

# Parking Reimagined

June 2022 UPDATE

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## **PROJECT SUMMARY**

The County initiated a comprehensive review of parking requirements in August 2021. The review is intended to evaluate the influence of changes in travel behavior and technology on parking demand. Access to the internet, along with flexible telework options and convenient home delivery of goods, has decreased the need or desire to drive to shop or work. Growth of transit availability with the expansion of Metrorail and bus service and the movement toward compact walkable mixed-use communities has decreased the need for vehicle trips and parking demand. The Parking Reimagined project is a broad review of the parking requirements, aiming to modernize how the County regulates parking, including methods to right-size these requirements. In addition to updating parking rates, the project will evaluate current administrative processes to identify proposals for changes that benefit our residents and businesses.

## **UPDATE ON ACTIVITIES TO DATE**

Since presenting to the Board of Supervisors' Land Use Policy Committee (LUPC) on March 15<sup>th</sup>, the project team has met individually with Board members to review the project proposal. Staff has also continued to meet with Board appointed committees, various community groups and the project work group which has contributed to refining our approach. A complete list of the outreach activities is attached in Appendix 1. At the March 15<sup>th</sup> LUPC, staff presented a framework that recognized the County has a variety of different access to modes of travel and that a one size fits all approach for parking was not appropriate. That approach proposed three tiers for parking rates based on low, medium, and high development densities/intensities using zoning districts as the basis. Further each tier allowed for adjustments of parking rates in locations that meet transit area criteria. A map of the previous conceptual framework tiers based on zoning districts is contained in Appendix 2. While the project team received positive feedback on the project framework and parking modifications, questions were raised about the designations of certain areas for lower parking requirements. Some of the Tier 2 areas which were identified for lower parking requirements were located in areas distant from high-quality transit or in isolated areas of the County. Innovative approaches to parking are more effective where there is a higher availability of transit and multi-modal options, such as good walking and bikeable areas, as well as compact, higher density and intensity, mixed-use development. While keeping the tiered framework of the initial proposal, changes are being incorporated which focus more on areas of the County planned for higher development densities and intensities.

## REVISED TIERED FRAMEWORK

The revised framework differs from the initial proposal by assigning parking tiers that align with Comprehensive Plan designated development areas, instead of zoning district classification. The tiers in the revised framework join locational characteristics and planned future development areas included in the Comprehensive Plan. In the suburban residential and low-intensity commercial areas of the county, most travel requires a car. In the highest density and intensity areas, such as areas near bus routes and Metrorail stations, more options for travel exist as these areas are well-served by transit and tend to be more walkable. These areas have a mix of uses to serve employment, living, retail services, and entertainment that are closely located to one another. Parking requirements should be oriented to the character of these diverse areas. In such an approach, parking requirements would remain higher in more car-dependent areas with less parking required in areas where non-auto travel options make personal-vehicle ownership and use more discretionary. A countywide map of the proposed tiers and descriptions of each tier are provided in Figure 1 below.

