

**City of Los Altos Citywide Parking Committee  
Memorandum**

Date: **September 10, 2015**

To: **City Council and Planning and Transportation Commission**  
From: **Citywide Parking Committee**

Subject: **Parking Ratios**

**INTRODUCTION**

Parking standards are used to properly manage the temporary storage of vehicles for the convenience of people in the community. A parking ratio is an appropriate metric for establishing a standard for the number of parking spaces needed, based upon the type of use and area of the space being used. Frequently, the parking ratio is expressed as the number of parking spaces per 1,000 square feet of building area. Parking ratios can be used to establish a minimum or a maximum requirement for the provision of parking related to a building or use.

Parking ratios are usually established in municipal codes, as is the case in Los Altos and most other cities. Parking ratios are an important tool to provide appropriate parking supply to support people as they live, work, and play in the community.

The Citywide Parking Committee was created by the City Council on February 14, 2015 to address several issues related to parking. The Committee reviewed several examples of past development, parking related studies, and City practices. We reviewed other nearby cities and towns to benchmark practices in the area. Field review was also conducted to see what impacts or opportunities were currently evident.

The Committee recommends new and revised parking ratios to serve the City of Los Altos, shown in the attached Table 2. The goal is to have parking ratios that are:

1. Reasonable, so that they can be applied to the vast majority of cases;
2. Within range of what relevant professional published studies suggest, and that are appropriate for small Bay area cities;
3. Flexible, to address various situations, such as shared parking, or other circumstances;
4. Clear and consistent, eliminating ambiguity or uncertainty

## BACKGROUND

The *City-wide Parking Ad-hoc Committee* memo, approved by Council on February 24, 2015, asks the Committee to address the following questions:

1. Do current parking ratios reflect real parking demand?
2. Do different types of businesses generate different demands?
3. Are current codes applied consistently?

### 1. Reasonable and Realistic

In many cases, the current parking ratios do not reflect real parking demand and the ratios are not always reasonable for the intended use. This can result in requiring an inappropriate amount of parking, either too much or too little. The City has frequently relied upon granting exceptions or variances to approve a project where the parking requirements have not been met. Reasonable parking ratios should be suitable in most cases, without the need for exceptions or variances.

### 2. Usage Profiles

Each type of business or use generates a different parking demand. Parking demand also varies from use to use, from place to place, and time of day. Parking ratios can express a minimum requirement. Some cities also restrict the maximum number of parking spaces allowed, for various reasons, to avoid unwanted or unintended consequences. With ideal planning, varied uses can be mixed to complement each other and provide the most efficient shared parking. In the worst cases, peak parking periods coincide to create parking problems that cause unnecessary traffic, insufficient parking supply and an unpleasant environment.

### 3. Consistent and Objective

The current Los Altos Code contains several methods for calculating parking requirements that can cause inconsistency. Some of the metrics employed are more subjective than objective. For example, restaurant parking is currently based upon the number of restaurant seats and number of employees. A developer or restaurant tenant may have one concept initially, when parking requirements are being calculated, and quite a different concept later, after the parking requirement has been met. Calculations based upon area are more objective, and also relate to fire occupancy codes.

The current codified parking ratios, based on nation-wide standards for “stand-alone” sites, are generally unsuitable for Los Altos, particularly where shared parking is encouraged. Although the City of Los Altos encourages shared parking and has policies to support shared parking, the Code lacks parking ratios for shared parking areas. The result can be, or can appear to be, an inconsistent application of the Code.

The Parking Committee reviewed a great deal of data with the intent of addressing and resolving the aforementioned issues. The review included the following:

1. City Resources: presentations by City Staff on recent developments, City reports, memos, studies, City Code; City-sponsored consultant-studies, reports, and memos; public comments at Citywide Parking Committee meetings;
2. Field Resources within Los Altos: site reviews of buildings and parking areas around town, Aerial photos, public records, on-line documents;
3. Outside Resources: parking standards or nearby cities, City Codes; professional publications.

## DISCUSSION

The Committee's review revealed several opportunities to improve the parking ratios and the way they are applied. The Committee also found the complex nature of parking policy makes it difficult to comprehend without defining several parameters. Review of nearby cities' codes illustrates the complexity that drives the need to define terms.

While it seems satisfying to compare Code requirements with other cities, we noted several problems with a direct comparison.

1. Many different metrics may be used to calculate parking requirements, including using area with a ratio to determine the number of parking spaces, in which case the area used varies from city to city:
  - a. Gross building area (square-feet of entire building, similar to what insurance companies use.)
  - b. Net building area (gross area less certain utility areas that may not necessarily create parking demand.) The definition of what is excepted from the gross area can include: vertical transportation (elevators, stairwells, and ducts), lobbies, inner courts, atrium, restrooms, utility rooms and other items.
  - c. Parcel area (square-feet of the entire parcel,) either gross or net, relating to what zoning may ultimately allow.

Some codes, such as in Los Altos, use applicant information to determine specific use, such as: number of employees, patrons, visitors, etc. and applying a "carpooling" ratio to the total. For example, for restaurants, Los Altos divides the total number of seats plus the number of employees, by 3 to determine parking requirements. We have demonstrated that this results in an equivalent parking ratio that is at the extreme high end of most Bay-area cities.

2. Some cities (such as Palo Alto) state parking ratios as either a catchall category when none of the other categories exist, or as a maximum allowance that cannot be exceeded. Some cities have specific commercial districts throughout the city, each of which has its own parking ratio, based upon shared parking or other factors. The catchall standard is only applied outside of all known commercial districts. Some cities (such as Mountain View) use the parking ratio as a back-up category, where it is only applied if the project does not fall into one of many incentive zones or policies.
3. Cities employ incentives or disincentives to achieve their goals. Those cities (such as Mountain View) that seek to enliven the sidewalks with outdoor dining do not count outdoor dining in their parking demand calculations. Other cities, (such as Saratoga) diminish or eliminate outdoor seating at restaurants by including it in parking demand calculations. Similarly, some cities have incentives to attract retail.
4. Looking to the future: cities revise their parking ratios to accommodate new realities. Parking management and alternate modes of travel are two factors that impact existing as well as future parking standards.
  - Mountain View and other cities have developed mass-transit throughout the city, as well city- and corporate-sponsored shuttle buses. Many technology companies provide buses, ride-sharing programs, or transit passes.
  - Bicycle routes, paths and trails reduce motor-vehicle traffic, but require a different kind of parking space at destinations, such as bicycle lockers.
  - Self-driving or autonomous vehicles may pick you up and drop you off at your destination, but may need a place to park as well. The convenience of autonomous vehicles may rely upon adequate parking near traffic-generating attractions to reduce response wait-time and traffic.
  - A large shift in retail from “Main Street” to “big box stores” and from “Main Street” to Internet commerce has reduced the amount and kind of retail that may be viable for many communities. Delivery services bring meals, goods and services to people’s residences or places of work, while causing another type of traffic and momentary parking need.

Los Altos can learn from other cities while respecting the qualities that give Los Altos a distinctive village feel, as well as the vibrancy needed for commercial districts to thrive, amid peaceful neighborhoods. Simplifying the parking Code will serve the community and those who wish to serve the community.

