

SB 1067 (Portantino)

Housing development projects: automobile parking requirements

PROBLEM

Parking minimums require private property owners to provide and maintain a certain number of off-street parking spaces, but these requirements impose significant financial, environmental, and social costs onto cities. Estimates suggest that off-street parking is associated with a 27% increase in vehicle miles traveled, deepening our dependence on cars and contributing to traffic congestion and air pollution.

While building parking stalls or garages costs an enormous amount of money, 31% of these spaces remain empty. Excess parking spaces create unutilized space that could be dedicated to more productive uses, including areas for walking, bicycling, public transportation, or additional housing. They contribute to the housing affordability crisis by increasing the cost of development and rent, as well as discouraging developers from building affordable housing due to the added cost of parking spaces.

BACKGROUND

The continued requirement of a minimum number of parking spaces on private properties is a factor in holding California back from decreasing its reliance on cars, building affordable housing, and cutting costs for tenants and small business owners.

Building parking stalls or garages poses a financial costs that some estimates put between \$20,000 and \$80,000 per space in California. These costs get priced into more expensive housing or increased costs of services, contributing to rising costs for tenants and the lack of

affordable residences. In addition to occupying areas that could have been used for housing, parking minimums pose challenges for developers, as otherwise viable development projects can become unaffordable. Costs also can be put onto small business owners who are required to build and maintain costly parking spaces.

Certain California regions have moved towards ending minimum parking requirements. San Francisco abolished all parking minimums, while San Diego and Sacramento removed requirements within walking distance of mass transit. Eliminating parking minimums within close proximity to public transit would lessen California's dependence on cars, provide more space for walking and bicycling, and help counteract housing affordability problems.

While some cities have voluntarily moved toward removing parking minimums, others seek to maintain local control and review projects on a case-by-case basis. Still others have reduced parking requirements with safeguards for protecting senior and disabled units.

At a time when California is in desperate need of affordable housing, incorporating affordability mandates with a preemption might be a tool to meet low-income housing goals, increase inventory, and reduce a reliance on cars.

Some have suggested that a simple reduction in parking will result in lower cost rental units. This strategy relies on the private sector and market pressures rather than mandates to achieve affordability.

SUMMARY

SB 1067 would prohibit a city with a population greater than 200,000 from imposing any minimum automobile parking requirement on a housing development project that is located within 1/2 mile of public transit, as defined, and that either (1) dedicates 75% of the total units to low- and very low income households, the elderly, or persons with disabilities or (2) the developer demonstrates to the local agency that the development would not have a negative impact on the local agency's ability to meet specified housing needs and would not have a negative impact on traffic circulation or existing residential or commercial parking within 1/2 mile of the project. By changing the duties of local planning officials, this bill would impose a state-mandated local program.

SB 1067 would include findings that changes proposed by this bill address a matter of statewide concern rather than a municipal affair and, therefore, apply to all cities, including charter cities.

EXISTING LAW

The Planning and Zoning Law requires each county and city to adopt a comprehensive, long-term general plan for its physical development, and the development of certain lands outside its boundaries, that includes, among other mandatory elements, a housing element. Existing law also authorizes the legislative body of a city or a county to adopt ordinances establishing requirements for parking.

SUPPORT

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