- **Base Rate.** These are the baseline parking rates for all uses in the County. The project is reviewing all rates for all uses to determine if changes should be made to simplify and right-size parking requirements. These rates will be the basis from which reduced minimum requirements are proposed in the sections below.
- **Suburban Centers – 10 Percent Reduction.** These areas include the Dulles, Fairfax Center and Merrifield Suburban Centers as defined by the Comprehensive Plan. The previous conceptual framework identified suburban centers as Transit Areas based in part on the proximity of current and future transit facilities and that they are designated county planning areas expected to have higher density and intensity of development. These factors can create mixed-use development opportunities that modestly reduce the need for vehicle parking while creating walkable and bikeable activities within and between developments. Also, the Suburban Centers are generally better served by transit than lower density areas of the County. Simply put, the built densities and required infrastructure with development in Suburban Centers (sidewalks, crosswalks) allow someone to walk from their place of work to get lunch. This alone is a modest reduction in parking need. Recognizing that development in these areas creates an ability to reduce parking need, the project proposes a by-right 10 percent reduction in minimum parking requirements for non-residential uses and multifamily dwellings. The parking proposal is currently not considering a reduction for single family detached, single family attached or stacked townhouses in Suburban Centers.
- **Revitalization Areas – 20 Percent Reduction.** This tier includes properties located within areas defined or designated as Commercial Business Centers (CBCs), Commercial Revitalization Areas (CRAs) or Commercial Revitalization Districts (CRDs). The project is considering adding the urban core of the Fairfax Center Suburban Center (which includes Fair Oaks Mall and Fairfax Center) and the suburban neighborhoods located between the CBCs in the Richmond Highway Corridor as defined by the Comprehensive Plan, to this tier due to the availability of transit facilities and the concentrated mixed-use development that is in place and planned for these areas. Under this proposal, Revitalization areas would be permitted a by-right 20 percent reduction of parking requirements for non-residential uses and multifamily development. No reduction for single family detached, single family attached or stacked townhouses in Revitalization areas is currently being considered.

The Comprehensive Plan encourages redevelopment of these designated areas with a mix of uses focused around core areas of high intensity development, such as town centers with a pedestrian-oriented design. The designated areas are concentrations of development activity that are mostly smaller in scale containing closely located, smaller building lots. These compact areas provide a greater opportunity to walk and bike between sites and uses. Many of these areas are also planned to modestly de-emphasize the influences of auto travel, designing streets and buildings to create Main Street business district locations with safer walking and biking opportunities. Because business development and higher density residential uses are concentrated in these areas, they are also better served by transit. In these areas, multiple bus lines serve the business districts. In many centers, these routes provide good access to nearby Metrorail stations. These Revitalization Areas include:

- **Community Business Centers:** Annandale, Baileys Crossroads, Beacon Groveton, Hybla Valley/Gum Springs, Kingstowne, Lincolnia, McLean, North Gateway, Penn Daw, Seven Corners, South County Center, Springfield, and Woodlawn.
- **Commercial Revitalization Districts:** Annandale, Baileys Crossroads & Seven Corners, McLean, Richmond Highway (including the adjacent suburban neighborhoods as identified by the Comprehensive Plan), and Springfield.
- **Commercial Revitalization Areas:** Lake Anne and Merrifield.
- **Fairfax Center Urban Core Area**

The proposed 20 percent reduction for this tier is in harmony with existing zoning ordinance provisions which permits a 20 percent parking reduction for nonresidential uses in CRDs and in the Lake Anne CRA. Currently only the Richmond Highway CRD reduction is automatic, and the other CRDs and Lake Anne require separate approval by the Board of Supervisors. The CRD parking reduction approval process can average six months, from initial application to final Board approval. All CBCs, except for Kingstowne and Lincolnia, are partially or fully located with Commercial Revitalization Districts. The intent of this tier is to promote revitalization by reducing required parking for certain uses, while enhancing speed, predictability, and flexibility of development and permitting reviews, by making the proposed 20 percent reduction automatic for all CBCs, CRAs, CRDs and the Fairfax Center Urban Core Area.

- **Transit Station Area/ Tysons Urban Center – 30 Percent Reduction.** This tier includes properties located within all designated Transit Station Areas (TSA) and the Tysons Urban Center. A TSA is distinguished from a Transit Oriented Development (TOD) area by distance from a Metrorail station. A TSA is defined by the comprehensive plan and surrounds a TOD area that is immediately adjacent to the Metrorail station.

A reduction in the minimum parking requirement for TSAs and the Tysons Urban Center is consistent with both a greater concentration of development expected in these areas and their location adjacent to TOD areas. TSAs are planned for higher development density and intensity than Suburban Centers and CRDs and CBCs. The availability of rail transit as an alternative to personal vehicle travel is expected to offset the higher intensity of development within the TSA. By extension, this is also expected to offset parking demand. The County's expectation for higher intensity development in these areas is aligned with the compact, mixed-use, walkable development envisioned for Tysons, Reston and other TSAs listed below. Studies of parking for mixed-use developments with access to rail transit demonstrate less parking demand. High-speed rail is

available for longer distance trips, local street-level bus transit is available in higher density/intensity areas to serve local trips, and more opportunities for employment, living, entertainment, and retail services are within walking, biking, and ridesharing distance.

