

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** District of Columbia Zoning Commission

**FROM:** Matt Jesick, Development Review Specialist  
*JL for* Jennifer Steingasser, Deputy Director, Development Review & Historic Preservation

**DATE:** February 16, 2021

**SUBJECT:** ZC Case 21-XX – Text amendment to Subtitle C § 712 to allow special exception relief to certain vehicle parking dimensional requirements

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**I. RECOMMENDATION**

The Office of Planning (OP) recommends that the Zoning Commission:

1. Set down the proposed text amendment for a public hearing;
2. Take emergency action to adopt the text amendment and authorize immediate publication of the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking;
3. Approve a shorter notice period of thirty (30) days for the Notice of Public Hearing; and
4. Allow flexibility for OP to work with OAG to make any necessary refinements to the zoning text.

**II. BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS**

The proposed text amendment is being brought forward following discussions with OAG about the most appropriate form of relief and analysis for recent BZA applications seeking relief from parking space size requirements, specifically from the maximum number of permitted compact spaces. The Regulations provide for special exception relief from the total required number of spaces, but not from parking space and aisle dimensions. As such, variance relief is required to exceed the permitted number of compact spaces.

This proposal would provide a mechanism for special exception relief from the dimensional parking requirements, as there is for other vehicular parking standards such as parking number, location and screening. This is particularly appropriate for smaller development projects, typically on smaller lots, to have more flexibility in the ratio of full sized spaces to compact spaces. These changes should help facilitate the provision of required parking on-site, and allow more efficient and effective provision and design of parking spaces. In addition to OAG, OP also consulted with DDOT on the proposed text and they had no objection to the changes.

Also in response to recent BZA cases, OP is proposing an amendment to clarify when bumper guards, screening, or other devices are required at a property boundary for surface parking spaces.

### III. PROPOSED TEXT

The proposed text amendment would permit special exception relief from specified vehicle parking dimensional requirements of Subtitle C § 712, and would permit developments with numerically small parking requirements to use higher ratios of compact spaces. OP also proposes an amendment to clarify when bumper guards or other devices are required at a property boundary. The full text of § 712 is below, with text proposed for deletion in ~~red strikethrough font~~, and proposed new text underlined and in blue underlined font.

#### 712 SIZE AND LAYOUT REQUIREMENTS

712.1 All required parking spaces and parking aisles shall conform to the dimension requirements of this section, except as provided in Subtitle C § 717.

712.2 An automated parking garage is exempt from the requirements of this section.

712.3 ~~At least fifty percent (50%) of the required parking spaces must meet the minimum full-sized parking space standards of Subtitle C § 712.5. All other spaces must meet the minimum compact parking space standards in Subtitle C § 712.6.~~

The minimum parking space dimensions shall be provided as follows:

(a) When four (4) or more spaces are required, at least fifty percent (50%) of the spaces shall meet or exceed the full-sized dimensions specified in Subtitle C § 712.5;

(b) When three (3) parking spaces are required, at least one (1) of the spaces shall meet or exceed the full-sized dimensions specified in Subtitle C § 712.5 and the others shall meet or exceed the compact-sized dimensions specified in Subtitle C § 712.6; and

(c) When two (2) or fewer parking spaces are required, they may meet or exceed the compact-sized dimensions specified in Subtitle C § 712.6.

712.4 Parking spaces provided on the same lot as a historic resource shall meet the minimum dimensional requirements of Subtitle C § 712.6.

712.5 The minimum dimensions for full-sized parking spaces and aisles are as follows:

**TABLE C § 712.5: MINIMUM DIMENSIONS FOR FULL-SIZED PARKING SPACES AND AISLES**

Parking Angle	Stall Width	Depth of Stalls Perpendicular to Aisle	One-Way Drive Aisle Width	Two-Way Drive Aisle Width
45°	9 ft.	17.5 ft.	17 ft.	N/A
60°	9 ft.	19 ft.	17 ft.	N/A
90°	9 ft.	18 ft.	20 ft.	20 ft.
Parallel	22 ft.	8 ft.	12 ft.	20 ft.

