

**County of Fairfax, Virginia  
Planning Commission Meeting  
November 20, 2019  
Verbatim Excerpt**

*ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENT - CODE AMENDMENT (PARKING RATE AT REGIONAL MALLS) – (Countywide)*

During Commission Matters

(Decision Only) (Public Hearing on this application was held on November 13, 2019)

Commissioner Sargeant: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am prepared to move forward with the Zoning Ordinance Amendment for parking rates – regional parking rates for malls.

Chairman Murphy: Okay.

Commissioner Sargeant: Unless there are questions, I'm prepared to go ahead and start.

Chairman Murphy: Can I get you to pull that mic over a little bit?

Commissioner Sargeant: Unless there are questions, I'm prepared to – is it on? Can you hear me?

Chairman Murphy: Are there any questions for anyone? Okay. Go ahead.

Commissioner Sargeant: Okay. Let me go ahead and start Mr. Chairman. Mr. – I got some opening comments and then I will proceed to the motions. Mr. Chairman, the proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendment, Article 11, Regional Mall Parking Rates, is in response to a request by the Board of Supervisors. It directed staff to review the current parking requirements for regional malls in excess of 800,000 square feet of gross floor area to determine whether a lower rate is appropriate. Potential changes to parking requirements identified four regional malls, Fair Oaks, Springfield Town Center, Tysons Corner Center, and Tysons Galleria. However, the potential impact of this Zoning Ordinance really only affects Fair Oaks Mall. Here's the reason. In 2010, Tysons One opted into the Planned Tysons Corner or PTC District that allows for much lower parking rates than what's being proposed in this amendment. However, in nearly a decade, Tysons One has not used that flexibility of the PTC District to lower its parking rates. It's not surprising. Tysons One continues to do very well with its mix of retail and other attractions. Tysons Two could opt into the PTC District and the flexibility of lower parking rates, but like Tysons One, has not chosen to do so. They are successfully bucking the trend when it comes to retail centers across the country. However, in response to citizen concerns regarding a potential parking rate deduction if that happens at the Tysons Malls, we have included a motion tonight to make sure there are opportunities for notification and review. We also have included a call for further study of how to reference and incorporate the PTC parking rates in a zoning update. There's a similar scenario for the Springfield Town Center, which is a designated transit station area. It's located in an area that's served by Metro and multiple bus routes. The Springfield Town Center has the opportunity for reduced parking rates now, which is in concert with future plans for additional development at that site. What we are focusing on here is the Fair Oaks Mall, which has gone the way of many shopping malls across the country. Failing or closed retail stores, changes in how, when, where we make our purchases. All of which are identified in the Nelson/Nygaard Study used for the preparation of this Zoning Ordinance Amendment. It's important to understand that this is only the first phase of the Zoning Ordinance review for retail centers. In order to address concerns about parking rate changes, we've included a motion to

prioritize the review of parking rates for retail and mixed-use centers during Phase II of the Zoning Ordinance Modernization Program. Which should be approximately in the Spring of 2020. I'm reminded of one citizen's testimony during last week's public hearing. The message was clear. If we do consider parking rate reductions, we should do so in a manner that helps to battle the heat island effect of asphalt lots and work to provide more affordable housing. Quite simply, this Zoning Ordinance Amendment is a step in that direction as it provides opportunities for environmental improvements in the new revitalization and redevelopment and more opportunities for affordable housing. With that Mr. Chairman, I'm prepared to begin my motions.

Chairman Murphy: Please.

Commissioner Sargeant: Okay. And I have several motions, so I'll go through one – ask for vote on each one and take it from there. Mr. Chairman, I MOVE TO RECOMMEND TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS APPROVAL OF THE ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENT, ARTICLE 11, REGIONAL MALL PARKING RATES, AS OUTLINED IN THE STAFF REPORT DATED OCTOBER 15<sup>TH</sup>, 2019 AND ADOPTING A RATE OF 2.5 SPACES PER 1,000 SQUARE FEET OF GROSS FLOOR AREA FOR SHOPPING CENTERS WITH 800,000 SQUARE FEET OF GROSS FLOOR AREA OR MORE. I FURTHER MOVE THAT THE ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENT BECOME EFFECTIVE AT 12:01 A.M. THE DAY FOLLOWING ADOPTION.

Commissioner Migliaccio: Second.

Chairman Murphy: Seconded by Mr. Migliaccio. Is there a discussion of the motion? All those in favor of the motion to recommend to the Board of Supervisors that it adopt Zoning Ordinance Amendment, Article 1 (sic), Parking Rate at Regional Malls, say aye.

Commissioners: Aye.

Chairman Murphy: Opposed? Motion carries.

Commissioner Clarke: Abstain.

Chairman Murphy: Mr. Clarke abstains. Alright.

Commissioner Sargeant: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Murphy: For all the motions, Mr. Clarke abstain.

Commissioner Sargeant: Okay. Mr. Chairman, I also have a few follow-on motions for the Planning Commission to consider. Staff has indicated that a comprehensive review and update of the parking rates in Article 11 is planned as part as Phase II of the Zoning Ordinance Modernization effort. Based on comments we've heard during this public hearing relating to the proposed changes in parking rates for regional centers greater than 800,000 square feet, it's clear that additional analysis and studies should be undertaken to address the changing parking demands for both large and small retail centers, as well as developing a new approach for mixed-use centers. There was also a discussion about the existing approvals for Tysons One and Two

and how the proposed amendment to change the parking rate could impact those approvals. Therefore, I move the following:

I MOVE THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMEND THAT THE BOARD DIRECT STAFF TO PRIORITIZE THE REVIEW OF THE PARKING RATES FOR RETAIL AND MIXED-USE CENTERS DURING PHASE II OF THE ZONING ORDINANCE MODERNIZATION PROGRAM AND INCLUDE A PROJECTED TIMELINE AS PART OF THE ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENT WORK PROGRAM WHICH WILL BE REVIEWED IN THE SPRING OF 2020.

Commissioner Migliaccio: Second.

Chairman Murphy: Seconded by Mr. Migliaccio. Is there a discussion of that motion? All those in favor, say aye.

Commissioners: Aye.

Chairman Murphy: Opposed? Motion carries. Same abstention.

Commissioner Sargeant: Mr. Chairman, I also MOVE THAT THIS REVIEW INCLUDE A STUDY OF HOW TO REFERENCE AND INCORPORATE THE PTC, PLANNED TYSONS CORNER PARKING RATES IN THIS UPDATE.

Commissioner Migliaccio: Second.

Chairman Murphy: Seconded by Mr. Migliaccio. Is there a discussion? All those in favor of that motion, say aye.

Commissioners: Aye.

Chairman Murphy: Opposed? Motion carries.

Commissioner Sargeant: Alright. Mr. Chairman, I MOVE THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMEND THAT THE BOARD DIRECT STAFF IN LAND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES TO PROVIDE NOTIFICATION THAT THE APPLICABLE DISTRICT SUPERVISOR AND PLANNING COMMISSIONER, WHEN A PARKING REDUCTION OR OTHER TYPE OF ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVAL REQUEST IS SUBMITTED TO REDUCE PARKING FOR THOSE RETAIL CENTERS IN EXCESS OF 800,000 SQUARE FEET.

Commissioner Migliaccio: Second.

Chairman Murphy: Seconded by Mr. Migliaccio. Is there a discussion of that motion? All those in favor, say aye.

Commissioners: Aye.

Chairman Murphy: Opposed? Motion carries. Same abstention.

Commissioner Sargeant: Mr. Chairman, with regard to some of the discussion we've had – heard regarding the proposal for future for redevelopment of Fair Oaks Mall and the concern that any reduction in the parking requirement would result – would not necessarily result in commitments that are consistent with policies for the County, committee and stormwater management, and other environmental policies, I would like to make the following motion for the Board's consideration. I MOVE THAT THE REVIEW OF ANY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT AND SUBSEQUENT ZONING APPLICATION FOR FAIR OAKS MALL PLACE PARTICULAR EMPHASIS ON THE PROVISION OF INTERCONNECTED GREEN SPACES, TREE CANOPY, LANDSCAPING, MULTIMODAL CONNECTIONS, AND STORMWATER LOW IMPACT DEVELOPMENT TECHNIQUES, AS WELL AS THE INTEGRATION OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN ANY RESIDENTIAL COMPONENT OF REDEVELOPMENT AT THE CENTER.

Commissioner Cortina: Second.

Chairman Murphy: Seconded by Ms. Cortina. Is there a discussion of that motion?

Commissioner Hart: Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Murphy: Yes.

Commissioner Hart: On that one. I think this may be the most important of the package. And – and as Commissioner Sargeant pointed out at the beginning, the – the reduction of parking requirements provides an opportunity for environmental improvement. But there is no quid pro quo, if that's the phrase. There's – there's nothing coupled with the reduction of parking requirements, at least as of yet. And I wish there were. And I think some of the suggestions we've had is that a reduction in parking ought to increase impervious surface, or provide opportunities for solar panels, or some other improvement. And whether it's Fair Oaks Mall or somewhere else, our environmental policies, it seems to me, could be better integrated with this type of activity. If we're gonna reduce parking for a mall, there oughta be a quid pro quo. We oughta be getting some environmental benefit out of it. Whether it's Fair Oaks or anywhere else. Thank you.

Chairman Murphy: Further discussion? Mr. Migliaccio.

