

CodeNEXT: Parking Position Paper April 10, 2017

WHAT

The draft code already includes provisions we support such as

- Parking for residential changed from 1/bedroom to 1/unit;
- No parking required for the first 2,500 SF of some uses;
- Parking for office uses reduced from 1/275 SF to 1/500 SF.

These changes are positive, but we'd be better served by going further and eliminating parking requirements altogether while keeping ADA requirements. As an alternative, we have also advised on ways to amend Section 23-4E-3 of the draft code to solve the Why.

WHY

Removing off-street parking requirements speeds up the Site Plan process by removing a layer of labor- and time-intensive regulation, increases the feasibility of ADUs thus spurring demand to build more affordable homes and apartments, and allows developers to have a more flexible use of their impervious coverage resulting in more density and thus a better Highest and Best use of a particular site. Austin Strategic Housing Plan supports "*reduced parking*"¹ as well as Foundation Communities (FC) states we should allow for greater reduction than 40% if affordable housing is provided.

HOW

- Provision 23-4E-3020 (D) (3) stipulates that Parking Management Districts are exempt
 - Help define quality PMDs that can be easily understood and adopted by the lay citizen/neighborhood
 - Promote to neighborhood associations as a method of funding neighborhood goals laid out in their plans
- Provision 23-4E-3020 (D) (1) stipulates that existing SFRs are exempt but adding new units would require meeting the code. This needs to include ADUs as an exemption to make them feasible. ²

¹ Page 32, http://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Austin_Strategic_Housing_Plan_031417.pdf

² Supported by Foundation Communities

- Provision 23-4E-3040 (A), which limit parking reductions should be amended or deleted to allow some reductions in areas this group supports
- Delete section 23-4E-3060(A)(1), which sets a maximum parking adjustment of 40 percent³.

CASE STUDIES

- Buffalo adopted new Green Code, 63-year overhaul of their LDC that removes parking requirements citywide (December 2016)⁴
- San Francisco and Portland reduced ADU parking requirements zero; Denver reduced to 20%
- FC reports that Capital Studios has a roughly 20% tenant-to-car ratio and has zero parking provided to the tenants.

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³ Supported by Foundation Communities

⁴ http://www.buffalogreencode.com/December_2016/UDO_Dec_2016.pdf

CodeNEXT Draft Exhibits

Division 23-4E-3: Parking and Loading

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23-4E-3010 Purpose

The purpose of this Division is to provide regulatory standards for parking and access for motor vehicles and bicycles. The Division also provides options for the adjustment of parking requirements and the provision of parking alternatives. These standards provide for the parking needs of new land uses and development while being designed and located in a manner consistent with the desired character and development patterns of the community and as outlined in the Austin Comprehensive Plan.

23-4E-3020 Applicability

These standards apply to all development within zones and shall be considered in combination with Article 23-4D (Zoning Districts) and Chapter 23-9 (Transportation).

- (A) Parking and Loading Requirements apply to development of:
- (1) A new building;
 - (2) An enclosed addition that results in an increase in the gross floor area of 25 percent or more;
 - (3) A change in land use that increases the number of required parking spaces above the number of existing spaces;
 - (4) Addition of Residential Units, except for accessory dwelling, on the same lot as an Existing Dwelling; and/or
 - (5) A change of occupancy or operation that increases the number of required parking spaces above the existing number of spaces.

- (B) Additional parking or loading facilities required under this Division are required only for the addition, enlargement, or change, and not for the entire building or use, except as follows:
- (1) An addition, enlargement, or change in use for a cocktail lounge or a restaurant with a late-hours permit is required to meet parking requirements for the entire building or use.
- (C) **Nonconforming Uses, Structures or Lots.** When a nonconforming use, structure, or lot is abandoned for a period of 180 consecutive days and then changed to a new use according to the requirements of Section 23-2G-1060 (Termination of Non-Conforming Use) and Section 23-2G-2030 (Nonconforming Parking) of this Code, then parking facilities shall be provided for the entire building, structure, or premises, to the maximum extent feasible as determined by the Planning Director.
- (D) **Exempt**
- (1) **Existing Single-Family Dwellings.** The standards within this Division shall not apply to existing single family dwellings as follows:
 - (a) When dwellings are added to a lot and the total number of dwellings is more than two on the same lot, it shall require that the parking and access for the second single-family dwelling meet the standards in this division. The parking and access for the original dwelling does not have to meet the requirements of this Division; and
 - (b) When more than two single-family dwellings are on the same lot, where allowed, it shall be required that the parking and access for all the dwellings, including existing single-family dwellings, meet the requirements in this Division.
 - (2) Parking and/or loading is not required for an accessory use.
 - (3) **Uses Within a Parking Management District.** The parking requirements required by this Division shall not apply, except as provided by the parking management district.
- (E) **Design.** A parking and loading areas, circulation area, or queue line constructed or substantially reconstructed after January 1, 1985 must comply with the design standards prescribed in the Transportation Criteria Manual, and the landscape standards prescribed in Division 23-4E-4 (Landscaping).