The City has conducted several studies of parking and parking related issues. These studies, along with current field review shed light on parking successes and failures. Lack of appropriate parking creates problems when it:

1. Negatively impacts neighboring businesses or residents;
2. Causes unnecessary traffic;
3. Discourages favorable business traffic or commerce;
4. Frustrates residents, customers, employees, or visitors.

The Committee vetted available studies, performed field reviews, and heard City Staff explain the permitting process on several recent development projects. This review garnered several conclusions:

1. The current parking Code and actual practices are not aligned.
2. Exceptions and variances become the norm, rather than desirable projects that can meet the Code without variance or exception. When other projects are rejected for not meeting the Code, one wonders why a variance is not similarly applied, leading to the appearance of unfairness.
3. Depending on the specific use some parking demands were found to be below current requirements, yet above current practices. There is too great a degree of reliance on interpretations of the Code, exceptions, or variances to reproduce or predict results from one project to the next.
4. Staff must rely upon unwritten rules and interpretations of the Code since these rules do not seem to be well documented. This creates the appearance of inconsistency and possible unfairness. An example is that the parking policies practiced in the Downtown Parking District seem inconsistent and are not clearly defined by Code.
5. Inconsistent application of parking standards, regardless of how popular or unpopular the results, raises the suspicion of unfairness and cronyism, whether or not it actually exists.
6. It is an undue and inappropriate burden on City Staff for the parking Code to be anything other than reasonable, clear, concise, and predictable.

Table 1 (attached) compares current parking regulations and practices in Los Altos with results of parking studies, and recommendations. The existing parking regulations indicate both current Code requirements as well as current practices, indicated by existing conditions or recent project approvals. Where the City Code does not use ratios, equivalent ratios were calculated and indicated to simplify comparison with ratios. Results of parking studies in Los Altos, were reviewed, corrected as necessary, and checked for conformity with current conditions by verification counts. A reasonable range of parking ratios applicable to a small town like Los Altos is shown. Published parking manuals indicate that local information

is more appropriate than nationwide standards. Property values in Los Altos and the Bay area clearly suggest different parking patterns than what is found in Midwest cities, urban metropolises, or rural farmland.

## OPTIONS

The Parking Committee has developed several options to address and improve the parking ratios and their application.

### Area Calculation

- A. Gross Area of Building or Use – This is the simplest and least likely to be misrepresented or misinterpreted.
- B. Net Area of Building or Use – This gets to the heart of what generates parking demand, but this method requires more Staff review, and is subject to change or differing interpretations. This approach requires clear definitions of what is and is not an exception for the purposes of determining net area. (The Committee’s recommendations to determine areas for parking purposes are outlined elsewhere.)
- C. Specific use approach – This requires more documentation from applicants and more staff time, but may be a more precise method of calculating parking demand. On the other hand, it is very subjective, and requires verification and modifications as the market changes, and uses evolve.

### Parking Ratios

- A. 100% parked – This approach requires the most parking but covers all foreseeable events and peak usage. This approach works best where property values are low.
- B. Reasonably parked – This approach recognizes that parking congestion may occur for reasonably short peak periods, or during occasional special events.
- C. Specific Use studies – this requires the most documentation and staff time, and is subjective in determining parking demand.
- D. Reasonable ranges of parking ratios, by category of use, are provided herein. These allow the City to impart policy to provide incentive or disincentive for a particular use, all while keeping within the realm of what is supported by best practices and current studies. Each recommended specific ratio poses a neutral position. Increasing the ratio would tend to discourage that category of use. Decreasing the ratio would tend to encourage that category of use. Ratios beyond the reasonable range are not recommended as they have little or no basis of support.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Parking Categories

The Parking Committee recommends simplifying categories for types of use based upon uses found in Los Altos. Medical office or clinics were once included in the same category with offices. Los Altos recently revised that practice, by requiring each medical clinic to calculate parking demand on a Use Permit basis. Medical offices remain in the office category.

We recommend that medical offices that are similar to other professional (legal, engineering) offices be considered the same. However, medical clinics/dental offices are shown as a new category. A parking ratio for medical clinics/dental offices establishes a minimum parking requirement, while preserving the option for the City and medical/dental clinic applicant to use site-specific parking studies, as appropriate.

### Area Calculation

The Parking Committee's Recommended Parking Ratios and Application Rules are tabulated in Table 2 (attached.) After considering several options the Committee recommends that the City calculate parking requirements using a well-defined net area of the building or use, particularly for office buildings. This approach allows the City to encourage architectural features that give a building and a city character but do not necessarily increase parking demand.

Whereas, restaurant parking demands are more well established and suited to gross area, since there is far less difference between gross and net. Therefore, the parking ratio for restaurants is based on gross area, with specific exceptions. Restaurants in multi-story buildings can exclude area for vertical transportation, such as elevators, stairs, and ducts, as these are required for accessibility but do not add to parking demand.

Provided that the City employs mechanisms to verify the area of exceptions, and verify that these areas are not later being converted, the parking ratio would apply to net area for uses such as office buildings. The City Code should have provisions that require the applicant to clearly label each relevant dimension and area, so that staff can quickly verify the facts. The dimensioned plan and tabulation of gross and net area should be signed and sealed by the professional-of-record. Furthermore, the Code and permit should include language that clearly notifies the applicant, owner, or tenant, that any change to the excluded areas, or net area is subject to revised parking requirements that must be met in kind or in-lieu, (such as parking demand reduction.)

## **Parking Ratios**

We recommend calculating minimum parking requirements based on parking ratios in the attached Table 2, indicating the number of parking spaces per 1,000 square-foot of net area (as herein defined), for most commercial uses. Parking requirements for residential dwellings should be based upon number of bedrooms or number of dwelling units. The Committee presents a reasonable range of parking ratios, suitable for Los Altos, as well as a specific recommended ratio in each category, for stand-alone as well as shared-use cases.

The adjustment for shared use is based upon the capacity of that commercial district to share parking. This approach furthers the City goals to encourage shared parking, and should apply to most situations encountered within Los Altos. Data from the 2013 CDM/Smith parking study indicates 22% shared use in the Downtown Parking District. An optimal mix of uses can achieve even higher degrees of shared parking. Although we have recommended that parking ratios be adjusted by a very modest 20% shared parking factor, we agree that the reasonable range, for shared parking Downtown, could be between 20% and 25%.

Selecting a ratio within the reasonable range is supported by the facts, studies, and reviews that were conducted. The Council may select a ratio at the higher end of the range, if it seeks to discourage this type of use; or at the lower end of the range if it seeks to encourage this type of use. The Committee's specific recommendation for each category is neutral on policy and only addresses what we believe is the appropriate ratio for Los Altos without creating incentive or disincentive. We do not recommend parking ratios beyond the reasonable range.

## **Shared Parking**

The capacity for shared use varies based upon the overall size and character of the commercial district. Therefore, shared parking ratios for the Downtown Parking District and Neighborhood Commercial Centers are shown, based upon the capacity or those areas to support shared parking.