Properties located within a TSA or within the Tysons Urban Center would be permitted a by-right 30 percent reduction of minimum parking requirements, applicable to commercial and multifamily properties. The Zoning Ordinance currently permits a 20 percent reduction of minimum parking requirements for all commercial uses, except restaurants, which are located within a designated TSA. Further, within a TSA, multifamily dwellings and stacked townhomes are currently subject to reduced parking rates based on the number of bedrooms. Within the Tysons Urban Center, properties not zoned to PTC District are currently permitted to opt into the PTC parking rates.

- **Transit Station Areas:** Dunn Loring, Franconia-Springfield, Herndon, Huntington, Innovation Center, Reston Town Center, Van Dorn, Vienna, West Falls Church, Wiehle-Reston East.

- **Transit Oriented Development – 40 Percent Reduction.** Under this proposal, properties located within a Transit Oriented Development (TOD), as defined by the comprehensive plan and typically within ¼ mile radius from the Metro station platform, would be permitted a by-right 40 percent. Reduction of minimum parking requirements, applicable to commercial and multifamily uses. Staff is also considering permitting a reduction for single family attached units to align with what is permitted in the PTC District. In addition, property owners would have the option of adopting a framework for parking consistent with the current PTC District, which allows the elimination of minimum parking requirements and imposes a maximum parking requirement. This would be approved in conjunction with a rezoning or through a staff administered opt-in process.

These development areas are located immediately adjacent to a Metrorail station. As such, they share similar characteristics as TSAs, but the allowable densities and intensities are greater, and this development is specifically designed to enhance Metrorail usage. TOD areas are typically within one-quarter to one-half mile of the Metrorail station, which is the distance most people are willing to walk to access a rail station. Development in these areas is planned and designed with the intent of de-emphasizing auto travel in favor of multi-modalism. Also, these areas have a mix of closely located high density employment, living, entertainment, and retail service options within one-quarter to one-half mile. These are areas planned for high urban densities. Thus, with rail transit and basic amenities within walking distance, less parking is both needed and desired. Less parking is desired because the reason for planning and building mixed-use development in these locations is to maximize modes of travel other than a personal vehicle. Building excess parking with easy personal auto access encourages driving and defeats this intent. These are the areas where parking innovation is most critical.