23-4E-3030 Calculations

- (A) **Calculations.** Any fraction greater than or equal to 0.50 shall be rounded up to nearest whole number. No additional space shall be required for a fractional unit of less than 0.50.
- (B) **Square Feet.** In any case where the number of required parking spaces is based on floor area in square feet (sf) the measurement shall mean square feet of gross floor area, unless stated otherwise.
- (C) **Number of Employees.** In any case where a parking requirement based on number of employees, the number of employees shall be calculated based on the largest work shift.
- (D) **Maximum Number of Parking Spaces.** Developments over 10,000 square feet in floor area or containing 25 or more residential units shall not exceed the minimum number of parking spaces by more than 100 percent.

- (E) **Compact Car Spaces.** Up to 40 percent of required parking spaces may be designed as compact spaces.
- (F) Tandem parking may count towards the required parking for an individual residential unit.
- (G) Parking lifts may be used to meet the residential portion of the parking requirement.

23-4E-3040 Parking Limitations

- (A) **Reduction of Parking.** Required off-street parking shall not be reduced below the requirements of this Division. Existing parking that is determined to be nonconforming in accordance with Division 23-2G-2 (Nonconforming Parking), shall not be further reduced from the number of parking spaces available on the effective date of this Land Development Code.

23-4E-3050 Parking for Persons with Disabilities

- (A) **Applicability.**
 - (1) Development must comply with Federal ADA and Texas Accessibility Standards when applicable.
 - (2) A parking facility that is accessible to a person with disabilities that is compliant with current Federal ADA Standards, current Texas Accessibility Standards, and current locally adopted Building Code;
 - (3) Routes of travel that connect the accessible elements of the site; and
 - (4) The number of accessible parking spaces required by the current Federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Standards and current Texas Accessibility Standards. Where the standards found here conflict with other standards the most restrictive shall apply.
 - (5) A single-family dwelling or duplex and residential sites not governed by the Federal Fair Housing Act must have an accessible route of travel as required by the Visitability section of this Land Development Code.
- (B) **Appeal.** A person may appeal the requirements of this section to the Board of Adjustment; however, Federal and State laws must be appealed through their respective processes.
- (C) **Variance.** A variance granted applies only to the use for which the variance was granted and does not run with the land on which the use is located.
- (D) **Design.** Parking facilities for persons with disabilities must comply with the design standards prescribed in the Transportation Criteria Manual.

23-4E-3060 Off-Street Motor Vehicle Parking Adjustments

(A) **Simple Parking Adjustments.** Adjustments that are applicable with Planning Director approval when requirements are met.

(1) **Maximum Parking Adjustment.** Where multiple parking adjustments are allowed the maximum cumulative parking reduction is 40%.

Table 23-4E-3060.A Simple Parking Adjustments			
Type	Requirement	Reduction	
		Transect Zones	Non-Transect Zones
Developments Located in Proximity to:			
Transit Corridor	Located within 1/4 mile of a transit corridor	20%	20%
Transit Corridor	Located within 1/2 mile of a transit corridor	10%	no reduction
Developments Providing the Following Features:			All Zones
Preservation of On-Site Trees	Preserve significant stands of trees or protected trees in addition to those required to be preserved by the Code, pursuant to protection measures specified in the Environmental Criteria Manual.	10%	
Car-Share	Car-sharing vehicle provided on-site in compliance with requirements prescribed by the Planning Director by administrative rule.	20 spaces per car-share vehicle	
Bicycle Parking			
On-site Bicycle Parking above requirements of Section 23-4E-3080.	For every 4 bicycle parking spaces, requirement may be reduced by 1 motor vehicle space	up to 5% max.	
Buildings Providing Shower and Changing Facilities for employees			
Up to 20,000 gsf	One unisex shower and changing facility min.	10%	
20,001 to 100,000 gsf	Two unisex shower and changing facility min.	10%	
Greater than 100,000 gsf	Four unisex shower and changing facility min.	10%	