Commissioner Migliaccio: Mr. Chairman, a question for either staff or Commissioner Sargeant. Is this above and beyond or is this more than we would normally do in the process of a Comprehensive Plan and a rezoning?

Commissioner Sargeant: I would suggest this is – this is going beyond. But simply it – it ties in with Commissioner Hart's comments of going – going the extra mile to see what the opportunities are going forward.

Commissioner Migliaccio: So, we're not making this more onerous for the...

Commissioner Sargeant: I think this – this gives the opportunity to further highlight in ...

Commissioner Migliaccio: It's just...

Commissioner Sargeant: Our – our guidance on how we ...

Commissioner Migliaccio: Okay. So, we're just flagging it and for more review. Okay.

Commissioner Sargeant: We're – we're looking to make sure we've included the – the most recent techniques and strategies as has been suggested so that as you review these opportunities, as you look at reducing that sea of asphalt, you can see how you can better improve stormwater management and other – other components of this. So, Commissioner Hart's program I think as we review especially in Phase II of zMOD we have that opportunity.

Commissioner Migliaccio: Okay. I agree with that approach. I was just worried that we're putting one more step on something while we're trying to make, with this parking reduction, make it competitive, for Fair Oaks Mall to be competitive in the future. I just didn't want to put anything else in its way to get to that...

Commissioner Sargeant: Got it.

Commissioner Migliaccio: Destination. Thank you.

Chairman Murphy: All those in favor, say aye.

Commissioners: Aye.

Chairman Murphy: Opposed? Motion carries.

Each motion carried by a vote of 10-0-1. Commissioner Clarke abstained from the vote.  
Commissioner Niedzielski-Eichner was absent from the meeting.

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FAIRFAX  
COUNTY

# STAFF REPORT

V I R G I N I A

## PROPOSED ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENT

Article 11 – Regional Mall Parking Rates

### PUBLIC HEARING DATES

**Planning Commission**

November 13, 2019 at 7:30 p.m.

**Board of Supervisors**

December 3, 2019 at 4:00 p.m.

PREPARED BY  
ZONING ADMINISTRATION DIVISION  
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT  
703-324-1314, AND

PERMITTING AND CODE ADMINISTRATION  
LAND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES  
703-324-3065

October 15, 2019

MAD



Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA): Reasonable accommodation is available upon 48 hours advance notice. For additional information on ADA call 703-324-1334 or TTY 711 (Virginia Relay Center).

## **STAFF REPORT**

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Board of Supervisors (the Board) adopt the proposed amendment as set forth in this Staff Report dated October 15, 2019.

### **BACKGROUND**

The proposed amendment was developed in response to a request by the Board of Supervisors (Board) on February 5, 2019, directing staff to review the current parking requirements for regional malls in excess of 800,000 square feet of gross floor area (gfa) to determine if a lower rate is appropriate. This request was added to the 2019 Zoning Ordinance Priority Work Program.

The Board's request noted that organizations such as the Urban Land Institute, the International Council of Shopping Centers, and the Institute of Transportation Engineers acknowledge a trend in reduced parking demand for retail developments. For example, while the current parking supply at the Fair Oaks Mall addressed typical seasonal demand in the 1980s and 1990s, less than 70 percent of that supply would be needed to accommodate peak demand for holiday shopping today, according to data submitted by the property owner of the mall, the Taubman Company.

Reducing required parking is expected to help the County meet several key goals, ranging from reducing environmental impacts, including stormwater runoff and heat island effects, to better utilization of mall property, to creating a more pedestrian-friendly context that supports transit and other sustainable transportation modes. Changes to the parking requirements for large regional shopping centers could potentially impact all four of the County's regional malls – Fair Oaks, Springfield Town Center, Tysons Corner Center, and Tysons Galleria.

Conventional malls composed of multiple large-format anchor stores, a food court, and in-line shops surrounded by surface parking have responded to changing retail trends by trying to reinvent themselves to remain competitive. Malls around the United States are repurposing underused surface parking areas for redevelopment activities including the addition of new residential and commercial development, urban plazas, and enhanced design for pedestrian activities. Locally, Tysons Corner Mall and Springfield Town Center have similar approved plans for redevelopment that utilize surface parking. These redevelopments also take advantage of nearby alternative transportation modes which further reduces parking demand.



Fair Oaks Mall is also currently looking at redevelopment opportunities and an evaluation of the parking rates is viewed as critical to ensure the long-term vitality of the mall.

In an effort to expedite this analysis of parking rates for regional shopping centers with 800,000 square feet or more of gfa, County staff, working with Fair Oaks Mall and other regional centers, partnered with Nelson/Nygaard, part of the Clarion team assisting the County with the zMOD effort, to undertake this independent review of parking rates for large regional shopping centers. A copy of the Nelson/Nygaard report is included as Attachment A to the Staff Report.

## DISCUSSION

Currently, the Zoning Ordinance provides for a tiered parking rate for shopping centers based on the total gfa for the shopping center as follows:

- A. 100,000 square feet of gfa or less: 4.3 spaces per 1,000 square feet of gfa
- B. Greater than 100,000 but equal to or less than 400,000 square feet of gfa: 4.0 spaces per 1,000 square feet of gfa
- C. Greater than 400,000 but less than 1 million square feet of gfa: 4.8 spaces per 1,000 square feet of gfa,
- D. 1 million square feet of gfa or more: 4.0 spaces per 1000 square feet of gfa

The above parking requirement is applicable to all uses in a shopping center, except that the area occupied by offices, restaurants or restaurants with a drive-through establishment that exceeds 5000 square feet of gfa, and hotels is parked separately in accordance with the applicable standards for those uses as set forth in Article 11-104, Minimum Required Spaces for Commercial and Related Uses.

According to the Urban Land Institute, shopping centers are defined as follows by floor area size:

- Community Shopping Center: <400,000 gross leasable area (gla)
- Regional Shopping Center: 400,000 to 600,000 gla
- Super Regional Shopping Center: >600,000 gla

In order to bring the County's large commercial shopping center size categories generally in line with industry standards, it is recommended to modify the minimum shopping center threshold in Paragraph D from 1 million square feet of gfa to 800,000 square feet of gfa and to modify the maximum shopping center threshold for Paragraph C from 1 million square feet of gfa to 800,000 square feet of gfa. This accounts for converting from gla to gfa as currently defined in the Ordinance and will provide Fairfax County's largest commercial retail centers additional flexibility to react to a changing retail marketplace.



The County's consultant, Nelson/Nygaard, collected data from other US jurisdictions on trends in changes to retail parking rates and reviewed the parking demand information submitted by the Taubman Company, owners of Fair Oaks Mall. The Taubman Company commissioned an analysis of mall parking demand during the 2017 and 2018 holiday seasons at Fair Oaks Mall, when annual peak parking occurs. The analysis found that less than 65 percent of the available spaces on the mall site were occupied during the peak of peak occupancy. As part of the analysis, staff also requested Nelson/Nygaard to conduct a parking demand study of Springfield Town Center. This was completed in August 2019. The consultant then projected holiday demand at this center and anticipates that, at 100% occupancy of the available retail space, approximately 65% of the parking spaces will be full during the peak of peak occupancy. This information is summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Existing Conditions Summary

	Parking Required by Code	Existing Parking Supply	Peak Weekday Parking Utilization			Peak Weekend Parking Utilization		
			Total	% Occ	Per 1000 sf gfa	Total	% Occ	Per 1000 sf gfa
<b>Fair Oaks Mall</b> (1.79 million sf gfa)	4/ 1000gfa*							
<b>December 2018 Surveys**</b>	7,610	7,736						
- At then 85% tenant occupancy			2,793	36%	1.56	4,363	56%	2.44
- At 100% tenant occupancy			3,260	42%	1.82	5,092	66%	2.84
<b>December 2017 Surveys**</b>	7,610	7,736						
- At then 90% tenant occupancy			2,585	33%	1.44	4,864	63%	2.72
- At 100% tenant occupancy			2,847	37%	1.56	5,356	69%	2.99
<b>Springfield Town Center</b> (1.69 million sf gfa)	4/ 1000gfa*							
<b>June 2019 Surveys</b>	7,559	7,588						
- At current 91% tenant occupancy			2,331	31%	1.38	3,312	44%	1.96
- At 100% tenant occupancy			2,562	34%	1.52	3,640	48%	2.15
<b>December Projections***</b>	7,559	7,588						
- At current 91% tenant occupancy			3,100	41%	1.83	4,405	58%	2.60
- At 100% tenant occupancy			3,407	45%	2.01	4,841	64%	2.86