Shared parking works best when the mix of uses tends to flatten the parking demand curve. Professional offices tend to have a more uniform parking demand throughout the day with the exception of lunch time, when a portion of the occupants leave for lunch engagements elsewhere. Others within the office may walk to nearby restaurants. Both of these activities have the effect of flattening the lunchtime peak-demand normally generated by restaurants. The Downtown area has sufficient space, adjacent high-density housing, restaurants, retail, grocery and service, so that it can support a greater degree of shared parking. Neighborhood commercial centers can support shared parking, but to a lesser degree than the Downtown, due to their smaller size and limit on the mix of uses that can

significantly flatten the peak demand curve. The shared parking percentages have been applied to reflect these circumstances.

### **Conditions to Apply Parking Ratios**

Based on discussions for a vibrant downtown, the City Council may wish to activate the sidewalks, by not counting outdoor sidewalk dining in the parking ratio calculation. Our recommendation would be to not count outdoor sidewalk seating, where the sidewalks have adequate width for both seating as well as unobstructed access, as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the amount of seating does not exceed 25% of the first floor seating.

We recommend that all permits that relate to parking clearly specify that any changes from the plans or intended uses on the permit set, shall trigger re-evaluation of parking requirements. If changes increase the parking demand the owner shall be responsible for providing the additional spaces, or to participate in an in-lieu program that will either decrease demand, and/or increase parking. Failure to do so would require restoring the building or use(s) to their former configuration.

We recommend that all applicants be advised in writing that the parking ratios are minimum requirements, and that property owners are responsible if the uses of the building cause parking to encroach into residential areas, or negatively impact neighboring businesses. Where it can be shown that the use at a property negatively impacts others they shall likewise be required to pay for programs that either decrease the parking demand or increase the parking supply.

We recommend that offices be encouraged to provide bicycle parking within secure facilities at the building. Each three qualifying bicycle parking spaces should satisfy one motor vehicle parking space requirement, up to 10% of the parking requirement. Space set aside for secure bicycle parking would be excluded from the parking area calculations.

We recommend that properties be allowed to count one half of on-street parking spaces, directly in front of their property, on both sides of the street, within Los Altos, to satisfy parking space requirements for visitors. This discourages curb cuts that would reduce on-street parking, while also reducing pedestrian/vehicle conflicts. Counting on-street parking in this manner recognizes the contribution that each property owner made in street dedication. The calculation of one half of spaces on both sides of the street fairly distributes the credit for parking regardless of which side of the street it may fall upon. Narrow streets may have parking only on one side, whereas wider streets may have diagonal parking on one side and parallel on the other. This fairly distributes parking resources, while allowing the location of parking and lanes to be determined by best practices of traffic engineering.

We recommend greater emphasis be placed on safe and convenient pedestrian loading zones with bench seats and shade amenities. Commercial loading should be restricted to non-peak periods, with those loading zones made available for public parking during those periods.

## **SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS AND OBSERVATIONS**

Table 2 (attached) summarizes the Parking Committee's recommendations for minimum parking requirements, for stand-alone projects, as well as shared use areas. Where applicable, the parking ratio is based upon the number of parking spaces per 1,000 square feet of area. The method for application of the parking ratios is summarized on the back of Table 2.

We believe that resolving parking issues in Los Altos requires a multi-pronged approach. Approving the proposed parking ratios will form a foundation to support other parking reforms. No single item can completely address the various factors that result in parking problems. Current parking ratios do not accurately reflect parking demand. Making parking requirements and ratios simpler, more accurate and reasonable, and more predictable serves Los Altos and supports merchants' ability to serve the community while adjusting to shifting market conditions. Reasonable parking ratios should also reduce the frequency of exceptions or variances needed to satisfy parking requirements.

In pursuit of improving overall parking conditions, the City must recognize that the amount of retail and restaurants is greatly out of proportion with the amount of office and nearby residential required to support the retail/restaurant sector, particularly in the Downtown. Parking and traffic issues are exacerbated when the mix of uses is out of proportion. The shifting marketplace, caused by Internet disruption has reduced the amount of "bricks and mortar" retail that can be sustained by cities, particularly cities with smaller populations. Therefore, we also recommend that the City consider policy to encourage mixes of residential and office use that tend to flatten the peak parking demand curve. Furthermore, the Parking Committee's other recommendations for revised parking layout standards, and building area calculation, all work synergistically to support City goals, for a pleasant community.

In the Downtown, expansion of the Downtown Parking District and an associated in-lieu program would support more shared parking opportunities, and greater unity in this unique commercial district. Expansion of parking supply with (re-stripping) more efficient parking layouts in the parking plazas, as well as a parking structure would alleviate parking while supporting vibrancy. Interim measures to reduce parking demand, such as shuttle buses, transit, and bicycle use, can also quickly improve parking in Los Altos. There are several parking management tools that can

also work together with parking reform measures to improve the parking experience downtown.

While there are several steps to optimize citywide parking in Los Altos, the recommended parking ratios and their proper application will provide a strong foundation to support subsequent steps. These reasonable ratios will also immediately serve the City by eliminating practices that may cast negative perceptions and can help streamline practices to better serve the community.

Respectfully submitted by  
The Citywide Parking Committee:

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### **Attachments**

Table 1. Comparison of Current Code and Practice, Studies, and Recommended Parking Standards (2 pages)

Table 2. Recommended New Parking Ratios and Application Rules (2 pages)

### **Appendix**

Table 3. Los Altos Office and Retail Parking Standards – 2007 corrected results (2 pages)

Table 4. Confirmation Counts to Update Parking Studies to 2015 (2 pages)

Table 5. Los Altos Parking Ratio Examples – Restaurant Parking (2 pages)

PowerPoint Presentation slides “Reasonable Ratios” dated 9/10/2015 (Slides 1-3 and 5-25)

Comparison of Current Code and Practice, Studies and Recommended Parking Standards

#	Type of Use	Current		Studies		Proposed						
		Current Code	Current Practice		Studies Results	Reasonable Range	Citywide	Neighborhood Commercial Centers	Downtown Parking District			
		foot- notes	foot- notes	foot- notes	foot- notes	foot- notes	foot- notes	foot- notes	foot- notes			
		Stand Alone	Shared Use	Stand Alone	Stand alone	Stand alone	10% Shared Use	20% Shared Use				
		spaces/ 1,000 sf net	spaces/ 1,000 sf	spaces/ 1,000 sf	spaces/ 1,000 sf gross	spaces/1,000 sf	spaces/1,000 sf	spaces/1,000 sf	spaces/1,000 sf			
1.a.	Retail - Extensive	2.00	2.00	2.00		2.00 to 3.00	2.50	f-5	not applicable	not applicable		
1.b.	Retail - Intensive	5.00	5.00	2.86	3.60	3.50 to 4.00	3.75	f-6	3.38	3.00		
1.c.	Retail - Loyola Cor.	3.33	3.33	3.33					same as above	not applicable		
2	Service	5.00	-	2.86		3.00 to 5.00	4.00	f-7	3.60	3.20	f-7	
3	Restaurant	14.00	f-1	5.19	3.03	f-4	9.00	8.00 to 10.00	9.00	8.10	7.20	
4	Office	3.33	f-2	3.33		2.25	2.00 to 3.00	2.50	f-6	2.25	2.00	
5	Grocery	5.00		3.38			3.00 to 4.00	3.50		3.15	2.80	f-9
6	Clinic	3.33	f-3	3.33		f-3	4.00 to 6.00	5.00	f-7	4.50	4.00	f-8
7	Hotel	*		2.04	1.42		1.00 to 4.00	2.00		1.80	1.60	f-9

\* See code - too complicated to summarize

See back for General Notes, and Footnotes.

