



AB 1401 – Parking Requirements Reform

Summary:

AB 1401 would prohibit a local government from imposing or enforcing a minimum parking requirement on developments located near public transit. This measure would reduce car dependence, lower carbon emissions, and encourage more housing production near transit.

Background:

Many cities in California require new residential or commercial development to provide on-site parking spaces. Often, apartments must include one or two parking spots per unit, and commercial properties must provide one space for every 100-200 square feet (frequently causing more space to be provided for parking than for the business itself). These one-size-fits-all mandates are often imposed even in areas that are close to transit.

Mandatory parking requirements have led to an oversupply of parking spaces; Los Angeles County alone has 18.6 million parking spaces, or almost two for every resident. Experts believe that this policy encourages car dependence and discourages mass transit usage, increasing vehicle miles traveled. California needs to reduce vehicle miles traveled by 15% in order to meet its SB 32 climate goals, even in a scenario with full vehicle electrification.

Mandatory parking requirements also worsen California's severe housing shortage by raising the cost of housing production. On average, a garage costs \$24,000-\$34,000 per space to build, a cost that is passed on to households regardless of whether they own a car. Additionally, on-site parking takes up space that could otherwise be used for additional apartment units.

In recent years, California has instituted some incremental reforms to parking mandates. AB 744 (2015) limits local parking requirements to 0.5 spaces per bedroom for housing near transit that uses the state density bonus program or is 100% affordable to lower-income households. Projects that are streamlined under SB 35 (2017) are exempt from parking requirements if

the project is near transit or within a historic district, and may not be required to provide more than one space per housing unit in all other areas. Additionally, San Diego and Oakland have eliminated parking minimums near transit, while San Francisco has eliminated them citywide.

However, these harmful parking mandates remain in place in most cities, requiring bolder action to address California's climate, transportation, and housing challenges. AB 1401 does not prohibit property owners from building on-site parking. Rather, it would give them the flexibility to decide on their own how much on-site parking to provide, instead of requiring them to comply with a one-size-fits-all mandate.

AB 1401 (as amended on April 19, 2021):

- Prohibits a local government from imposing or enforcing a minimum parking requirement on residential, commercial, or other development if the project is within one-half mile walking distance of public transit (either a major transit stop or a location along a high-quality transit corridor); and
- Requires new multifamily or nonresidential projects to continue to provide electric vehicle parking spaces and parking spaces that are accessible to persons with disabilities.

Support:

California YIMBY (co-sponsor)
San Francisco Bay Area Planning and Urban Research Association (SPUR) (co-sponsor)
Abundant Housing LA (co-sponsor)
Council of Infill Builders (co-sponsor)

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