712.6 The minimum dimensions for spaces and aisles exclusively for compact parking spaces are as follows:

**TABLE C § 712.6: MINIMUM DIMENSIONS FOR COMPACT PARKING SPACES AND AISLES**

Parking Angle	Stall Width	Depth of Stalls Perpendicular to Aisle	One-Way Drive Aisle Width	Two-Way Drive Aisle Width
45°	8 ft.	16.5 ft.	16 ft.	N/A
60°	8 ft.	17 ft.	16 ft.	N/A
90°	8 ft.	16 ft.	20 ft.	20 ft.
Parallel	20 ft.	8 ft.	12 ft.	20 ft.

712.7 All parking spaces and access ways to and from spaces shall have a minimum vertical clearance of six feet, six inches (6 ft., 6 in.).

712.8 Above grade parking areas shall be designed so that no vehicle shall project over any lot line, front setback line, or building restriction line.

712.9 Except on a lot that only has one (1) or two (2) dwelling units:

- (a) Parking spaces that abut public spaces such as sidewalks, streets or alleys shall be separated therefrom by wheel bumper guards, curbs, guard rails, or screening that prevents vehicular encroachment into the public space, unless the abutment in question is the access point to the parking space; shall be installed between the property line and the perimeter of the parking area; and
- (b) All parking areas and spaces shall be designed and operated so that sufficient access and maneuvering space is available to permit the parking and removal of any vehicle without moving any other vehicle onto public space.

712.10 All individual compact parking spaces shall be clearly labelled as such.

**712.11 The Board of Zoning Adjustment may grant full or partial relief from the requirements of Subtitle C §§ 712.3, 712.5, and 712.6 as a special exception under Subtitle X, Chapter 9 and subject to the following:**

- (a) The Office of Zoning shall refer any request under this subsection to the Office of Planning and the District Department of Transportation for review and comment;
- (b) For a request for relief from the ratio requirement of Subtitle C § 712.3, the applicant shall demonstrate to the Board’s satisfaction a reasonable difficulty in providing the number of full-sized parking spaces;
- (c) A request for relief from the dimensional requirements for drive aisles of Subtitle C §§ 712.5 and 712.6 shall be accompanied by vehicle movement and turning diagrams demonstrating to the Board’s satisfaction that vehicles of average dimensions would be able to safely and efficiently access the relevant parking spaces; and
- (d) No required parking space shall have dimensions less than the compact-sized dimensions specified in Subtitle C § 712.6.

#### **IV. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

The proposed text amendment would help to fulfill the following policies of the Comprehensive Plan.

##### Land Use Element

###### *Policy LU-2.1.11: Residential Parking Requirements*

*Ensure that parking requirements for residential buildings are responsive to the varying levels of demand associated with different unit types, unit sizes, and unit locations (including proximity to transit). Parking should be accommodated in a manner that maintains an attractive environment at the street level and minimizes interference with traffic flow... 309.16*

##### Transportation Element

###### *Paragraph 415.9*

*Guiding principles for parking policy in the District should include...Prioritizing parking in residential areas for residents.*

##### Housing Element

###### *H-1.5 Reducing Barriers to Production*

*The development of housing may be hampered by both governmental and non-governmental constraints. Governmental constraints include lengthy delays in permit processing and plan approval, insufficient coordination among agencies and utilities, zoning regulations which may not reflect contemporary housing trends, and even prohibitions on certain types of housing.*

*Policy H-1.5.1: Land and Building Regulations*

*Ensure that the District's land regulations, including its housing and building codes, its zoning regulations, its construction standards, and its permitting fees, enable the production of housing for all income groups. Avoid regulations which make it prohibitively expensive or difficult to construct housing. 507.2*

Implementation Element

*Policy IM-1.1.1: Mitigation of Development Impacts*

*To the greatest extent feasible, use the development review process to ensure that impacts on neighborhood stability, traffic, parking and environmental quality are assessed and adequately mitigated. 2502.5*

*Policy IM-1.3.1: Updating Land Use Controls*

*Regularly review and update the District's land use controls and building codes to eliminate obsolete regulations and develop new regulations that address emerging issues, land uses, building types, and technologies. 2504.3*