**General Notes** Applies to Table 1

**All recommended ratios are minimum requirements. Applicants should be encouraged to provide adequate parking for their needs.**

Studies were vetted, corrected as necessary, and updated to with current confirmation counts.

Currently Los Altos has no specific standards for shared use areas.

Current practice has allowed applicants to provide a parking study, subject to staff approval, to allow reduced parking for shared use.

Neighborhood Commercial Centers: Village Court, Rancho, Loyola Corners, and Foothill Crossings.

**Footnotes** Applies to Table 1 front and back

f-1 Equivalent ratio based upon current Los Altos code. See Table 4.

f-2 Current Los Altos code doesn't distinguish Medical Office from Professional Office.

f-3 Medical Clinics currently require parking per use permit based on applicant-provided information.

f-4 Average of 30 Los Altos restaurants.

f-5 Applies only for El Camino Real area. This discourages big-box type stores in the Downtown or residential neighborhoods.

f-6 Recognizing that parking studies included some shared use the stand-alone ratio has been adjusted up.

f-7 Locations of service establishments may be restricted by zoning code.

f-8 The City may wish to discourage medical/dental clinics in the Downtown core. If so, no shared use ratio would apply.

f-9 Shared usage must be proven, and is only applicable for parking spaces open to the general public during normal business hours.

Los Altos Parking Standards Recommended New Parking Ratios and Application Rules

<u>Commercial</u>	Reasonable Range	Citywide	foot- notes	Neighborhood		Comments
				Commercial Centers	Downtown Parking District	
# Type of Use	Stand alone spaces/1,000 sf	Stand alone spaces/1,000 sf		10% Shared Use spaces/1,000 sf	20% Shared Use spaces/1,000 sf	avg. % shared use units-net square feet
1.a. Retail - Extensive	2.00 to 4.00	3.00	f-1			big box retail
1.b Retail - Intensive	3.50 to 4.00	3.75		3.38	3.00	
2 Service	3.00 to 5.00	4.00	f-2	3.60	3.20	
3 Restaurant	8.00 to 10.00	9.00		8.10	7.20	
4 Office	2.00 to 3.00	2.50		2.25	2.00	professional or medical
5 Grocery	3.00 to 4.00	3.00		2.70	2.40	f-4 Shared use is usually not applicable
6 Medical Clinic/Dental Off.	4.00 to 6.00	5.00	f-3	4.50	4.00	f-4 medical or dental
7 Hotel	1.00 to 4.00	2.00		1.80	1.60	

All ratios apply to net building area, except restaurants. Restaurant ratio applies to gross building area, less vertical transportation, if any.

<u>Residential</u>			Comments
# Type of Use	spaces/bedroom	spaces/bedroom	units
8 Single-family	1.00 to 2.00	1.00	visitor parking on-street
9.a. Multi-family	1.00 to 2.00	1.00	resident parking
9.b. Visitor	1 visitor space/ 3-6 dwellings	1 visitor space/ 4 dwelling units	1 visitor space/ x dwelling units

See back for Application Rules and Footnotes

**Application of Los Altos Standard Parking Ratios****Table 2**

Page 2

- 1 The Citywide ratio applies unless the property is within a recognized shared parking district.
  - a. Recognized shared parking districts include the Downtown Parking District, and Neighborhood Commercial Centers. In the Downtown Parking District 100% F.A.R is exempt from parking, or may have a credit of 3.5 spaces/1,000 square feet of 100% F.A.R
  - b. The Downtown Parking District includes the Original Parking District plus approved expansions.
  - c. Neighborhood Commercial Centers include: Village Court, Rancho, Loyola Corners, and Foothill Crossings.
  - d. Other properties may use the shared parking ratio if they demonstrate at least 10% shared parking.
- 2 Area is measured as gross area less approved exceptions for determining minimum parking requirements.
  - a. The applicant shall provide a plan with sufficient dimensions to determine area with simple mathematical expressions.
  - b. The applicant shall provide a table with gross area on each floor and each area to be excluded, labeled on the plan.
  - c. The professional-of-record for the plan shall sign and stamp the plan and table indicated in 2.a. and 2.b. above.
  - d. Owners shall acknowledge, in writing, that any changes in the building affecting net area shall be reported to the City in writing.
  - e. Changes to net area shown on the plan shall void use permits unless revised parking requirements have been met.
- 3 All ratios are minimum requirements. **Applicant is responsible for providing adequate parking for their current use.**
  - a. If normal parking demand exceeds the legal parking available to that property, they shall mitigate parking demand.
  - b. Parking demand mitigation includes: providing additional parking, and parking management measures that reduce demand.
  - c. Downtown Parking District members may pay an in-lieu fee, that is used to increase parking or decrease demand.
  - d. Parking demand that spills over into: other's private property, parking districts, or residential neighborhoods, shall be mitigated.
  - e. City should encourage uses within the Downtown Triangle that flatten parking demand curves when plotted over time.
  - f. Uses that satisfy optimal use ratios shall be given highest priority: 4:4:1 (Office, Residential, retail + restaurant)  
 Goal for optimal use ratio - 4 sf of office; plus 4 sf of residential within walking distance for each 1 sf of retail and restaurant.
- 4 Restaurant parking requirements shall not include exterior sidewalk (public right-of-way) seating that is less than 25% of the total seating.  
 Provided that exterior sidewalk seating keeps adequate access as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act.
  - a. Interior mezzanines for restaurant offices that are less than 10% of the first floor area are not counted for parking determination
  - b. Interior mezzanines for restaurant seating are counted for parking determination.
- 5 Grocery stores may not be eligible for shared parking unless spaces are not restricted to grocery customers.

**Footnotes:**

For Table 2 front and back

- f-1 Applies only for El Camino Real area. This discourages "extensive retail" type stores in the Downtown or residential neighborhoods.
- f-2 Locations of service establishments may be restricted by zoning code.
- f-3 The City may wish to discourage medical/dental clinics in the Downtown Parking District, and not allow a shared parking reduction.
- f-4 Shared usage must be proven, and only applicable for parking spaces open to the general public during normal business hours.

**Los Altos Office and Retail Parking Standards**

**Table 3**

2007 Parking Study in Los Altos

7/15/15

Page 1

This table combines Appendix A, B, and C, in one table, with calculations to support corrections

Note that calculations are for stand-alone sites. These should be reduced for shared parking uses.

