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Barney S. Heath  
Director

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## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** March 24, 2023

**TO:** Councilor Deborah Crossley, Chair, Zoning & Planning Committee  
Members of the Zoning & Planning Committee

**FROM:** Barney Heath, Director, Department of Planning and Development  
Jennifer Caira, Deputy Director Department of Planning and Development  
Zachery LeMel, Chief of Long Range Planning  
Joe Iadonisi, Planning Associate

**RE:** **#38-22 Discussion and review relative to the draft Zoning Ordinance regarding village centers**  
ZONING & PLANNING COMMITTEE requesting review, discussion and possible ordinance amendments relative to Chapter 30 zoning ordinances pertaining to Mixed Use, business districts and village districts relative to the draft Zoning Ordinance. (formerly #88-20)

**MEETING:** March 27, 2023

**CC:** City Council  
Planning Board  
Jonathan Yeo, Chief Operating Officer

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### Introduction

At the two previous Zoning and Planning Committee (ZAP) meetings, the Committee heard and discussed the updated framework focused on reducing, and in certain areas, eliminating parking requirements within the Village Center Overlay District (VCOD). In general, a majority of ZAP members voiced support for this update. However, some Councilors requested additional case studies on U.S. cities that have eliminated parking minimums and incorporated parking maximums. This memo highlights three such cities. More case studies can be found on the [Parking Reform Network's webpage](#).

### Case Studies

Hartford, CT

- Eliminated parking minimums and established parking maximums citywide in 2017.
- Context: Hartford has a winter parking ban when snowfall is expected, population is 121,050, and about 30% of residents walk, bike, or take public transit in both Hartford and Newton.
- Impact of Removing Parking Minimums: a 2014 study found that the city was forgoing \$50 million in tax revenue by mandating parking. The city was providing tax incentives for developers and businesses to locate in Hartford and reported no longer needing to provide any subsidy after

eliminating the parking minimum. Attachment B shows the reduction in downtown surface parking lots and the increase in downtown development following removal of the parking ban.

#### Sandpoint, ID

- Eliminated parking minimums in downtown in 2017.
- Context: Sandpoint has a winter parking ban and a much smaller population with only 9,003 residents, little/no public transit, and is not located by any metropolitan areas.
- Impact: the elimination of parking minimums is directly credited with saving two local small businesses and allowing for expansion for a third as well as development for a digital marketing company headquarters in the downtown.

#### Fayetteville, AR

- Eliminated downtown parking minimums in 2015.
- Context: similar population size to Newton with population of 95,230, but is significantly less dense, with less transit, and no winter parking limits.
- Impact: led to two new restaurants on sites that had been vacant for 40 years, a mixed-use development, and saved staff time.

### Conclusion

The case studies here represent just a small sampling of the many communities that have eliminated parking minimums. They demonstrate the promise of village center investment by eliminating parking minimums and allowing the market to determine the amount of parking required. Our neighboring (Boston, Cambridge, Somerville, and Brookline) and regional (Brattleboro, VT, Manchester, NH, and Dover, NH) communities have eliminated parking minimums, some also having parking maximums, either citywide or within downtown districts. By continuing to maintain high parking minimums, Newton risks becoming uncompetitive at retaining and attracting businesses and residents, creating housing, and ensuring that our village centers are pedestrian-friendly and enjoyable places to live and visit.

### Attachments

<b>Attachment A</b>	Sources
<b>Attachment B</b>	Hartford, CT Downtown Development/Parking Maps

## Attachment A - Sources

### General

- MAPC 2019 *A Perfect Fit* parking study: [Final Perfect Fit Report.pdf \(mapc.org\)](#) and supporting data [DataCommon \(mapc.org\)](#)
- Parking Reform Mandates Map: [Parking Mandates Map - Parking Reform Network](#)

### Hartford, CT

- Academic study on property tax implications of parking, to include Hartford: [Effects of Urban Fabric Changes on Real Estate Property Tax Revenue: Evidence from Six American Cities - Bryan P. Blanc, Michael Gangi, Carol Atkinson-Palombo, Christopher McCahill, Norman W. Garrick, 2014 \(sagepub.com\)](#)
- Cornell review of rezonings, to include Hartford: [Comprehensive Rezonings \(cornell.edu\)](#)
- StreetsBlog report on Hartford removing minimums, citing Planning and Zoning Commission Chair: [Hartford Eliminates Parking Minimums Citywide – Streetsblog USA](#)
- NewsTime report on Hartford removing minimums, citing Planning and Zoning Commission Chair: [Downtown Hartford's parking lots could hold the key to grand list growth \(newstimes.com\)](#)
- UConn research on Hartford parking costs: [Urban Parking at Any Price? - UConn Today](#)

