



March 7, 2022

**Testimony in Support of LD 2003
An Act To Implement the Recommendations of the Commission To Increase
Housing Opportunities in Maine by Studying Zoning and Land Use
Restrictions**

Good morning, Senator Daughtry, Representative Sylvester, and members of the Committee on Labor and Housing. My name is Angela King, and this testimony is on behalf of the Bicycle Coalition of Maine. We recommend an “ought to pass with amendments” vote from the committee.

The Bicycle Coalition of Maine is the statewide organization that advocates for bicyclists and pedestrians. We work to make Maine better for bicycling and walking to encourage active transportation, which improves environmental and public health.

The Bicycle Coalition supports more affordable, higher density housing developments that are more walkable and bikeable and less car dependent, and we feel LD 2003 will help achieve these important objectives.

We do, however, recommend amending the bill to remove the parking requirements. Most zoning codes and development practices require parking, forcing people who purchase or rent housing to pay for parking regardless of demands. Parking requirements reduce housing affordability and impose various economic and environmental costs. Based on typical affordable housing development costs, one parking space per unit increases costs approximately 12.5%, and two parking spaces can increase costs by up to 25%. Since parking costs increase the price of housing, and low income households tend to own fewer vehicles, minimum parking requirements are regressive and unfair. Not requiring developers to include parking can increase affordability, economic efficiency and equity.

Parking requirements increase land costs, and create lower density urban and suburban land use patterns that are unsuitable for walking, bicycling and transit.

Many cities and towns are reforming parking policies or removing any parking requirements to improve community design for walking and biking, and to increase various economic, social and environmental goals, including affordability. When Buffalo New York removed parking requirements, the city unlocked the creation of more than 1,000 new homes and a vibrant array of transit-accessible businesses and restaurants — many of which might never have existed given the high cost of creating new parking.

The quality of transit service also needs to be part of residential development. Residents of communities with more diverse transport systems tend to own fewer cars and take fewer vehicle trips than in more automobile-dependent areas. People should be able to live car-free. A parking demand survey done around the city of Vancouver found that nearly a quarter of households living near transit stations own no vehicles.

For these reasons, we support ways to make more affordable housing in Maine, but urge the Committee to amend LD 2003 to remove all parking requirements.

Thank you for your time and service to the people of Maine.

Sincerely,

Angela King
Advocacy Manager for the Bicycle Coalition of Maine