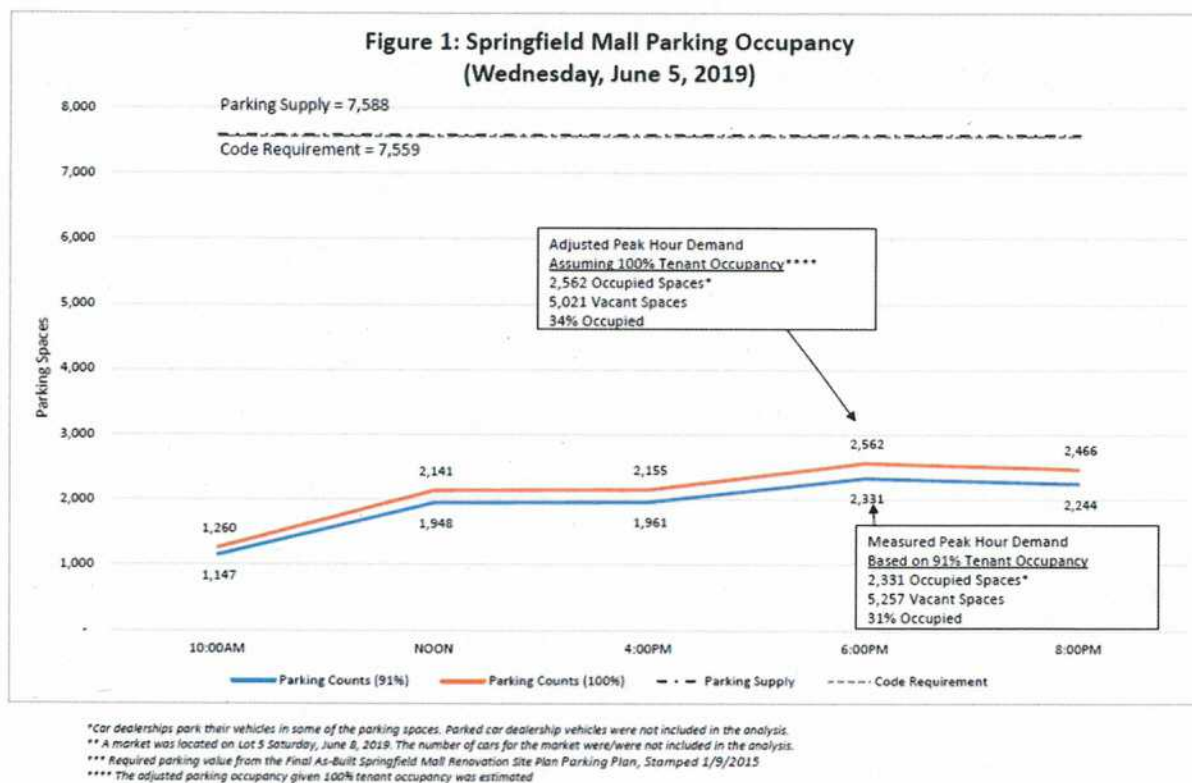
\*Required for Shopping Centers with greater than 1,000,000 gfa (not including supporting uses such as restaurants, movie theaters, etc)

\*\* Surveys undertaken by Fair Oaks Mall Owners Consultants

\*\*\* December projections for Springfield Town Center utilize ULI monthly parking demand factors

An examination of current and recent parking utilization at Fair Oaks Mall and Springfield Town Center shows peak occupancy for a limited time period in a single day of approximately 2.8 spaces per 1000 square feet of retail development. However, during most of the year, parking demand is much less. Typically, parking is not designed to address peak demand but, instead, average demand. Infrequent times of peak demand may create a tight parking supply with difficulty finding a space, but the tradeoff is a right-sized parking facility for 90 percent of its operational time. An oversupply of parking is an inefficient use of land resources and creates environmental, design, and aesthetic issues. Figure 2 below shows parking demand in June 2019 for the Springfield Town Center which demonstrates the underutilization of parking supply occurring at regional mall sites today. Overall, parking demand at these sites is

declining. This is a trend that is expected to continue even at economically healthy malls.



Nelson/Nygaard's analysis recommends that the County consider reducing its minimum parking requirement for large regional malls within a range of 2.5 – 3.0 parking spaces per 1000 square feet of retail development. The 2.8 spaces per 1000 square feet previously discussed represents peak parking during December, which is typically the highest demand period for parking. Staff has advertised the range of 2.5 – 3.0 spaces per 1000 square feet of gfa to allow maximum flexibility for the Board's consideration. However, as an interim first step, staff believes a rate of 2.8 spaces per 1000 square feet of gfa for shopping centers with 800,000 square feet or more of gfa is reasonable and will address the oversupply of parking currently experienced at our regional malls. This topic will be revisited during Phase II of the County's zMOD effort which will include a broad review of all the parking rates within Article 11 of the Zoning Ordinance.

## STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH

In addition to a presentation to the Board's Development Process Committee on September 10, 2019, the proposed amendment was included as a discussion topic during the Zoning Open House held at the South County Government Center on September 10, 2019. The amendment was also discussed with stakeholders at the zMOD citizen and land use attorney's working group. In addition, the Nelson/Nygaard Report was presented to all four mall property owners for their review and input.

## **CONCLUSION**

The proposed amendment lessens parking requirements for retail developments over 800,000 square feet of gfa. This provides greater flexibility for existing retail development of this type to repurpose parking areas which will provide economic, environmental, and public welfare benefits. The analysis supports a significantly lower minimum parking ratio for large regional malls in Fairfax County. Therefore, staff recommends adoption of a minimum parking requirement of 2.5 - 3.0 spaces per 1,000 square feet of gfa for shopping centers of 800,000 square feet or more of gfa, with an effective date of 12:01 am the day following adoption.



**PROPOSED ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENT  
CHAPTER 112 OF THE FAIRFAX COUNTY CODE**

*This proposed Zoning Ordinance amendment is based on the Zoning Ordinance in effect as of October 15, 2019, and there may be other proposed amendments which may affect some of the numbering, order or text arrangement of the paragraphs or sections set forth in this amendment, which other amendments may be adopted prior to action on this amendment. In such event, any necessary renumbering or editorial revisions caused by the adoption of any Zoning Ordinance amendments by the Board of Supervisors prior to the date of adoption of this amendment will be administratively incorporated by the Clerk in the printed version of this amendment following Board adoption.*

1 Amend Article 11, Off-Street Parking and Loading, Private Streets, Part 1, Off-  
2 Street Parking, as follows:

3  
4 - Amend Sect. 11-104, Minimum Required Spaces for Commercial and Related  
5 Uses, by revising Paragraph 23, to read as follows:

6  
7 23. Shopping Center:

- 8  
9 A. 100,000 square feet of gross floor area or less: ~~Four and three tenths ( 4.3 )~~  
10 spaces per 1000 square feet of gross floor area  
11  
12 B. Greater than 100,000 but equal to or less than 400,000 square feet of gross  
13 floor area: ~~Four ( 4 )~~ spaces per 1000 square feet of gross floor area  
14  
15 C. Greater than 400,000 but less than 800,000~~1,000,000~~ square feet of gross  
16 floor area: ~~Four and eight tenths ( 4.8 )~~ spaces per 1000 square feet of gross  
17 floor area  
18  
19 D. 800,000~~1,000,000~~ square feet of gross floor area or more: ~~Four (4)~~ 2.8  
20 spaces per 1000 square feet of gross floor area *[Advertised to permit the*  
21 *Board to consider a rate from 2.5 spaces up to 4.0 spaces per 1000 square*  
22 *feet of gross floor area]*  
23

24 For purposes of determining whether Par. A, B, C or D above is applicable, the  
25 size of the shopping center is based on the definition of gross floor area as set  
26 forth in Article 20, and includes any gross floor area devoted to offices,  
27 restaurants, restaurants with drive-through and hotels. The gross floor area  
28 calculation as qualified in Sect. 102 above is used to determine the required  
29 number of parking spaces.

30 The off-street parking requirement set forth above applies to all uses in  
31 a shopping center, except that the area occupied by offices, any restaurant or  
32 restaurant with drive-through establishment that exceeds 5000 square feet of

1 gross floor area, and hotels is parked in accordance with the applicable  
2 standards for such uses as set forth in this Section. For shopping centers subject  
3 to Par. A, B or C above, the area occupied by theaters is parked in accordance  
4 with the applicable shopping center requirement; however, for theaters with  
5 more than 2000 seats, an additional three-tenths (0.3) space must be provided  
6 for each seat above 2000 seats. For shopping centers subject to Par. D above,  
7 the area occupied by theaters is parked in accordance with the applicable  
8 shopping center requirement; however, for theaters with more than 750 seats,  
9 an additional six (6) spaces must be provided for each 100 seats above 750 seats.

10 In addition, for all shopping centers, stacking spaces as required by this  
11 Part must be provided for those uses which have drive-in or drive-through  
12 facilities. Spaces designated for curb-side pickup cannot be counted toward the  
13 minimum required number of parking spaces.



## MEMORANDUM

To: Leslie Johnson, Fairfax County Zoning Administrator  
From: Nelson\Nygaard  
Date: August 20, 2019  
Subject: Development of recommended minimum parking ratios for large commercial retail properties in Fairfax County

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

## BACKGROUND

In early February 2019, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors directed the County Department of Planning and Zoning to review current parking requirements for regional malls, those in excess of 800,000 square feet (sf) of gross floor area (gfa). This work was added to the Zoning Ordinance Priority Work Program, as part of the Zoning Ordinance Modernization (zMOD) process and contract. This direction came in response to a proposal from the Taubman Companies, owners of Fair Oaks Mall, that the County evaluate its minimum parking requirements for large commercial properties, to recognize current and future conditions in way that could allow owners of those properties to better match the amount of parking they provide to that desired by their customers.

As Commissioner Herrity noted in directing this review, "Fair Oaks Mall is surrounded by a sea of asphalt" which is never more than 70% occupied with parked vehicles. Reducing this oversupply could help the County meet several key goals, ranging from the economic health of such regional malls, to reducing environmental impacts including stormwater runoff and heat island effects, to creating more walking-friendly contexts that support transit and other sustainable transportation modes. Changes could potentially impact all four of the County's regional malls – Fair Oaks, Springfield Town Center, Tysons Corner Center, and Tysons Galleria. All four property owners welcome this review of minimum parking ratios for shopping centers of 800,000 sf and larger.