**See Table 4 for update to 2015**

**A. Office Sites**

**C.**

<b>Location</b>	<b>Area Square Feet</b>	<b>Survey Dates</b>	<b>Peak Occupancy Spaces</b>	<b>Corrected Peak Demand Spaces/1,000 SF</b>
Packard Foundation	21,400	10/17/07	32	1.50
200 Second Street		10/18/07	39	1.82
Multi-tenant office bldg.	79,150	10/17/07	159	2.01
5150 El Camino Real		10/18/07	157	1.98
Real Estate offices	32,738	10/17/07	84	2.57
161 & 167 San Antonio Rd.		10/18/07	72	2.20
<b>Totals</b>	<b>133,288</b>		<b>Average peak</b>	<b>2.01</b>
			Min.	1.50
			Max.	2.57

(No seasonal correction for office)

<b>Circulation Factor increase</b>	<b>Average Peak</b>	<b>Circulation Factor</b>	<b>Parking Ratio</b>
	2.01	0.90	<b>2.23</b>

**B. Retail Sites**

Foothill Plaza total	66,356	10/18/07	248	3.74
2310 & 2350 Homestead Rd.	52,315	10/20/07	225	3.39
22356 & 22390 Homestead	14,041			
Elephant Pharmacy	14,004	10/18/07	21	1.50
4470 El Camino Real		10/20/07	31	2.21
Village Court Shopping Center	63,012	10/18/07	220	3.49
4546 El Camino Real		10/20/07	153	2.43
<b>Totals</b>	<b>209,728</b>		<b>Average peak</b>	<b>2.79</b>
			Min.	1.5
			Max.	3.74

<b>Seasonal Correction</b>	<b>Average Peak</b>	<b>Oct. to Dec.</b>	<b>Increase amt.</b>	<b>Total</b>
Increase from Oct. to Dec.	2.79	15.00%	0.42	3.21

<b>Circulation Factor increase</b>	<b>Average Peak</b>	<b>Circulation Factor</b>	<b>Parking Ratio</b>
	3.21	0.90	<b>3.57</b>

## Los Altos Office and Retail Parking Standards

Table 3

Page 2

Area by building

<b>Lcn.</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Major Tenants</b>	<b>Area in Sq. ft.</b>	<b>% of Reported Area</b>
Foothill Plaza				
	2310 Homestead Rd.	Trader Joe's etc.	29,902	57%
	2350 Homestead Rd.	Rite Aid, Chain Reaction	22,413	43%
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>Previously Reported</b>	<b>52,315</b>	<b>100%</b>
	22356 Homestead Rd.	Peets, Subway, etc.	7,257	14%
	22390 Homestead Rd.	Wells Fargo, Starbucks	6,784	13%
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>Previously Omitted</b>	<b>14,041</b>	<b>27%</b>
	<b>Total Foothill Plaza or Foothill Crossings</b>		<b><u>66,356</u></b>	<b><u>127%</u></b>

City of Los Altos Citywide Parking Committee  
Confirmation Counts to Update Parking Studies to 2015

Village Court El Camino Real at San Antonio  
Area 63,012 Square-feet

Date Thursday 5/28/15								10/18/07 F&P	
Time	Unmarked	Bank	HDCP	Aux. Lot on Louks	Total	Parking Usage/ 1,000 square feet		Total	Parking Usage/ 1,000 square feet
11:00	133	2	4	7	146	2.32		145	2.30
11:30	153	4	2	7	166	2.63		168	2.67
Noon	209	3	2	8	222	3.52		195	3.09
12:30	205	3	4	7	219	3.48		210	3.33
1:00	206	4	5	7	222	3.52	peak	220	3.49
1:30	164	7	2	9	182	2.89		196	3.11
2:00	169	4	1	8	182	2.89		160	2.54
2:30	161	3	1	7	172	2.73		144	2.29
3:00	152	4	1	6	163	2.59		131	2.08
3:30	146	3	0	7	156	2.48		130	2.06
4:00	132	3	1	6	142	2.25		130	2.06
Date Saturday 5/30/15								10/20/07	
Time	Unmarked	Bank	HDCP	Aux. Lot on Louks	Total	Parking Usage/ 1,000 square feet		Total	Parking Usage/ 1,000 square feet
11:30	110	1	2	3	116	1.84		109	1.73
Noon	126	0	4	2	132	2.09		112	1.78
12:30	127	0	3	1	131	2.08		126	2.00
1:00	153	0	3	1	157	2.49	peak	123	1.95
1:30	144	2	3	2	151	2.40		153	2.43
2:00	130	1	2	2	135	2.14		147	2.33
2:30	90	1	2	1	94	1.49		133	2.11
3:00	83	1	4	1	89	1.41		92	1.46
3:30	79	1	2	3	85	1.35		92	1.46
4:00	77	0	1	3	81	1.29		85	1.35
								75	1.19
Average						2.27		Average	2.22

## City of Los Altos Citywide Parking Committee

Table 4  
Page 2

## Adjustment for 2015

	Year	2007	2015	% Change
<b>Highest Peak Demand</b>		3.49	3.52	0.86%
<b>Average Demand</b>		2.22	2.27	2.25%

The minor increase in peak parking demand of less than 1% indicates little change from 2007 to 2012.

The minor increase in average parking demand of about 2% indicates a minor flattening of the parking demand curve, showing better overall use of parking supply.

Assuming all areas would increase by the same amount yields the following:

## Average Retail Peak Parking Demand

	2007	2015	%
Average Peak Demand	Study	Adjust.	Change
<b>Retail</b>	3.57	3.60	0.86%
<b>Office</b>	2.23	2.25	0.86%

Los Altos Parking Ratio Examples

6/3/15

Table 5

Restaurant Parking

Page 1

Comparison with other Municipalities

Note: Equivalent Ratio of Parking Spaces per 1000 square feet of total area

calculated from Municipal/Planning Code formulas, using Standard Restaurant Examples (page 2)

Municipality	Units/ Example	Total Area Square Feet	Parking Code Formula 1 space/unit of measure	Total spaces	Parking spaces/ 1000 sf	Comment
					ratio	
<b>Cupertino</b>	R #1	5,000	1/250 sf total area	20	<b>4.00</b>	
	R #2	2,500		10	<b>4.00</b>	
<b>Palo Alto</b>						
<b>Downtown</b>	R #1	5,000	1/250 sf total are	20.00	<b>4.00</b>	
	R #2	2,500		10.00	<b>4.00</b>	
<b>Burlingame</b>	R #1	5,000	1/200 sf total area	25.00	<b>5.00</b>	
	R #2	2,500		12.50	<b>5.00</b>	
<b>San Carlos</b>	R #1	5,000	1/75 sf seating area	33.33	<b>6.67</b>	
	R #2	2,500		16.67	<b>6.67</b>	
<b>Palo Alto</b>						
<b>Calif. Ave.</b>	R #1	5,000	1/155 sf gross area	32.26	<b>6.45</b>	
	R #2	2,500		16.13	<b>6.45</b>	
<b>Los Gatos</b>	R #1	5,000	1/4 seats	41.25	<b>8.25</b>	
	R #2	2,500		22.25	<b>8.90</b>	
<b>Sunnyvale</b>	R #1	5,000	9/1000 sf min, 13/1000 sf max.	45.00	<b>9.00</b>	
	R #2	2,500	9/1000 sf min, 13/1000 sf max.	22.50	<b>9.00</b>	
<b>Mountain View</b>	R #1	5,000	The greater of A. 1/2.5 seats or B. 1/100 sf <b>total</b> area +	54.00	<b>10.80</b>	These parking standards are frequently not applied.
	R #2	5,000	1/2.5 outdoor seats	62.00	<b>12.40</b>	
	R #1	2,500	A.	35.60	<b>14.24</b>	
	R #2	2,500	B	25.00	<b>10.00</b>	
<b>Saratoga</b>	R #1	5,000	1/75 sf total area, incl. outdoor	71.85	<b>14.37</b>	outdoor seating is scarce
	R #2	2,500		36.50	<b>14.60</b>	
<b>Los Altos</b>	R #1	5,000	1/3 (customers + employees)	71.67	<b>14.33</b>	
	<i>current code</i> R #2	2,500		36.33	<b>14.53</b>	