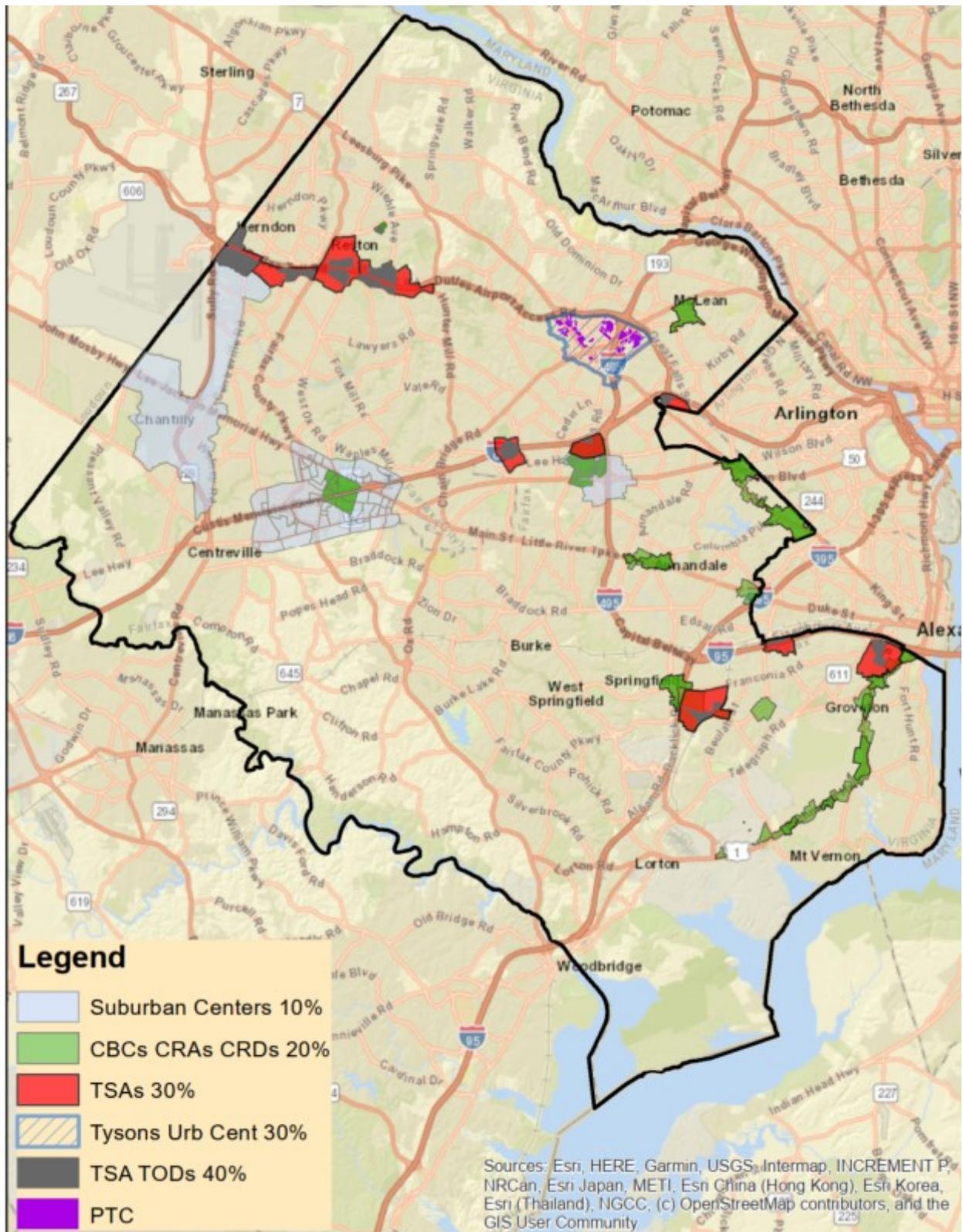


Figure 1: Map of Conceptual Framework

- **PTC District – No Minimum Parking Requirement/Maximum Requirement.** This tier includes areas zoned to the PTC District within the Tysons Urban Center, considered the County’s ‘downtown’. As currently proposed, parking for uses zoned to the PTC District would be regulated generally with the existing PTC parking regulations, although staff is considering making some rate adjustments to be consistent with the conceptual TOD approach. This may result in some parking rate reductions. The PTC rates remove minimum requirements for many uses and establishes maximum parking rates.

The Tysons Urban Center allows the maximum amount of development density and intensity in the County. The planned character of the urban center is entirely a TOD with higher intensity nodes at the Metrorail stations. Thus, parking requirements for planned and approved development adjacent to the Metrorail nodes should be the most innovative of any area in the County. Design and implementation of quality non-auto modes of travel are more critical than auto access in these nodes, diminishing the need for an ample and free supply of parking. This is consistent with a designation of this area as an urban core.

### SAMPLE BASE RATES

Simplification and rightsizing of minimum parking rates continues to be a core goal of this project. Since mid-January of this year, staff and our consultant have collaborated to review existing parking requirements to identify where this can occur. We continue to analyze data to fine tune the requirements, but draft recommendations for many uses have been developed for consideration with the Parking Reimagined proposal and staff has provided a range for review and consideration. Since we are continuing to evaluate the uses to determine the best fitting rates, ranges are shown at this time. Below are a few examples of potential changes to the current parking requirements.