## PURPOSE

The purpose of the parking requirement review is to develop recommended minimum parking ratios for large commercial retail properties in Fairfax County. Upon review by staff, a recommendation would be provided to the Board of Supervisors for possible action.



## APPROACH

Nelson\Nygaard's approach, developed in consultation with County DPZ staff, was to analyze current and potential future demand for parking, using existing and newly collected utilization data from the County's regional malls. This direct, local experience was compared to current practices in other jurisdictions to ensure the recommendation reflects national trends in parking policy as well.

## 2 PLANNING CONTEXT

In the mid-1990's the number of conventional shopping malls in the U.S. peaked at over 1,500, while the intervening years have seen that number drop by over 1/3 to 1000. Conventional malls composed of multiple large-format anchor stores, a food court, and inline shops surrounded by surface parking have responded to retail trends by trying to reinvent themselves to remain competitive. For example, Fair Oaks has changed its tenant mix, has an 85% tenant occupancy, remains in a strong position but continues to have a low daily parking demand. Other malls have worked to remain relevant by using mixed-use strategies to build "downtowns" within the mall. Examples include the following:

- Many malls have repurposed underused parking lots to host regular and special events. For example, Springfield Town Center in Fairfax County, Smith Haven Mall in New York, and Everett Mall in Washington state host weekly farmers' markets, annual car shows, weeks-long circus residencies, and summer concert series.
- Northgate Mall outside Seattle devoted its two southern parking quadrants into 1200 condominium units aimed at residents 55 years old and older.
- The Streets at Southpoint in Durham, NC, developed a walking-friendly outdoor component and continues to replace parking with expanded outdoor options and new residential and commercial development.

Within Fairfax County, the four regional malls have observed shifting shopping (and parking) patterns in recent years and responded in different ways according to their context. The two Tysons malls are part of the coordinated Tysons Corner Urban Center plan, which envisions a future far less dependent on parking. Springfield Town Center has planned for the addition of some 800,000 sf of office space alongside residential and hotel units. Despite the rapidly changing context, the four regional malls remain competitive, with all recently above 90% occupancy.

However, the need for repurposing of vacant commercial space is an issue that the Board of Supervisors has recently addressed with an amendment of the Comprehensive Plan. In October 2018 the Board approved County staff's proposal to amend the comprehensive plan to allow non-office commercial buildings to be repurposed for different but compatible uses. This enables alternative uses for former retail spaces such as offices, public or institutional uses like an art

**Minimum Parking Ratios – Large Commercial Retail Properties**  
Fairfax County, VA

gallery or library, indoor recreation, medical and healthcare uses, community colleges and training centers, and temporary or pop-up uses.

Currently, Article 11 of the County's Zoning Ordinance outlines required minimum off-street parking spaces accessory to the Shopping Center use, differentiated by size:

- 100,000 sf gfa or less: Four and three-tenths (4.3) spaces per 1000 sf gfa
- Greater than 100,000 but equal to or less than 400,000 sf gfa: Four (4) spaces per 1000 sf gfa
- Greater than 400,000 but less than 1,000,000 sf gfa: Four and eight tenths (4.8) spaces per 1000 sf gfa
- 1,000,000 sf gfa or more: Four (4) spaces per 1000 sf gfa
- The off-street parking requirement applies to all uses in a shopping center, except the area occupied by offices, any restaurant or restaurant with drive-through establishment that exceeds 5000 square feet of gross floor area, and hotels. These uses are parked in accordance with the applicable standards for such uses in the Zoning Code.

These parking space ratios are generally higher than current industry standard requirements, and in the range of the requirements imposed by adjacent jurisdictions:

**Industry Standards**

- Institute of Transportation Engineers Parking Generation Manual (5<sup>th</sup> Edition)
  - Non-December: 1.95 vehicles (weekdays) / 2.91 vehicles (Saturday) per 1000 sf of gross leasable area (gla)
  - December: 3.77 vehicles (weekdays) / 4.58 vehicles (Saturday) per 1000 sf gla
- Urban Land Institute Shared Parking 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition: 3.20 spaces per 1000 sf gla (weekday – regional mall) 3.60 spaces per 1000 sf gfa (weekend- regional mall)

**Local Jurisdictions**

- Arlington County, VA – 1 space per 250 sf gfa, or 4 spaces per 1000 sf gfa
- Montgomery County, MD – 5 spaces per 1000 sf gfa (all retail outside of Parking Lot Districts)
- Prince William County, VA - 1 space per 250 net sf, or 4 spaces per 1000 net sf (properties over 300,000 sf gfa) – note that net area omits some unleaseable space, meaning this requirement will produce fewer than 4 spaces per 1000 sf gfa
- Loudoun County, VA - 4.25 spaces per 1000 sf gfa (properties over 600,000 sf gfa)

Nationwide there are few examples of jurisdictions that have modified their zoning ordinances specifically to reflect lower parking requirements for retail and shopping centers. More jurisdictions have chosen to eliminate minimum requirements completely, at least in some districts, typically downtowns or other transit-oriented areas. These examples include:

**Minimum Parking Ratios – Large Commercial Retail Properties**  
Fairfax County, VA

- City of Portland, OR: In some zones, minimum of 1 space per 500 sf gfa and maximum 1 space per 196 sf gfa (5.1 spaces per 1000 sf gfa). In other zones, no minimum number of spaces.
- City of Pittsburgh, PA: Minimum of 1 space per 500 sf gfa (above first 2,400 sf) and maximum 1 per 175 sf gfa (5.7 spaces per 1000 sf gfa).
- City of Richmond, VA: Minimum of 1 space per 300 sf gross leasable area (3.3 spaces per 1000 sf gla). With a typical ratio for malls of gla being 85% of gfa, this equates to roughly 2.8 spaces per 1000 sf gfa. No minimums in specific districts.
- City of Buffalo, NY: No parking minimums.
- City of Hartford, CT: No parking minimums.

From this review we see a range of minimum required parking from zero to 2.8 spaces per 1000 sf gfa, and maximums from 5.1 to 5.7 spaces per 1000 sf gfa.

### **3 EXISTING CONDITIONS**

The Nelson\Nygaard team received parking inventory and utilization data for Fair Oaks Mall, collected by the property owner in December 2017 and December 2018. This data was supplemented with inventory and utilization data for Springfield Town Center, collected by Nelson\Nygaard on behalf of Fairfax County in June, 2019. These data provide existing conditions for two of the four regional malls in the County, and thus insight into current parking conditions and trends.

Table 1 below summarizes the existing parking conditions at Fair Oaks Mall and the Springfield Town Center. The full data summaries are included as Appendix A.



**Minimum Parking Ratios – Large Commercial Retail Properties**  
Fairfax County, VA

**Table 1 Existing Conditions Summary**

	Parking Required by Code	Existing Parking Supply	Peak Weekday Parking Utilization			Peak Weekend Parking Utilization		
			Total	% Occ.	Per 1000 sf gfa	Total	% Occ.	Per 1000 sf gfa
<b>Fair Oaks Mall</b> (1.79 million sf gfa)	4/ 1000gfa*							
<b>December 2018 Surveys**</b>	7,610	7,736						
- At then 85% tenant occupancy			2,793	36%	1.56	4,363	56%	2.44
- At 100% tenant occupancy			3,260	42%	1.82	5,092	66%	2.84
<b>December 2017 Surveys**</b>	7,610	7,736						
- At then 90% tenant occupancy			2,585	33%	1.44	4,864	63%	2.72
- At 100% tenant occupancy			2,847	37%	1.56	5,356	69%	2.99
<b>Springfield Town Center</b> (1.69 million sf gfa)	4/ 1000gfa*							
<b>June 2019 Surveys</b>	7,559	7,588						
- At current 91% tenant occupancy			2,331	31%	1.38	3,312	44%	1.96
- At 100% tenant occupancy			2,562	34%	1.52	3,640	48%	2.15
<b>December Projections***</b>	7,559	7,588						
- At current 91% tenant occupancy			3,100	41%	1.83	4,405	58%	2.60
- At 100% tenant occupancy			3,407	45%	2.01	4,841	64%	2.86

\*Required for Shopping Centers with greater than 1,000,000 gfa (not including supporting uses such as restaurants, movie theaters, etc)

\*\* Surveys undertaken by Fair Oaks Mall Owners Consultants

\*\*\* December projections for Springfield Town Center utilize ULI monthly parking demand factors

The surveys of Fair Oaks Mall took place in December 2017 and December 2018. Over that 12-month period the peak parking occupancy (at 100% tenant occupancy) declined by 264 spaces (to 66%) on the weekend but a 5% increase in the peak weekday occupancy (to 42%).