Los Altos Parking Ratio Examples

6/3/15

Table 5

Restaurant Parking

Page 2

Comparison with: current code, current practice, and nearby communities

<b>Standard Restaurant Examples</b>						
<b>Restaurant</b>	<b>R #1</b>	<b>5,000 sf</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>R #2</b>	<b>2,500 sf</b>	<b>100%</b>
Seating Area		2,500 sf	50%		1,250 sf	50%
Back of House		2,500 sf	50%		1,250 sf	50%
			SF/Seat			
Indoor Seating		135 seats	18.52		70 seats	17.86
Outdoor Seating		30 22%	388.89		19 27%	237.50
<b>Total Seating</b>		<b>165</b>			<b>89</b>	
			SF/Empl.			SF/Empl.
No. of Employees		50	50		20	63

<b>Current Los Altos</b>				
<b>Code Requirement</b>	<b>Pkg. Spaces</b>	<b>People/car</b>	<b>Pkg. Spaces</b>	<b>People/car</b>
No. of Customer spaces	55	3	29.67	3
No. of Employee Spaces	16.67	3	6.67	3
Equivalent Parking Ratio		<b>14.40</b>	parking spaces/1000 sf area	
Total Parking Spaces	R #1 71.67		R #2 36.33	

<b>Current Practice in Los Altos</b>				
Average of 30 Los Altos restaurants		<b>3.82</b>	parking spaces/1000 sf area	
Total Parking Spaces	R #1 19		R #2 10	

<b>Average Parking Ratios in Nearby Communities - from page 1</b>				
Average without including Los Altos		<b>8.19</b>	parking spaces/1000 sf area	
Average including Los Altos		<b>9.17</b>	parking spaces/1000 sf area	
Reasonable Range	8.00 to 10.00		parking spaces/1000 sf area	

<b>Recommended Los Altos Parking Ratio</b>				
		<b>9.00</b>	parking spaces/1000 sf area	
Total Parking Spaces	R #1 45		R #2 23	

**Recommendation:**  
 Change the current parking requirement for restaurants, from 1 space per every 3 seats, plus one space per every 3 employees, to: **9.00 spaces per 1,000 total gross square feet.**

# **City of Los Altos Parking Standards**

Los Altos  
Citywide Parking Committee

September 16, 2015

# Los Altos Citywide Parking Committee

Lou Becker

Ronit Bodner

Kim Cranston

Mike McTighe

David Rock

Mark Rogge

Gary Heddon

Jack Kelly

Bill Maston

City Staff:

Marcia Somers

James Walgren

# Los Altos Parking Standards

Efficient  
Layout

Reasonable  
Ratios

Shared  
Downtown

Parking  
Management

**PARKING STANDARDS  
DIMENSIONS & LAYOUT**

**Efficient  
Layout**

**INSERT PARKING LAYOUT AND  
DIMENSIONS HERE**

# Questions Posed by the City Council to the Citywide Parking Committee

## Reasonable Ratios

1. Do current parking ratios reflect real parking demand?
2. How do different types of businesses generate different demands?
3. Are current codes applied consistently?

Reasonable?  
Realistic?

Usage  
Profiles

Consistent?  
Objective?

# Research - Resources

## Reasonable Ratios

We reviewed several relevant resources:

### City Resources:

**Presentations by City Staff on recent developments;**  
**City reports, memos, studies, City Code;**  
**City-sponsored consultant: studies, reports, memos;**  
**Public comments at Citywide Parking Committee meetings**

### Field Resources within Los Altos:

**Site reviews of buildings and parking areas around town;**  
**Aerial photos, public records, on-line documents**

### Outside Resources:

**Parking standards of nearby cities, and their codes;**  
**Professional publications**

# Reasonable? – Realistic?

## Reasonable Ratios

What is a Parking Ratio?

Number of parking spaces/1,000 square-foot area

How is a parking ratio derived?

Counting parked cars, measuring areas by use.

Variables:

- 1 What spaces are counted, and when?
2. What areas are used and why?

# Reasonable? – Realistic?

## Reasonable Ratios

### What is a Parking Ratio?

Number of parking spaces/1,000 square-foot area

#### Variables:

1.

Vehicles in parking spaces associated with the buildings, over a statistically relevant period of time.

Statistics are used to adjust for when counts were taken, and to consider circulation, and availability.

2. What areas are used and why?

The relevant area that relates to the usage: gross or net area, excluded area, accuracy of area measurement.

# Reasonable? – Realistic?

## Reasonable Ratios

What's reasonable?

How do we reflect real parking demand?

Count spaces that are applicable to the building.

1. How do we count on-site spaces not available to the public?

OK for employees, residents

Not OK for customers, visitors

2. How do we count adjacent on-street public parking spaces?

Not OK for employees, residents

OK for customers, visitors

Count building area that relates to parking demand.

3. Should we not count building area that creates demand?

Must count all relevant area that creates parking demand.

4. Should we allow changes that impact parking?

# Reasonable? – Realistic?

## Reasonable Ratios

What's reasonable?

How do we reflect real parking demand?

Examples	Wrong	Right	Units
<b>Office</b>			
Average Peak Occupancy	158	158	cars
Area of building	76,400	79,150	sf
Avg. Peak Parking Demand	2.07	2.00	/Ksf
Min. 1.55      Max. 2.57			
<b>Recommended Ratio</b>	<b>3.33</b>	<b>2.25</b>	<b>/Ksf</b>
<b>Retail</b>			
Average Peak Occupancy	236.5	236.5	cars
Area of building	52,315	66,356	sf
Avg. Peak Parking Demand	4.52	3.56	/Ksf
Min. 1.50      Max. 3.74			
<b>Recommended Ratio</b>	<b>5.00</b>	<b>3.75</b>	<b>/Ksf</b>

# Reasonable? – Realistic?

**Reasonable  
Ratios**

## Parking Ratios of Nearby Cities Restaurant

Cupertino	4.00
Palo Alto Downtown	4.00
Burlingame	5.00
Palo Alto Calif. Ave.	6.45
San Carlos	6.67
Los Gatos	8.25
Sunnyvale	9.00
Mountain View	12.40
Saratoga	14.37 equivalent
Los Altos	14.33 equivalent