Many industrial uses have a rate based on number of employees and company vehicles, but a minimum of one space per 1,000 square feet (SF) of gross floor area (GFA). The project team is proposing to simplify that rate to be based solely on the square footage of the building. The size of a building can be determined at all phases of a project’s lifespan and parking supply can be sized when constructed. By contrast the number of employees and company vehicles will be uncertain before construction, and prone to variation after occupancy. The risk this creates of requiring additional parking requirements as activities and tenants change can create hardships for existing businesses and prevent new businesses from being established. Using a square footage measure for parking provides greater predictability for property owners and tenants. The proposed minimum rate does not prevent an owner/developer from providing more parking than the minimum required in order to meet their specific needs. Below are examples of converting a rate from an occupancy basis to a square footage basis.

Use	Current	Proposed
<b>Warehouse</b>	1 space per 1.5 employees on a major shift, plus 1 space per company vehicle, plus sufficient space to accommodate the largest number of visitors anticipated to be on-site at any one time, but with a minimum of 1 space per 1,000 square feet of gross floor area	1 space per 1,000 SF of GFA

The occupancy load for a health club is based on one person per 50 square feet and can result in a very high parking requirement for large health and exercise facilities. Many of these uses are in shopping centers, which currently only requires conformity with the shopping center parking requirement. The project team has identified a proposed range that would establish a rate that is consistent with retail and shopping center rates under consideration with the project.

Use	Current	Proposed
<b>Health and Exercise Facility, Large</b>	1 space per 3 persons based on occupancy load, plus 1 space per employee on a major shift	Range between 2.5-4 spaces per 1,000 SF of GFA

Childcare facilities are created in standalone buildings but are frequently co-located with other uses such as religious assembly, schools, and offices. Staff reviewed numerous childcare facilities to determine an average size to determine a proposed rate. The number of children enrolled in childcare centers is not consistent. A square footage measure is more consistent and static. The recommended range is consistent with the current requirements.

Use	Current	Proposed
<b>Child Care Center</b>	Maximum daily enrollment of 99 children or less: 0.19 spaces per child  Maximum daily enrollment of 100 or more children: 0.16 spaces per child	Range between 2.5-4 spaces per 1,000 SF GFA

Below are examples of proposed rate changes based on current operational characteristics. The retail sales rate has not been revised since 1978. Since then, significant changes in shopping behavior have occurred, such as online sales and curbside pickup, that has lowered parking demand. Local and national surveys data show that average, non-December, parking demand for all retail uses is below the current county requirement. Parking should be constructed for average demand, not peak demand. The proposed retail sales rate applies to a single use within a single building. The County considers a building that has two or more retail uses to be a shopping center which has a different parking rate.

Use	Current	Proposed
<b>Retail Sales, General</b>	General: 1 space per 200 square feet of net floor area for the first 1,000 square feet, plus 6 spaces per each additional 1,000 square feet	Range between 3-6 spaces per 1,000 SF

The office parking rate was last updated in 1988 where the office rate went from a single rate to three different rates based on the size of the office development. Staff is considering a simplification of the rate to

either a single rate, or two rates based on building size. Similar to retail sales, technology has influenced office parking demand. Remote working and flexible in-office schedules were becoming more common prior to the pandemic, lowering average parking need. Data indicates that, on any given day, an average of 15 percent of staff are not in the office due to vacations, sick leave, and other conflicts, lowering expected parking demand. Within the County, rail and bus transit service has expanded during this 35-year time period, providing travel alternatives. Nationally, survey data demonstrates that average parking demand for all office types is less than current County requirements. This example depicts how the office rate can change based on the proposed tiers.