Fair Oaks Mall and Springfield Town Center differ in their transportation context in some important ways. Fair Oaks is largely surrounded by limited-access and arterial roads and service from the three bus routes is adjacent to the Mall. Springfield is located within a short walk from the Franconia-Springfield Metrorail station, and is served by seven bus lines. The transit access decreases the demand for parking at Springfield Town Center. As a result of decreased demand, the mall owner currently leases parking spaces to local dealerships for vehicle storage, and leases part of one garage for commuter parking. In the recent utilization survey, car dealership storage amounted to 336 vehicles during the weekday peak and 348 during the weekend peak. These vehicles were not included in the parking utilization summarized in Table 1. Commuter parking is available on designated levels of the parking garage, and comprises 500 undesignated spaces as per agreement with the Fairfax County Department of Transportation. For that reason, they can

**Minimum Parking Ratios – Large Commercial Retail Properties**  
Fairfax County, VA

not be easily separated from mall parking and the parking utilization in Table 1 therefore includes commuter parking. Field observations and data collected by garage floor level show that the parking levels designated for commuter parking were less than 10% occupied on both weekday and weekend. However, this will result in an overstatement of the real demand for mall parking when looking at Table 1.

Based on the existing conditions, both the regional malls surveyed showed parking utilization well below the minimum requirements of the current Zoning Ordinance. Table 2 below highlights the required Zoning Ordinance minimum off-street parking spaces accessory to the Shopping Center use compared to the surveyed conditions.

**Table 2 Zoning Ordinance Minimum Off-Street Parking Comparison**

Location	Shopping Center Size	Zoning Ordinance Minimum Parking	Current Peak Weekday*	Current Peak Weekend*
Fair Oaks Mall December 2018 Surveys	1.79 million gsf	4 spaces per 1000gsf	1.82 spaces per 1000gsf	2.84 spaces per 1000gsf
Springfield Town Center December Projections	1.69 million gsf	4 spaces per 1000gsf	2.01 spaces per 1000gsf	2.86 spaces per 1000gsf

\*Based on 100% tenant occupancy and December Surveys/Projections

## 4 SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION

This analysis supports a significantly lower minimum parking ratio for large regional malls in Fairfax County. An examination of current and recent parking utilization at two of the four such malls shows peak occupancy of approximately 2.8 spaces per 1000 sf gfa, and a declining trend that can be expected to continue even at economically healthy malls. A review of current practice in other jurisdictions nationwide shows generally lower minimum requirements, in some cases (especially in more urban and transit-oriented locations) removing the minimums entirely and imposing maximums.

It is noted however, that both the tenant mix of regional malls and time of year is an important consideration in relation to parking demand. The mix of accessory uses incorporating office, restaurants and entertainment can influence the parking demand with those larger than 5,000 gsf required to park at their own applicable standards. This typically lowers the parking demand of the mall uses themselves. Additionally, the year sees parking demand peak during the December holiday period with lows during summer weekdays.

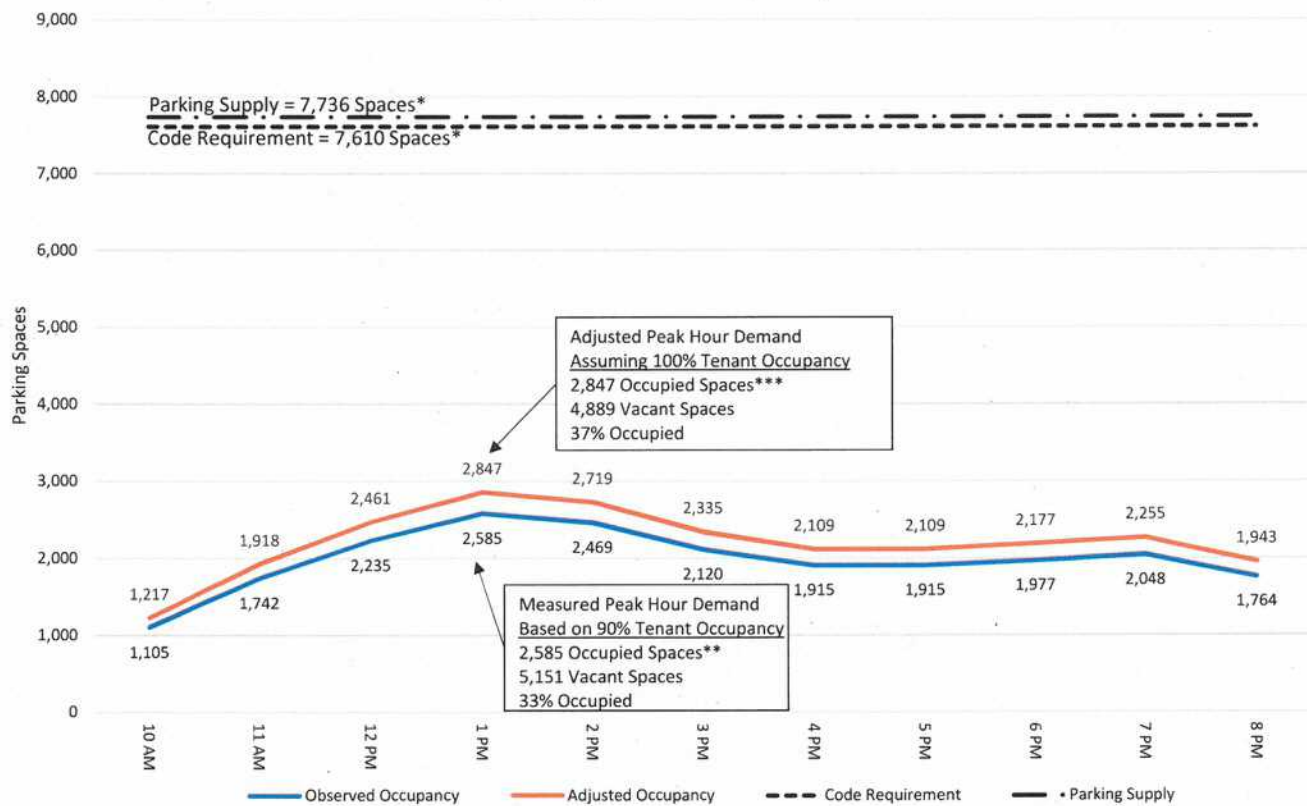
**Our resulting recommendation is that Fairfax County consider reducing its minimum parking requirement for large regional malls within a range of 2.5 – 3.0 parking spaces per 1000 sf gfa.** This recommendation range if implemented would result in continuing to oversupply parking at peak demand on weekdays and weekends over 350 days out of the year. On peak December weekends, parking demand could approach capacity at fully leased malls.

## **Appendix A Mall Parking Data**



# Fair Oaks Mall Parking Data

**Figure 1: Fair Oaks Mall Parking Occupancy  
(Thursday, December 7, 2017)**

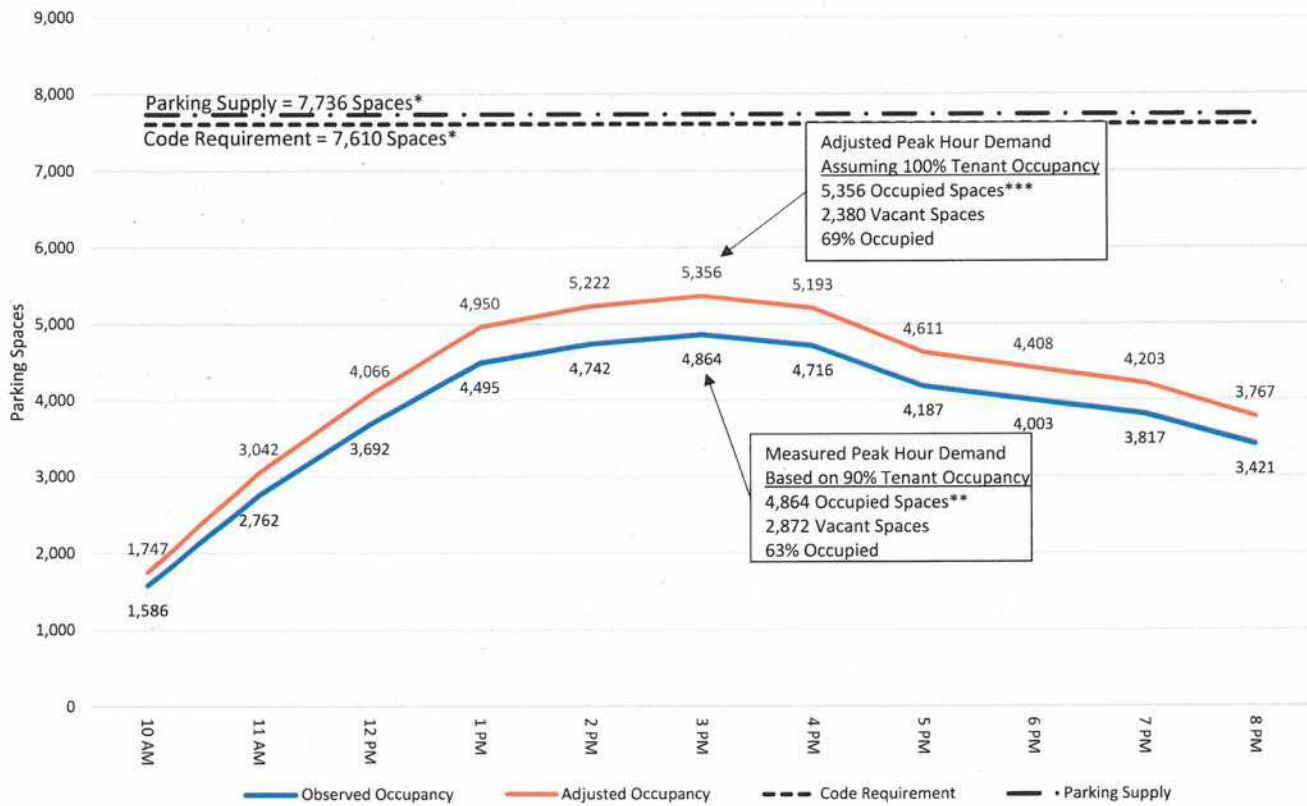


\* - Parking supply and code requirement numbers based on latest parking tabulation (2509-PKS-012-2) by Walter L. Phillips, Inc dated August 3, 2017 and approved on August 17, 2018

\*\* - Measured parking occupancies include only Fair Oaks Mall Areas A thru R.