(B) **Parking Adjustments Requiring Planning Director Approval.**

- (1) **Shared On-Site Parking.** Where two or more uses on the same site or adjacent parcels have distinct and differing peak parking usage periods (e.g., a theater and a bank), a reduction in the required number of parking spaces as determined by the Planning Director may be allowed in the following manner:
 - (a) The reduction in number of required parking spaces shall be based on a parking demand study provided by the applicant. The parking demand study shall be in accordance with established professional practices.
 - (b) Approval shall also require a recorded covenant running with the land, recorded by the owner of the parking lot, guaranteeing that the required parking will be maintained exclusively for the uses served and remain for the duration of the use.
 - (c) To apply for an adjustment under this Section, an applicant must submit to the Planning Director a site plan and transportation engineering report addressing the following:
 - (i) The characteristics of each use and the differences in projected peak parking demand, including days or hours of operation;
 - (ii) Potential reduction in vehicle movements resulting from the multi-purpose use of parking by employees, customers, or residents of the uses served;
 - (iii) Potential improvements in parking design, circulation, and access resulting from joint parking;
 - (iv) Compliance with shared parking guidelines in the Transportation Criteria Manual; and
 - (v) Detail the amount of bicycle parking to be provided.
- (2) **Off-site Parking.** The location of off-premises parking facilities in relation to the use served are described in this Subsection. All distances specified shall be between the closest edge of such parking facilities to the closest edge of the site being served.
 - (a) Off-site parking and the use that it serves may not be not more than 1,000 feet apart, measured from the nearest off-site parking space to the nearest public entrance of the use that the parking serves. The distance measured:
 - (i) Assumes that between adjacent intersections with traffic control signals, pedestrians cross at a marked crosswalk; and
 - (ii) Does not cross private property unless access is authorized by the affected property owner.
 - (b) Pedestrian access between the use or the site and the off-premise parking area shall be via paved sidewalk or walkway.
 - (c) In non-transect zones off-site parking facilities for a non-residential use shall not be located in a residential zone.
 - (d) Landscaping required by Section 23-4E-4130 (Visual Screening) is not required for a site plan filed solely for approval of shared or off-site parking on an existing parking lot.

- (e) The owner shall provide a recorded parking agreement reflecting the arrangement with the other site.
- (f) If the off-premise parking is shared, the Planning Director may allow a reduction in the same manner as on-site shared parking as described in Subsection 1 above.
- (3) **In-Lieu Fee.** The owner of any property upon which a development is proposed may pay an in-lieu parking fee if the City approves it as part of the site plan review. A request to pay the in-lieu fee for more than 15 parking spaces must be approved by the Council. The Council shall make the following findings before approving any in-lieu fee proposal:
 - (a) The development is within a parking management district;
 - (b) There is available or planned public parking capacity to offset this demand;
 - (c) The public parking will be made available within a reasonable time period of the approval of this development; and,
 - (d) The fee option is available only if existing or planned parking exists within 600 feet of the site, or within a distance set by the parking management district. The fee shall be the current value of land and parking construction costs per space needed, as determined by an adopted parking management plan
- (4) **Transportation Demand Management.** May reduce parking requirement based on approved Transportation Demand Management plan as set forth in Article 23-9H (Transportation Demand Management).

23-4E-3070 Loading

- (A) Required off-street loading facility must:
 - (1) Be maintained for the duration of the use or existence of the building requiring the facility; and
 - (2) Be used exclusively for the purpose of loading and unloading goods, materials, and supplies.