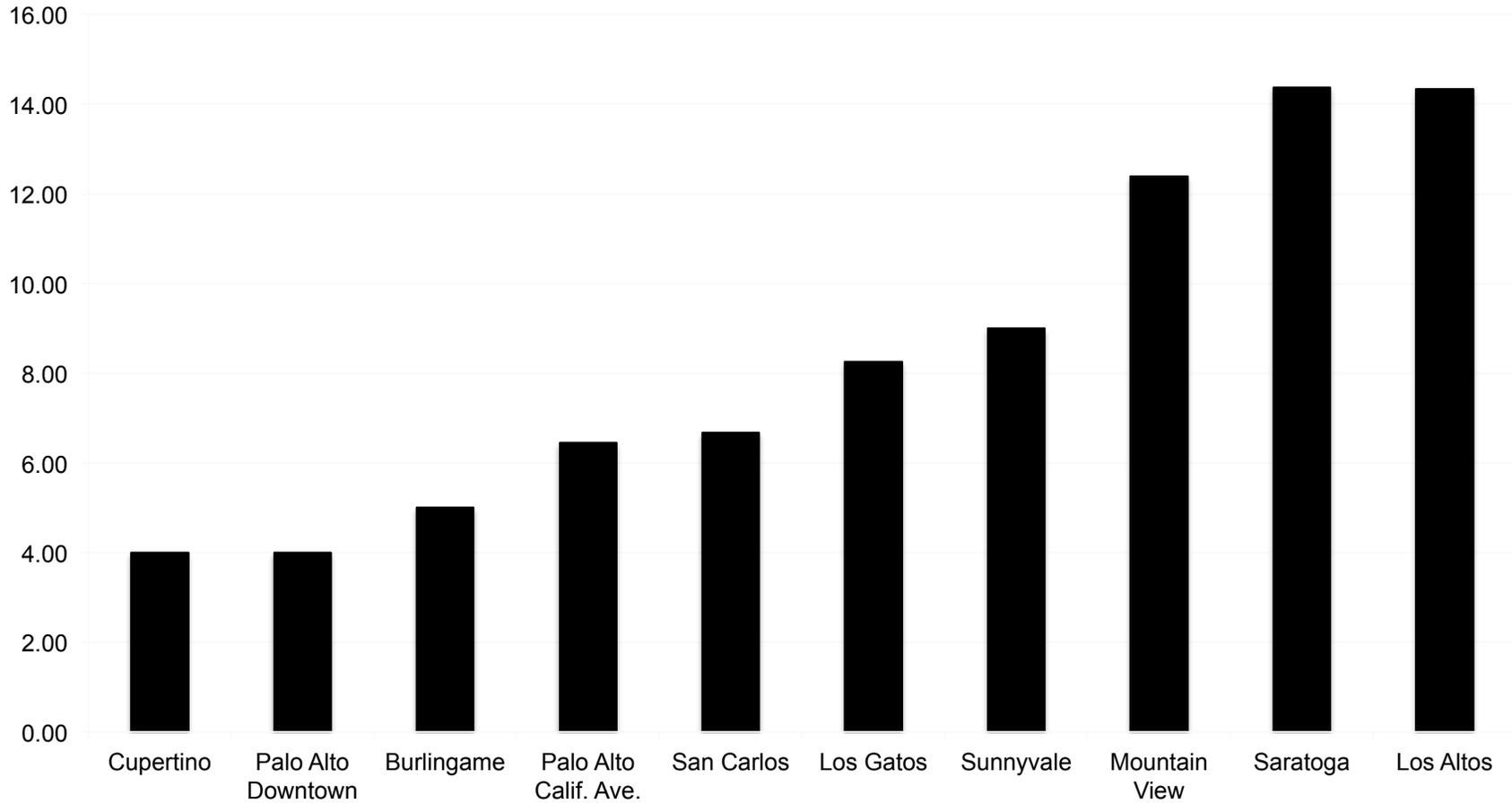
# Reasonable? – Realistic?

## Parking Ratios of Nearby Cities

### Restaurant

**Reasonable  
Ratios**

Parking spaces/1,000 sf



# Usage Profiles

## Current Conditions

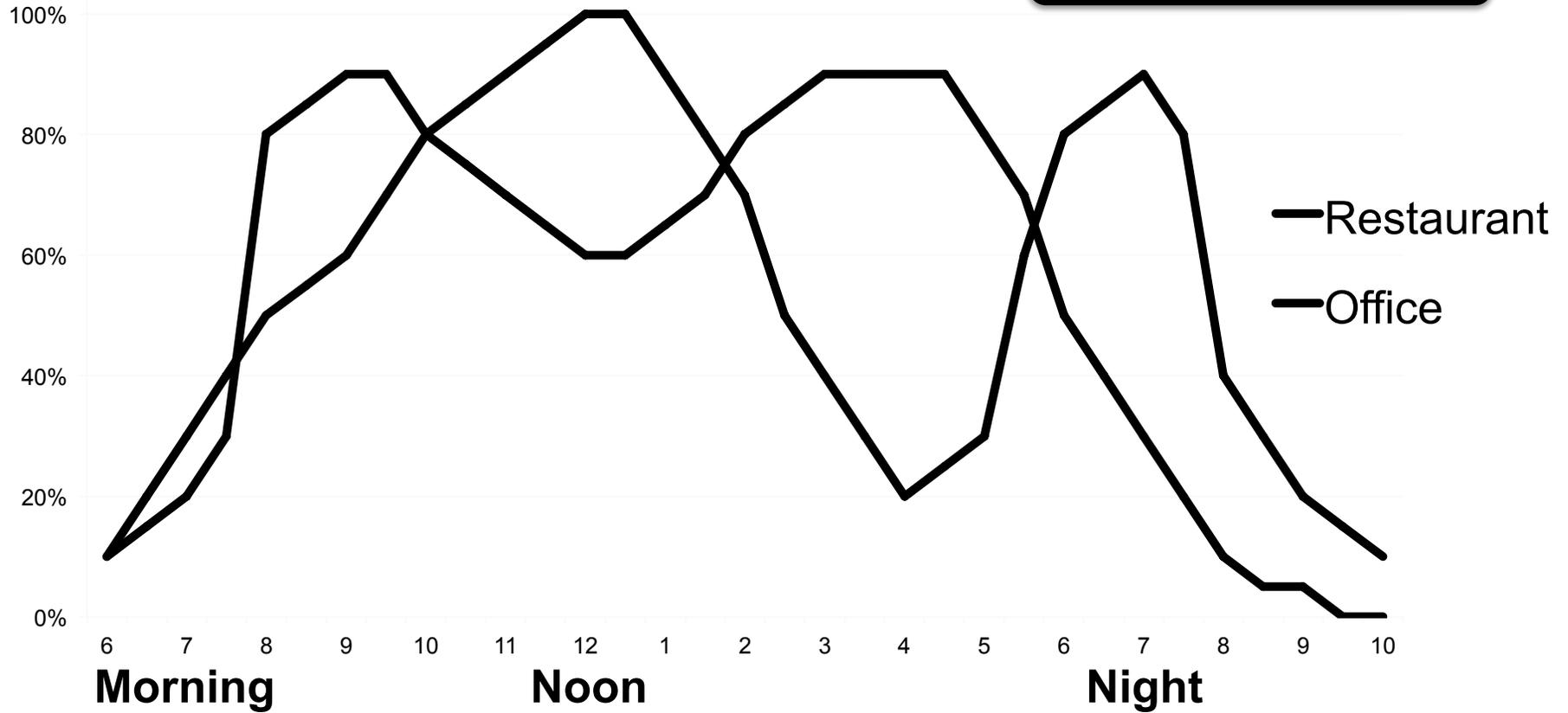
# Reasonable Ratios

# Type of Use	<u>Code</u>	<u>Practice</u>	
	Stand Alone	Stand Alone	Shared Parking
1.a) Retail - Extensive	2.00	2.00	2.00
1.b) Retail - Intensive	5.00	5.00	2.86
1.c) Retail - Loyola Cor.	3.33	3.33	3.33
2) Service	5.00	5.00	2.86
3) Restaurant (equiv.)	14.00	5.19	3.03
4) Office	3.33	3.33	2.86
- 5) Grocery	5.00	3.38	
6) Clinic	3.33	3.33	
7) Hotel	*	2.04	1.42

# Usage Profiles

## Time of Use – Compatible Mix

## Reasonable Ratios



**Each category has a unique usage profile over time.**

**Many office workers leave the office for lunch or dinner.**

# Consistent? Objective?

**Reasonable  
Ratios**

## The Parking Code lacks specific detail

Interpretations are made.