\*\*\* - Parking occupancy and code requirement adjusted based on an approximately 90% tenant occupancy at the time of the parking count.

**Figure 2: Fair Oaks Mall Parking Occupancy  
(Saturday, December 16, 2017)**

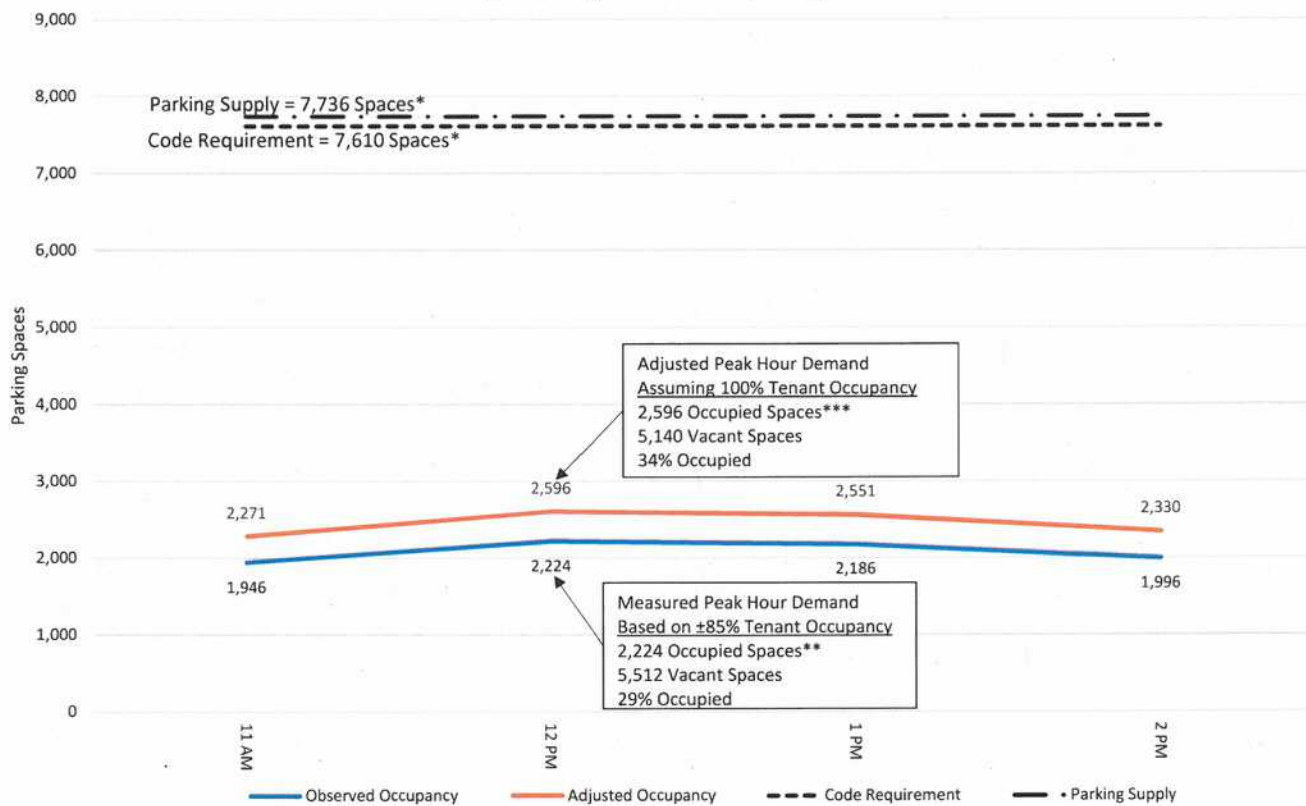


\* - Parking supply and code requirement numbers based on latest parking tabulation (2509-PKS-012-2) by Walter L. Phillips, Inc dated August 3, 2017 and approved on August 17, 2018

\*\* - Measured parking occupancies include only Fair Oaks Mall Areas A thru R.

\*\*\* - Parking occupancy and code requirement adjusted based on an approximate 90% tenant occupancy at the time of the parking counts.

**Figure 3: Fair Oaks Mall Parking Occupancy  
(Thursday, December 6, 2018)**

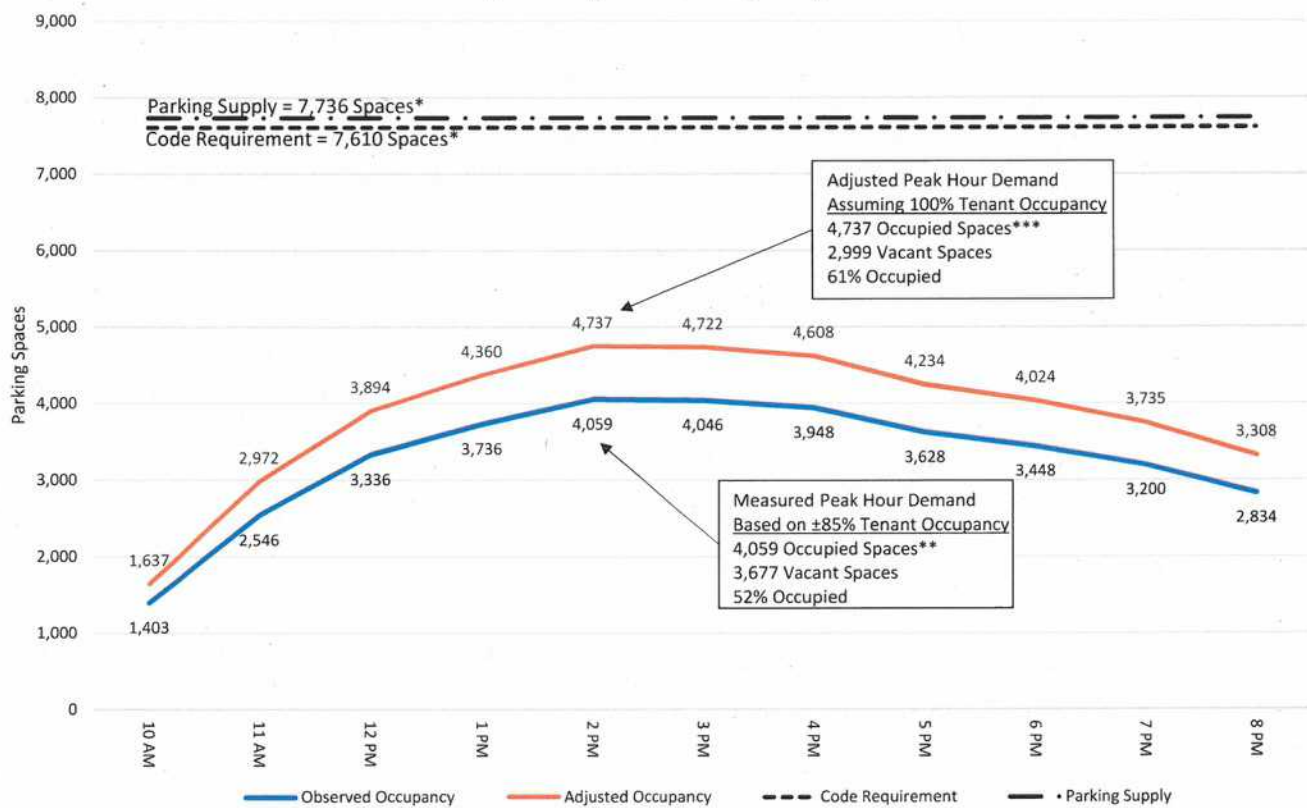


\* - Parking supply and code requirement numbers based on latest parking tabulation (2509-PKS-012-2) by Walter L. Phillips, Inc dated August 3, 2017 and approved on August 17, 2018

\*\* - Measured parking occupancies include only Fair Oaks Mall Areas A thru R.

\*\*\* - Parking occupancy and code requirement adjusted based on an approximately 85% tenant occupancy at the time of the parking count.