Use	Current Rate per 1,000 SF GFA	Proposed Base Rate	Suburban Center (10%)	Revitalization (20%)	TSA (30%)	TOD (40%)	PTC*
<b>Office</b>	50,000 SF GFA or Less: 3.6	50,000 SF GFA or Less: 3-3.6	50,000 SF GFA or less: 2.7-3.24	50,000 SF GFA or less: 2.4-2.88	50,000 SF GFA or less: 2.1-2.52	50,000 SF or less: 1.8-2.16	No minimum requirement except in non-TOD to match the TSA rate
	50,001-125,000 SF GFA: 3	50,001+ SF: 2.1-3	50,001+ SF GFA: 1.89-2.7	50,001+ SF GFA: 1.68-2.4	50,001+ SF GFA: 1.47-2.1	50,001+ SF GFA: 1.26-1.8	
	125,001+ SF GFA: 2.6						

\* PTC rate also establishes a maximum number of parking spaces. The table above only reflects the minimum rates. No change is proposed to the maximum rates.

The single family detached dwelling unit parking rate is proposed to remain unchanged, except a range is being considered for single family detached dwellings located in a TSA, TOD or PTC tiers. Currently three spaces are required if the dwelling is located on a private street and the project team is considering reducing that requirement to two spaces consistent with the public street standard.

Use	Current Rate (Spaces Per Unit)	Proposed Base Rate	Suburban	Revitalization	TSA	TOD	PTC*
<b>Dwelling, Single Family Detached</b>	Public ST: 2	Public ST: 2	Public ST: 2	Public ST: 2	Public: 2	Public: 2	Public: 2
	Private ST: 3	Private ST: 3	Private ST: 3	Private ST: 3	Private: 2-3	Private: 2-3	Private: 2-3

\* PTC rate also establishes a maximum number of parking spaces. The table above only reflects the minimum rates. No change is proposed to the maximum rates.

For single family attached dwelling units, the project team is considering preserving the current 2.7 spaces per unit rate but designate some of these spaces as visitor and shared spaces. In the TOD tier the rate would be proposed to change to be consistent with the PTC rate.

Use	Current Rate (Spaces Per Unit)	Proposed Base Rate	Suburban	Revitalization	TSA	TOD	PTC*
<b>Dwelling, Single Family Attached</b>	2.7 spaces	2.0 + 0.7/unit for shared/visitor	2.0 + 0.7/unit for shared and visitor	2.0 + 0.7/unit for shared and visitor	2.0 + 0.7/unit for shared and visitor	1.75-2/unit	1.75-2/unit

\* PTC minimum rate is based on proximity to transit station and if defined as TOD or non-TOD. PTC rate also establishing a maximum number of parking spaces. The table above only reflects the minimum rates. No change is proposed to the maximum rates.

The project is considering changes to minimum parking requirements for multifamily dwelling construction. Currently, the minimum parking requirement for multifamily is 1.6 spaces per unit except in the TSA and PTC District, where the rate is determined by the number of bedrooms. National and local data analysis has shown that parking demand for multifamily development is lower than the current 1.6 spaces per unit. The project team is exploring several options for the multifamily rates. We are looking at lowering the base rate of 1.6 spaces per unit and permitting automatic reductions in the rate based on the tiers described above. In addition, we are looking at converting the rate to be based on bedrooms instead a per unit basis. When the number of bedrooms in apartments is considered, different parking demand characteristics occur. Zero and one-bedroom apartments create lower parking demand than two and three-bedroom apartments. Thus, we can also consider parking requirements based on the number of bedrooms to be constructed within a multifamily project rather than the number of units.

Use	Current Rate (Spaces per unit)	Proposed Base Rate Range	Suburban (10%)	Revitalization (20%)	TSA	TOD	PT (PTC)*
<b>Dwelling, Multifamily</b>	1.6	1.2-1.6	1.08-1.44	0.96-1.28	0.4-0.8/bedroom	0.3-0.7/bedroom	0-0.4/bedroom

\* PTC minimum rate is based on proximity to transit station and if defined as TOD or non-TOD. PTC rate also establishing a maximum number of parking spaces. The table above only reflects the minimum rates. No change is proposed to the maximum rates.

