standards chosen. **A one-size fits all approach for local land use regulations across all municipalities does not work.**

Thank you for your time and consideration of these comments.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jennie Poulin Franceschi, P.E.
Director of Planning
and Code Enforcement