

November 6, 2020

RE: Downtown Residential Parking Requirements

Dear Mayor and Council:

The Downtown area and housing options have been a priority of City Councils for at least the past eight years but very little has happened to move the needle. After looking at pursuing a small-scale mixed-use project Downtown, it is apparent that parking regulations are a real impediment to both new projects as well as rehabbing under- or un-utilized, upper-floor units in existing buildings.

The current rule requiring one parking space per unit is not a viable option for a building that currently takes most or all of its lot area. For these properties, it is impossible to meet the requirement onsite without tearing down the building, which is both something that is not a good outcome as well as prohibitively expensive for the small number of parking spaces that would create.

While there are options in the code that allow for remote parking agreements, those spaces are required to be available essentially permanently for the specific use of residential units. The issue at hand is that there is precious little public or private land available for parking in the DSC let alone within the 300' radius required of remote parking as currently required. But even if it were, would we really want to reserve land for surface parking in our urban core in perpetuity?

These issues affect any potential project in the DSC but are especially acute for smaller projects where structured parking either will not fit or be so expensive per space on the site that no project occurs.

The end result is that no residential units will be built at a small scale or only large projects will be possible, simply because of parking. Keep in mind that there are already over 50 units downtown that are grandfathered in with no parking.

We respectfully request that Council refer to staff to put an item on a near-term future agenda that would eliminate the residential parking requirements of one space per unit in the DSC area to a maximum of the number of spaces that would fit on the property if it were a surface parking lot to a maximum of 18 spaces.

The risks of eliminating this requirement can be mitigated with future parking regulation changes and are small in consideration of what may be possible with its adoption.

Thank you for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jerry Nelson". The signature is written in black ink on a white background.

Jerry Nelson
Onondaga Investments