Interpretations can become subjective or appear subjective.

This may result in inconsistent applications of the parking code.

## **Examples:**

Intensive vs. Extensive Retail

Parking District interpretation of 100% F.A.R exemption

Literal code interpretation

Parking credit as retail

Parking credit as restaurant

Changes in Use

Retail becomes office

Retail becomes restaurant

# Consistent? Objective?

**Reasonable  
Ratios**

## Examples

### Intensive vs. Extensive Retail

#### LAC 14.02.070 – Definitions

1. "Extensive retail" as used with respect to parking requirements, means a retail use primarily selling large commodities such as home or office furniture, floor coverings, stoves, refrigerators, other household electrical and gas appliances, including televisions and home sound systems, and outdoor furniture, such as lawn furniture, movable spas and hot tubs.
2. "Intensive retail" as used with respect to parking requirements, means any retail use not defined as an extensive retail use.

BevMo – sells beverages and more – **all defined as Intensive.**

# Consistent? Objective?

## Reasonable Ratios

### Examples in Parking District

#### Parking District interpretation of 100% F.A.R exemption

##### Hotel

Literal code interpretation  
Parking credit as retail (5/1,000 sf)  
Parking credit as restaurant

Under-parked by 11 spaces  
Adequately parked  
Over-parked

##### Restaurant (2,500 sf)

Literal code interpretation  
Parking credit as retail (5/1,000 sf)  
Parking credit as restaurant  
\* Counting outdoor seating

Adequately parked\*  
Under-parked by 24 spaces  
Adequately parked\*\*  
Under parked by  
# of outdoor seats/3

\*\*Not counting outdoor seating

Adequately parked

# Consistent? Objective?

**Reasonable  
Ratios**

**Examples not in Parking District  
Changes in Use**

## **Retail becomes Office**

Mixed-use Retail/Office/Residential (not in Parking District)

Permit Application – 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Retail (5/1,000 sf)

Occupancy – 1<sup>st</sup> Floor converted into Office (3.33/1,000 sf)

Over-parked, yet under-parked per Code at time of application.

Inner Court and Atrium area gets filled in for Office use.

Increased usable area increases parking demand.

Most on-site parking is behind closed gate – not available to the public

Most convenient parking is on the adjacent Parking District Plaza.

Impacts public parking on the Parking District Plaza.

# Consistent? Objective?

**Reasonable  
Ratios**

**Examples not in Parking District  
Changes in Use**

## **Retail becomes Restaurant**

Mixed use Retail/Office (not in Parking District)

Permit Application – 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Retail (5/1,000)

Occupancy – 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Restaurant (14/1,000 equiv.) plus Retail

Under-parked by 54 spaces per current Code requirements

On-site office parking behind closed gate is not available to the public.  
Most convenient parking is on the adjacent Parking District Plaza.

Impacts public parking on the Parking District Plaza.

# Reasonable Range of Parking Ratios For Los Altos

## Reasonable Ratios

#	Type of Use	Reasonable Range
1.a)	Retail – Extensive	2.00 - 4.00
1.b)	Retail - Intensive	3.50 - 4.00
2)	Service	3.00 - 5.00
3)	Restaurant	8.00 -10.00
4)	Office	2.00 - 3.00
5)	Grocery	3.00 - 4.00
6)	Med. Clinic/Dental Off.	4.00 - 6.00
7)	Hotel	1.00 - 4.00

--	--

# Proposed Parking Ratios for Los Altos

## Reasonable Ratios

#	Type of Use	Reasonable Range	Stand Alone	Shared Parking	
				10% NCC	20% Dwntn
1.a)	Retail – Extensive	2.00 - 4.00	3.00	N/A	N/A
1.b)	Retail - Intensive	3.50 - 4.00	3.75	3.38	3.00
2)	Service	3.00 - 5.00	4.00	3.60	3.20
3)	Restaurant	8.00 -10.00	9.00	8.10	7.20
4)	Office	2.00 - 3.00	2.50	2.25	2.00
5)	Grocery	3.00 - 4.00	3.50	3.15	N/A
6)	Med. Clinic/Dental Off.	4.00 - 6.00	5.00	4.50	4.00
7)	Hotel	1.00 - 4.00	2.00	1.70	1.60

# Questions Posed by the City Council to the Citywide Parking Committee

## Reasonable Ratios

1. Do current parking ratios reflect real parking demand?
2. How do different types of businesses generate different demands?
1. Are current codes applied consistently?

Reasonable?  
Realistic?

Usage  
Profiles

Consistent?  
Objective?

# Conclusions

# Reasonable Ratios

## Reasonable? Realistic?

1. Proposed parking ratios are reasonable and reflect real parking demand.

## Usage Profiles

2. The proposed ratios, properly applied, respect how different types of businesses generate different demands.

Optimizing the mix: increases shared parking, reduces parking demand, and decreases unnecessary traffic.

## Consistent? Objective?

3. Proposed parking ratios are:  
consistent with a village or small-town character;  
more realistic, reducing need for exceptions, variances;  
more specific, for consistent and objective application.

# Recommendations

## Reasonable Ratios

### Reasonable & Realistic

1. Approve the proposed parking ratios along with associated application rules, as described in the Parking Ratios Report.

### Usage Profiles

2. Encourage as policy an optimum mix of uses that tend to: flatten the parking demand curve during peak usage and encourage shared public parking use.

### Consistent & Objective

3. Direct the City Attorney to revise the City Code to include the approved parking ratios and unambiguous rules for application of those parking ratios.

**The Citywide Parking Committee  
Thanks:**

**Reasonable  
Ratios**

**City Councilmembers Jeannie Bruins and Jean Mordo**

for oversight to the Citywide Parking Committee;

City Staff: City Manager Marcia Somers,

James Walgren, Zach Dahl, Jon Maginot, Wendy Meisner  
for supporting the Committee;

The Audience at our Citywide Parking Committee meetings

for well-informed, insightful comments;

The Planning and Transportation Commission

for review and consideration of our work;

The City Council

for review, consideration, and deliberation of our work.

# **Expanded Downtown Parking District and Parking In-Lieu Program**

**Shared  
Downtown**

**INSERT EXPANDED DOWNTOWN PARKING DISTRICT AND  
PARKING IN-LIEU PROGRAM HERE**

**Parking Demand Reduction**  
**Increasing Parking Supply**  
**Prioritizing Parking Supply**

**Parking  
Management**

**INSERT PARKING MANAGEMENT SLIDES HERE**