- (B) Off-street loading facility shall be provided for each use in a building or on a site as follows:

Table 23-4E-3070.A Off-Street Loading Requirement	
Floor Area	Requirement, min.
Up to 10,000 gsf	none required
10,001 to 100,000	1 off-street loading area
Greater than 100,000	1 off-street loading area per 100,000 gsf

- (C) Multiple uses or occupancies located in a single building or on one site may be served by a common loading space.
- (D) **Calculations.** An off-street loading facility requirement is based on the gross floor area.

- (1) Gross Floor Area for calculating Off-Street Loading Requirement includes exterior site area at a ratio of 1 square foot for every 2 gross square feet of area used for a commercial or industrial use.
- (2) Gross floor area does not include enclosed or covered areas used for off-street parking or loading.

23-4E-3080 Bicycle Parking

(A) Applicability

- (1) The following regulations are applicable whenever the provisions of this Division apply.
- (2) Bicycle parking is not required for single-family residential developments and uses.

(B) Required Spaces

Table 23-4E-3080.A Bicycle Parking Requirement

Retail, Office, Service Uses	
Up to 10,000 gsf	2 spaces
Greater than 10,000 gsf	2 spaces plus an additional 1 per 1,000 gsf
Residential Development	
12 to 25 units	1 per x units
Greater than 25 units	1 per x units

(C) Location and Design

- (1) The location of off-street bicycle parking must comply the design requirements found in the Transportation Criteria Manual and with the following requirements:
- (2) A minimum of 50% of all required bicycle parking must be located within 50 feet of the principal building entrance which shall not be obscured from public view; and
- (3) The remaining required bicycle parking may be located as follows:
- (4) In a secure location within 50 feet of building entryways other than the principal building entrance;
- (5) At employee only entrances;
- (6) Within a building; or
- (7) In covered motor vehicle parking within 50 feet of a street level entrance.
- (8) The closest bicycle parking must be no farther than the closest motor vehicle parking space, excluding accessible parking spaces.
- (9) Where a conflict exists the more restrictive standard shall apply.

23-4E-3090 Parking Lot Design

The design of parking lots is handled in different Divisions of this Land Development Code. Standards related to parking stall width and depth and drive aisle width are found in the Transportation Criteria Manual. In the case of conflict between standards in this Division and the Transportation Criteria Manual, those in the Transportation Criteria Manual shall apply. Standards related to landscaping for parking lots are found in Division 23-4E-4 (Landscape).

Table 23-4E-3090.A Parking Lot Landscaping	
Parking Lot Medians	
Width (min.)	
Width	10'
Width: Existing Tree	10' or 1/2 critical root zone, whichever is greater
Parking Lot Tree Island	
End of Parking Run	1 at end of parking run
Middle of Parking Run, When Not Adjacent to Median	1 every 8 parking spaces
Width	10'
Depth	match parking depth
Parking Lot Medians	
Width	
Width	10'
Width: Existing Tree	10' or 1/2 critical root zone, whichever is greater
Parking Lot Perimeter	
Parking Lots adjacent to a public thoroughfare other than an alley	10'



BUFFALO
greencode

Unified Development
Ordinance

PREPARED FOR
THE CITY OF BUFFALO
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING
MAYOR BYRON W. BROWN
DECEMBER 2016



PRODUCED BY:
camiros

Article 8. Access & Parking

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8.2.3 Long-Term Bicycle Parking

- A.** Long-term bicycle parking must be provided in a well-lit, secure location within convenient distance of a public entrance, building lobby, or other common area.
- B.** Examples of long-term bicycle parking design include:
 - 1. A bicycle locker.
 - 2. A lockable bicycle cage or other enclosure.
 - 3. A lockable bicycle room.
 - 4. A designated space visible from employee workstations.
- C.** All required long-term bicycle parking spaces must be designed to provide continuous shelter from the elements.

8.2.4 Waivers

The City Planning Board may issue a written waiver of bicycle parking minimums, in whole or part, if an applicant shows, through a letter of concurrence furnished by a qualified professional, that the minimum required number of bicycle parking spaces exceeds the probable demand.