**Figure 4: Fair Oaks Mall Parking Occupancy  
(Saturday, December 8, 2018)**

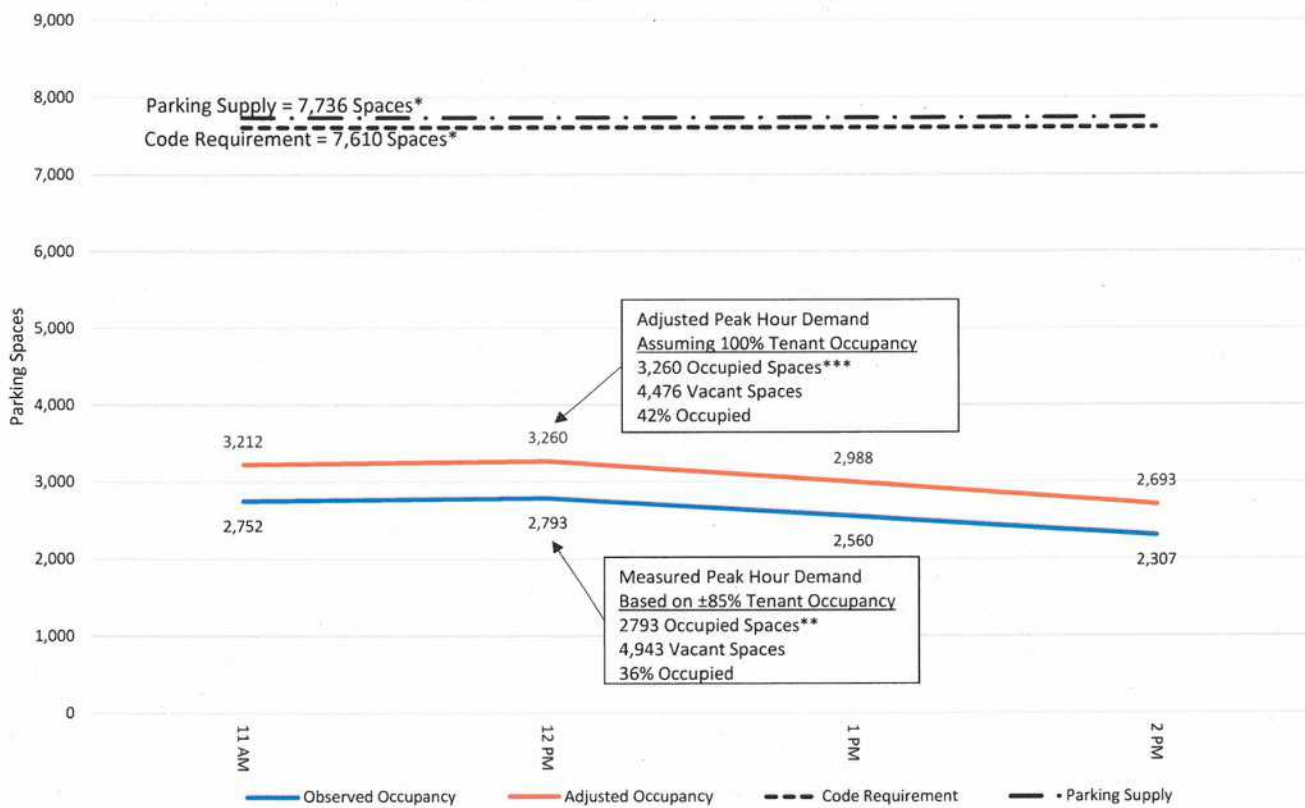


\* - Parking supply and code requirement numbers based on latest parking tabulation (2509-PKS-012-2) by Walter L. Phillips, Inc dated August 3, 2017 and approved on August 17, 2018

\*\* - Measured parking occupancies include only Fair Oaks Mall Areas A thru R.

\*\*\* - Parking occupancy and code requirement adjusted based on an approximate 85% tenant occupancy at the time of the parking counts.

**Figure 5: Fair Oaks Mall Parking Occupancy  
(Thursday, December 13, 2018)**



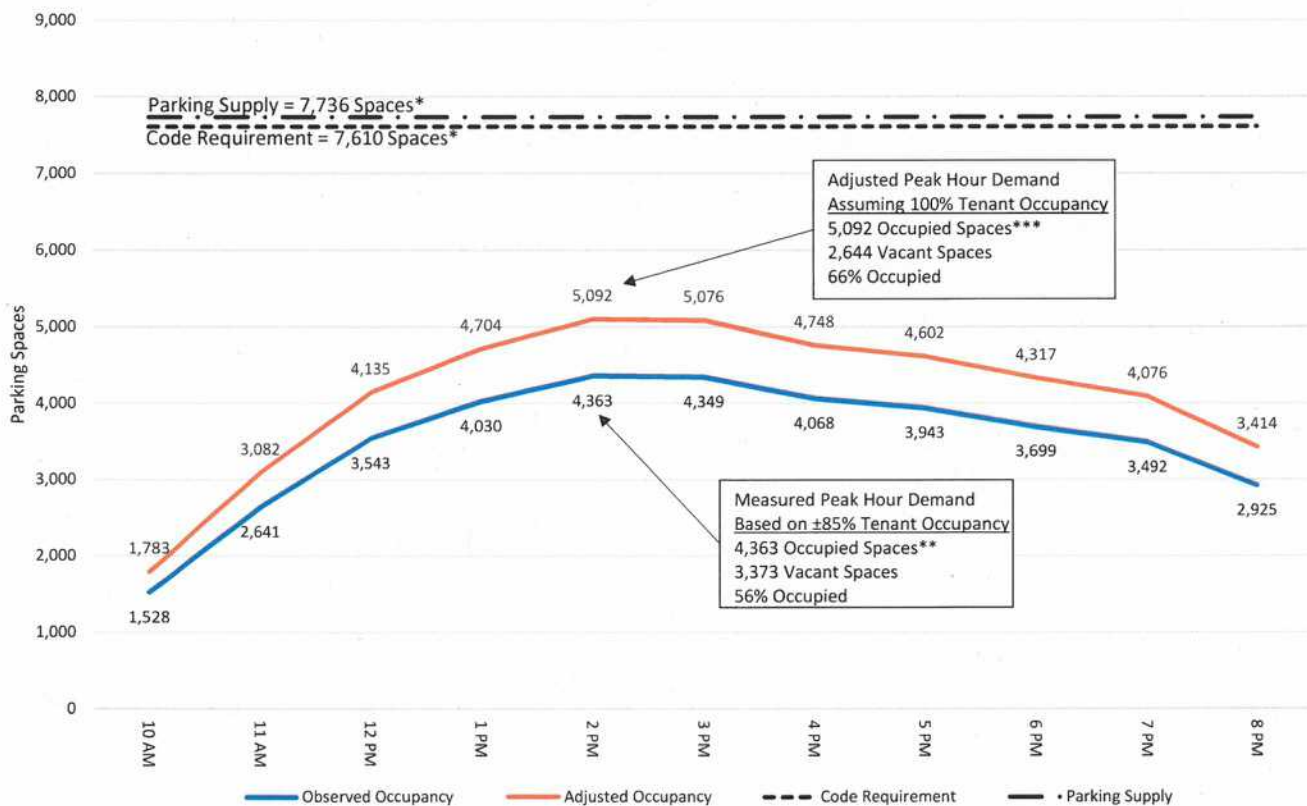
\* - Parking supply and code requirement numbers based on latest parking tabulation (2509-PKS-012-2) by Walter L. Phillips, Inc dated August 3, 2017 and approved on August 17, 2018

\*\* - Measured parking occupancies include only Fair Oaks Mall Areas A thru R.

\*\*\* - Parking occupancy and code requirement adjusted based on approximately 85% tenant occupancy at the time of the parking count.