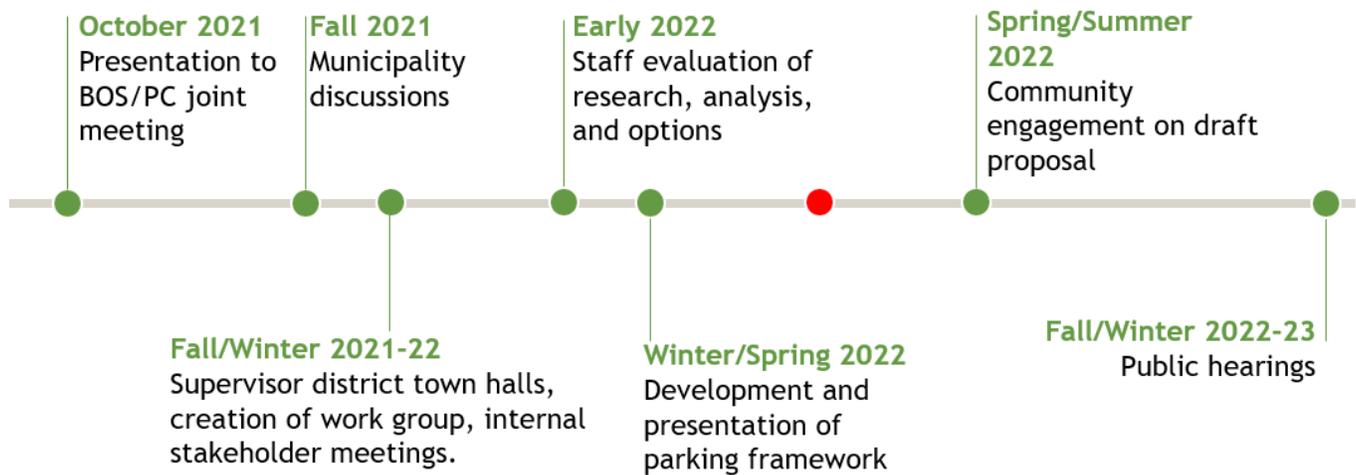
### **ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING (EVC)**

Currently, EVC spaces are requested to be provided during the entitlement process. In addition, EVC providers are partnering with shopping centers and other retailers to provide these services within the County. During the March LUPC meeting, staff indicated that the project team was considering establishing a minimum parking requirement for EVC spaces. However, due to lack of enabling authority to require EVC parking and related facilities, staff is considering options which would incentivize the installation of EVC spaces. If the County has clear legal authority to require EVC parking in the future, this topic will be reconsidered.

### **PROJECT TIMELINE**

The project team is currently in the process of developing, evaluating, and presenting the revised framework. Our current timeline is shown below in red. If this revised conceptual framework is supported, the project

team will formalize a draft amendment proposal for community review and comment. Community engagement on a draft proposal is scheduled to begin later this summer and will include further meetings with the Board, Board Advisory Committees, community groups, industry groups and continued collaboration with impacted county agencies. The project team will use the existing project webpage and listserv to keep the community updated on engagement opportunities. It is the intent to form a final draft proposal which could be presented to the Board for authorization, and to schedule public hearings early next year.



## Questions

If you have questions or comments about this project, please do not hesitate to contact Michael Davis, Parking Program Manager with Land Development Services, William Mayland, Deputy Zoning Administrator or Austin Gastrell, Planner with the Department of Planning and Development at [DPDLDSParkingAmendment@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:DPDLDSParkingAmendment@fairfaxcounty.gov) or visit the project website at [Parking Reimagined](#). If you would like to receive email updates about this project, please visit the project website and click “Add Me to the [Zoning Ordinance Information and Amendment List Serve](#).” You may follow us at <https://www.facebook.com/fairfaxcounty zoning/>.