8.3 VEHICLE ACCESS AND PARKING

8.3.1 General

- A. Off-Street Parking.** There are no provisions that establish a minimum number of off-street parking spaces for development. However, certain development proposals are required to complete a transportation demand management plan, per Section 8.4, which can result in the provision of off-street parking. Where provided, off-street vehicle parking must comply with the standards of this section.
- B. Accessibility.** All vehicle parking lots and parking structures must conform with the ADA Standards for Accessible Design and ADA Accessibility Guidelines for Buildings and Facilities published by the United States Access Board.
- C. Parking Access**
 - 1. All off-street vehicle parking must have direct access to a public right-of way through an alley, driveway, or permanent access easement.
 - 2. If an improved alley with a right-of-way of at least 18 feet in width is provided, all vehicle access should take place from the alley.
 - 3. Entries for parking must be placed along a secondary thoroughfare or alley, where practicable.
- D. Vehicular Circulation**
 - 1. All parking lots and parking structures must be designed so that vehicles enter or leave a parking space without having to move any other vehicle. Parking lots and structures where vehicles are moved by employees of the facility are exempt from this requirement.
 - 2. Parking lots and parking structures must be designed so that the driver of the vehicle proceeds forward into traffic rather than backs out into traffic.
 - 3. Parking lots and parking structures must be designed so that a vehicle is not forced

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to back onto the public right-of-way to gain access from one parking aisle to another parking aisle.

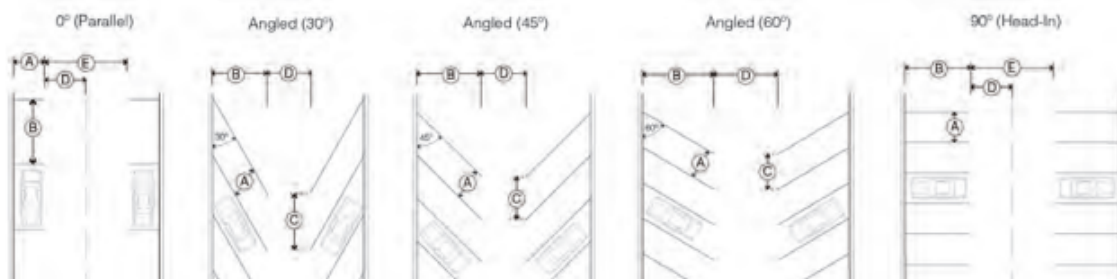
4. Any parking row that does not provide two means of vehicular egress must provide, at the closed end, a space designated as a turn-around area. This space must be located at the end of a parking row, be designed with a minimum dimension of nine feet in width by nine feet in depth, and include a "No Parking" sign. Parking lots of less than 50 spaces are exempt from this provision.
 5. Vehicle circulation providing cross-access between abutting lots is encouraged.
- E. Stall and Aisle Dimensions.** All off-street parking spaces and drive aisles must comply with the minimum dimensional standards shown in Table 8B: Parking Stall and Drive Aisle Dimensions, with the following exceptions:
1. Motorcycle and scooter parking stalls must

measure at least four feet in width and eight feet in depth.

2. Mechanical access parking is exempt from parking stall and drive aisle dimensional requirements.
- F. Off-Site Parking.** Accessory parking is allowed on an off-site lot within 1,320 feet of the use served, measured by closest walking distance from the closest public entrance to the off-site parking lot.
1. Parking provided by valet service is not subject to the maximum distance requirement. No off-site parking lot may be located within an N-2R, N-3R, N-4-30, or N-4-50 zone.
 2. An off-site parking lot is not permitted as a principal use in the N-1D, N-1C, N-2C, N-2E, N-3C, or N-3E zone, except in the case of a commercial or neighborhood parking lot open to the general public, as permitted under Article 6, Uses.

TABLE 8B: PARKING STALL AND DRIVE AISLE DIMENSIONS

STALL ANGLE	STALL WIDTH (MIN) (A)	STALL DEPTH (MIN) (B)	SKEW WIDTH (MIN) (C)	DRIVE AISLE WIDTH, 1-WAY (MIN) (D)	DRIVE AISLE WIDTH, 2 WAY (MIN) (E)	VERTICAL CLEARANCE (MIN)
0 degrees (parallel)	8'	18'	8'	11'	22'	7' 6"
30 degrees	8' 6"	15'	16' 6"	11'	--	7' 6"
45 degrees	8' 6"	17' 9"	11' 8"	11' 10"	--	7' 6"
60 degrees	8' 6"	19'	9' 6"	13' 6"	--	7' 6"
90 degrees (head-in)	8' 6"	18'	8' 6"	--	23'	7' 6"