**Figure 6: Fair Oaks Mall Parking Occupancy  
(Saturday, December 15, 2018)**

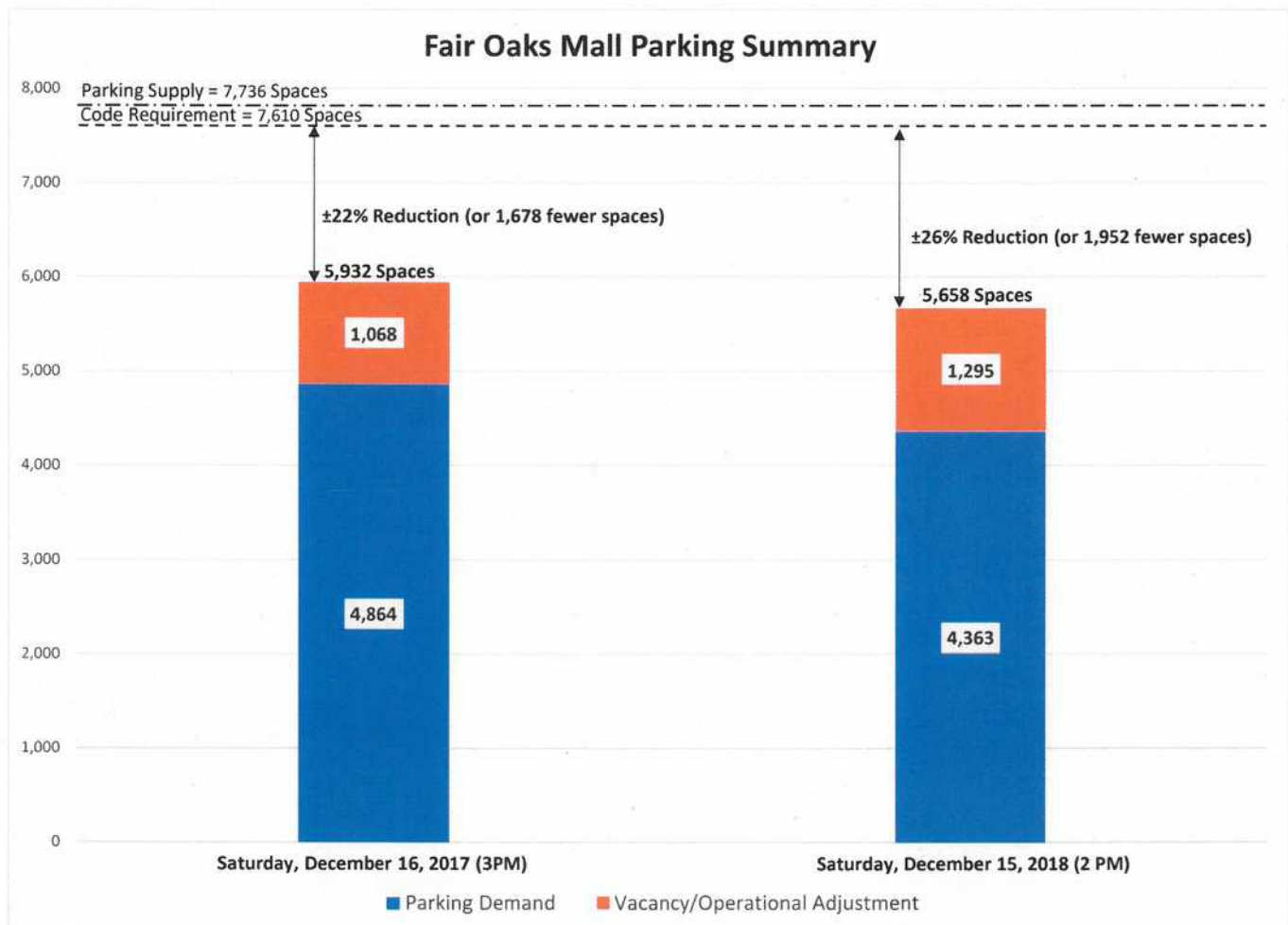


\* - Parking supply and code requirement numbers based on latest parking tabulation (2509-PKS-012-2) by Walter L. Phillips, Inc dated August 3, 2017 and approved on August 17, 2018

\*\* - Measured parking occupancies include only Fair Oaks Mall Areas A thru R.

\*\*\* - Parking occupancy and code requirement adjusted based on an approximate 85% tenant occupancy at the time of the parking counts.

## EXHIBIT 2



# EXHIBIT 4

O:\PROJECTS\7001 - 7500\7377 FAIR OAKS MALL\GRAPHICS\7377 FAIR OAKS MALL PARKING GRAPHICS (2.14.2019).DWG



**Figure 1**  
Parking Location Map

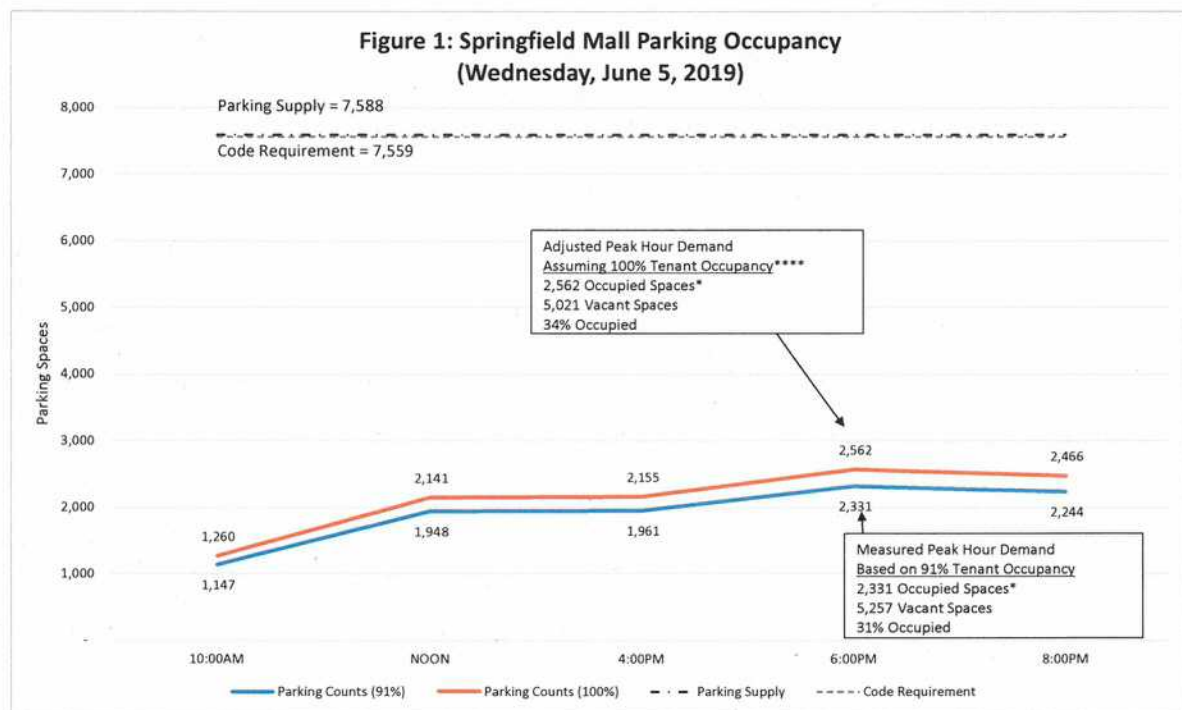
Dec. 2017  
Dec. 2018  
##% / ##%

**NORTH**  
Fair Oaks Mall  
Fairfax County, Virginia



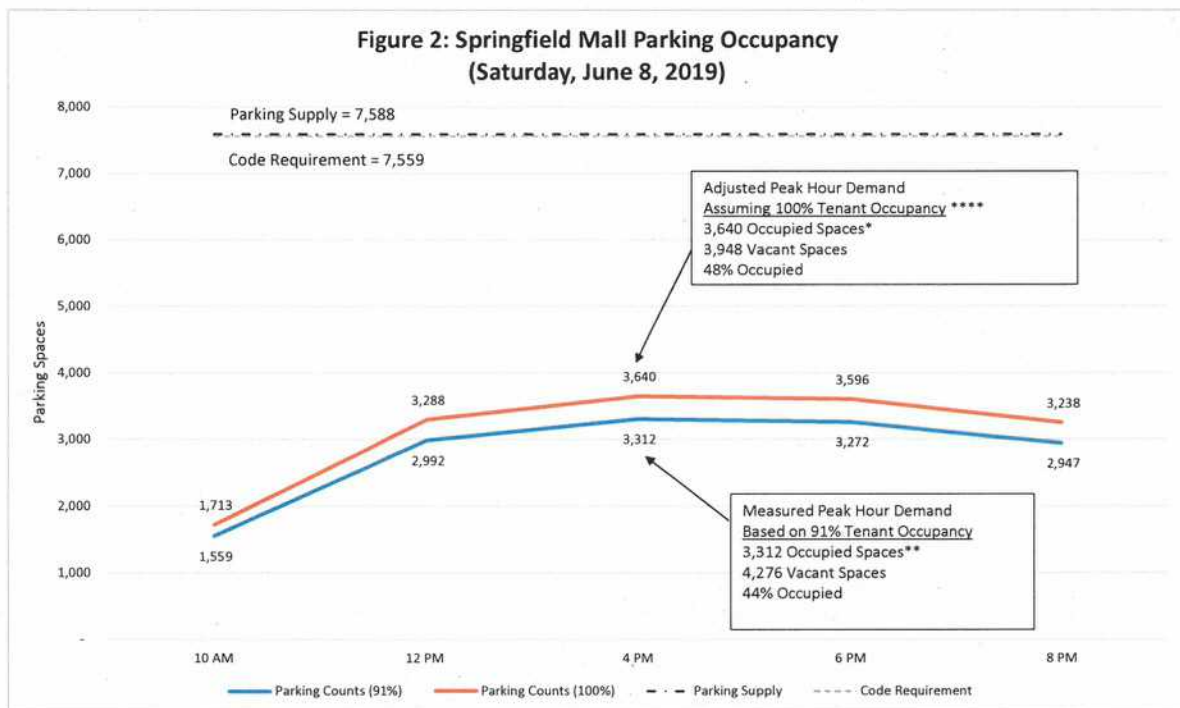
# Springfield Town Center Parking Data

**Figure 1: Springfield Mall Parking Occupancy  
(Wednesday, June 5, 2019)**



\*Car dealerships park their vehicles in some of the parking spaces. Parked car dealership vehicles were not included in the analysis.  
 \*\* A market was located on Lot 5 Saturday, June 8, 2019. The number of cars for the market were/were not included in the analysis.  
 \*\*\* Required parking value from the Final As-Built Springfield Mall Renovation Site Plan Parking Plan, Stamped 1/9/2015  
 \*\*\*\* The adjusted parking occupancy given 100% tenant occupancy was estimated

**Figure 2: Springfield Mall Parking Occupancy  
(Saturday, June 8, 2019)**



\*Car dealerships park their vehicles in some of the parking spaces. Parked car dealership vehicles were not included in the analysis.

\*\* A market was located on Lot 5 Saturday, June 8, 2019. The number of cars for the market were/were not included in the analysis.

\*\*\* Required parking value from the Final As-Built Springfield Mall Renovation Site Plan Parking Plan, Stamped 1/9/2015

\*\*\*\* The adjusted parking occupancy given 100% tenant occupancy was estimated



# Parking Occupancy Summary By Lot

##% / ##%  
Saturday June 8, 2019  
Wednesday June 5, 2019

\*Car dealerships park their vehicles in some of the parking spaces.  
Parked car dealership vehicles were not included in the analysis.

\*\* A market was located on Lot 5 Saturday, June 8, 2019. The  
number of cars for the market were/were not included in the  
analysis.

\*\*\* Required parking value from the Final As-Built Springfield  
Mall Renovation Site Plan Parking Plan, Stamped 1/9/2015

