

Reading Village Parking Waiver Summary

Reading Village is a proposed 72 unit multi-family building located directly across the street from the Reading Commuter Rail Stop. The Massachusetts Area Planning Council (MAPC) defines a Transit Oriented Project as within ½ mile of a rapid transit or commuter rail system. Reading Village is perfect example of a Transit Oriented Development (“TOD”). Reading Village proposes 72 parking spaces for a parking ratio of 1.0. This amount of parking is supported by: (1) recommendations from a Town of Reading Comprehensive Parking Program (2009) prepared by Nelson/Nygaard Consulting Associates, (2) The MAPC Study titled “Growing Station Areas The Variety and Potential of Transit Oriented Development in Metro Boston”, (3) the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Transit Oriented Development Overlay District Model Bylaw, (4) historical parking usage data from 30 Haven Street, a nearby comparable TOD project, and (4) parking ratios from recently approved TOD projects

Reading Comprehensive Parking Program

The Town of Reading in 2009 commissioned a report entitled Town of Reading Comprehensive Parking Program from Nelson/Nygaard Consulting Associates to analyze and issue recommendations for parking in Downtown Reading. The report stated that “Assuming no increase in parking supply, downtown Reading is able to handle an expansion of nearly 1,100 multi-family housing units, nearly six times the current number of housing units” Page 5-7. Clearly the addition of Reading Village fits within the parameter of what downtown Reading can handle in terms of parking. The Report goes on to recommend that **“Residential parking requirements should not exceed 1 space per unit, regardless of the size of the unit. Hundreds of parking spaces go unused in downtown Reading every night and weekend.”** Page 7-18. Reading Village parking ratio meets the recommendation. Furthermore Reading Village is committed to working with the Town to identify additional off-street parking spaces that go unused every night and weekend to become part of a dual-use parking program to provide additional parking spaces for Reading Village residents and visitors in the event there are times when additional spaces may be needed.

MAPC- Growing Station Areas, The Variety and Potential of Transit Oriented Development in Metro Boston

The MAPC issued report focused on different types of TOD’s as well as appropriate parking recommendations. The MAPC lists Reading Village as a “Town & Village” TOD, specifically mentioning 30 Haven St., as an example. The MAPC recommends reduced parking requirements in these TOD areas.

Transit Oriented Development Overlay District Model Bylaw

The Transit-Oriented Development Overlay District Model Bylaw was prepared by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts as a Smart Growth Toolkit. Specifically, Section 8.0 Parking Requirements, states:

“Parking requirements within the TOD Overlay District are as follows: 1. A maximum of 1 parking space per multi-family unit, plus 1 guest space per 15 units, is permitted. *Reading Village meets this maximum parking requirement. Additionally Reading Village will work the Town to identify additional off-street parking spaces that go unused every night and weekend to become part of a dual-use parking program to provide additional guest spaces (also see number 3 below).*

2. Parking for non-residential uses shall be provided at not more than 3 per 1,000 square feet (gross) and not less than less than 1 per 500 square feet (gross) for uses covering less than 1,000 square feet.

3. Further reduction in the number of required parking spaces may be permitted by a Special Permit granted by the Planning Board after a finding by the Board that the development will be adequately served by users of public transportation.

4. Shared parking is strongly encouraged. On lots serving more than one use, the total number of spaces required may be reduced, provided that the applicant submits credible evidence to the satisfaction of the City/Town Planning Board that the peak parking demand of the uses do not coincide, and that the accumulated parking demand at any one time shall not exceed the total capacity of the facility. Such evidence must take into account the parking demand of residents, employees, customers, visitors, and any other users of the lot. It must also take into account parking demand on both weekends and weekdays, and both during the daytime and overnight.” *The Reading Comprehensive Parking Program identified hundreds of spaces that go unused which is an even more pronounced issue at night and on the weekends when commuter rail travel is greatly reduced. Reading Village is committed to working with the Town to identify additional off-street parking spaces that can become part of a shared parking program to provide additional parking spaces for Reading Village residents and visitors during nighttime and weekend hours.*

Data from Comparable Project- 30 Haven Street

The Town approved 30 Haven Street in 2012. This project has 53 apartments along with ground floor retail. The approved parking ratio for this project was 1.25 spaces per residential unit. Six spaces are actually reserved for owners/employees of the retail uses so the actual residential ratio is slightly lower than 1.25.

On July 11, 2016 we had discussions with the property manager for 30 Haven. They said the property only offers tenants one spot per unit, and while they do have a limited number of additional spots for rent; these additional spots have gone unused by the residential tenants and are customarily used by the retail tenants. ..

Given this information, the fact Reading Village is even closer to the Commuter Stop, and Reading Village has a larger percentage of 1-bedroom units, a lower ratio is not only justified it is the correct ratio.

Parking Ratios from Recently Approved TOD Projects

Many recent 40B projects in towns outside of Boston but close to public transportation are being approved with a parking ration of 1.0. These include:

- 131 Rantoul Street, Beverly. This approved project has 72 units on a 38,615 sf lot (81.2 units/acre) nearby public transportation. The project provides 72 parking spaces for a 1.0 ratio.
- 79 Rantoul Street, Beverly. This project built in 2013 has 46 units on a 22,215 sf lot (90.2 units/acre) nearby public transportation. The project provides 47 parking spaces for a 1.02 ratio.

Note that Downtown Beverly is a good example of proper parking requirements and use of existing parking spaces.

- Colony & Warren, Quincy- This project is 40 units on a 16,557 sf lot (98 units/acre) nearby public transportation. The project provides 40 parking spaces for a 1.0 ratio.