### Sandpoint, ID

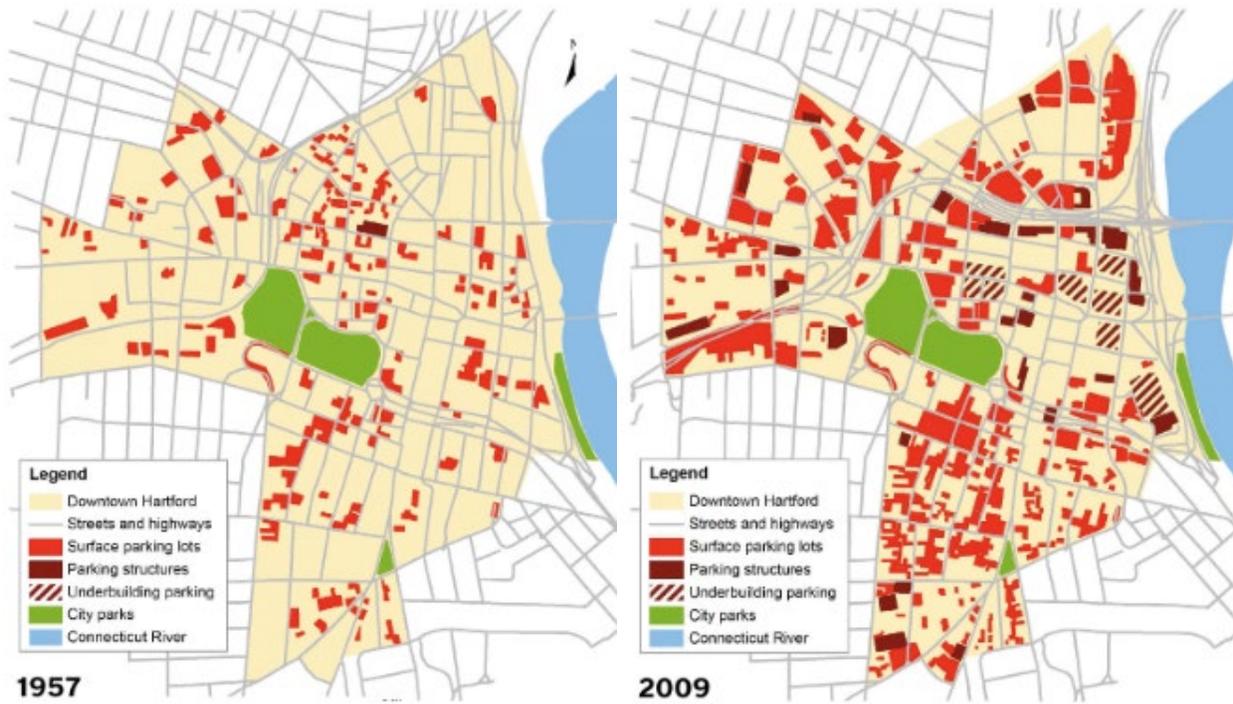
- Commentary by Sandpoint City Council member: [Why Parking Minimums Almost Destroyed My Hometown and How We Repealed Them \(strongtowns.org\)](#)
- APA report on Sandpoint: [5 Essential Tips for Repealing Parking Minimums \(planning.org\)](#)
- Strong Towns report on Sandpoint: [Best of 2019: One Line of Your Zoning Code Can Make a World of Difference \(strongtowns.org\)](#)

### Fayetteville, AR

- APA, *A Business Case for Dropping Parking Minimums*: [A Business Case for Dropping Parking Minimums \(planning.org\)](#)

Sightline Institute report on Fayetteville, AR: [No Minimum Parking Requirements? No Problem for Fayetteville, Arkansas - Sightline Institute](#)

**Attachment B - Hartford, CT Downtown Development/Parking Maps**



Above: Maps of downtown Hartford between 1957 and 2009 show the drastic increase in parking (surface, structured, and underground)

Below: A map of downtown Hartford in 2023 with surface parking lots shown in black, highlighting an increase in downtown investment since eliminating parking minimums