G. Parking Surfaces. All driveways, parking stalls, drive aisles, and loading areas:

1. Must be surfaced with fixed, firm, and non-slip material. Gravel may be used as a surface material only with the written consent of the Commissioner of Permit and Inspection Services. The portion of a driveway within a public right-of-way must be constructed in accordance with the specifications of the Commissioner of Public Works, Parks, and Streets.
2. Must be capable of withstanding the weight of vehicles and their loads.
3. Should be rated with a Solar Reflectance Index (SRI) of at least 29.

8.3.2 Curb Cuts and Driveways

A. Curb Cuts

1. A curb cut may be installed only with a curb cut permit per Section 11.4.2.
2. Curb cuts must be located to minimize conflict with pedestrian, cyclist, and vehicular traffic on the abutting public right-of-way. Curb cuts should be located at least 60 feet from any intersection unless otherwise permitted by the Commissioner of the Department of Public Works, Parks, and Streets.
3. The number and width of curb cuts must be the minimum needed to provide reasonable access to the site.

B. Driveway Dimensions. Driveways must be in accordance with Table 8C: Driveway Dimensions. A driveway flare may exceed the allowable driveway dimension by up to 18 inches on either side.

TABLE 8C: DRIVEWAY DIMENSIONS

	WIDTH (MIN/MAX)
Single-lane driveway	8'/12'
Double-lane driveway	18'/24'

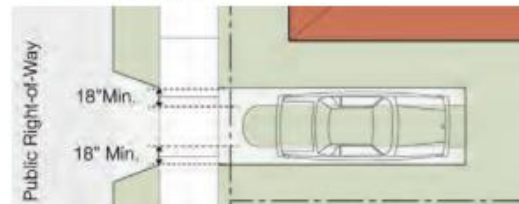
C. Residential Driveways. For any property with a residential principal use in an N-2R, N-3R, N-4-30, or

N-4-50 zone, there may only be one driveway, which must be a single-lane driveway, with the following exception:

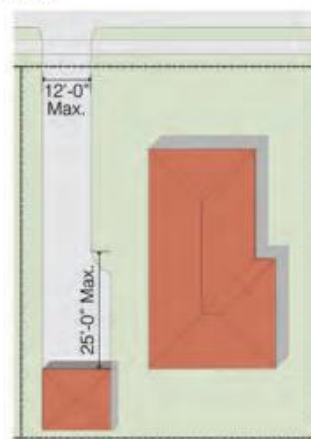
1. Multi-unit dwellings of more than six units may have one double-lane driveway or two single-lane driveways.

D. Shared Driveways. Shared driveways are permitted, so long as the width of the driveway meets the dimensional standards of Table 8C.

E. Double-Track Driveways. Double-track/wheel strip driveways are allowed, so long as each wheel strip is at least 18 inches in width and the area between the wheel strips is landscaped with living groundcover. However, within the public right-of-way, the driveway must be fully paved along its total width, from the property line to the curbline, per the specifications of the Commissioner of Public Works, Parks, and Streets.



F. Garage Aprons. A garage apron, that exceeds the maximum permitted driveway width, is permitted to extend for a depth of 25 feet from the garage doors, at which point the driveway must be no wider than the maximum permitted driveway width. The garage apron may be only as wide as the width of the garage.



BUFFALO'S ZONING CODE STEPS INTO THE 21ST CENTURY



The Unified Development Ordinance – better known as the Buffalo Green Code – unanimously passed the Common Council Tuesday, ushering in the first overhaul of the city code in 63 years.

In doing so, Buffalo – which began the process back in April 2010 and included over 230 public meetings – will join only Denver and Miami in undertaking such comprehensive reform. City planning will now move from a suburban model of development to one considered progressively urban in its approach to green and smart-growth principles.

[Related: Buffalo moves away from suburban development model in new Green Code]

"The last city code was written at a time where people were trying to change what the entire city looked like," said Brendan Mehaffy, who as executive director of the Office of Strategic Planning has led the Green Code effort under Mayor Byron Brown.

"There was little appreciation of our historic neighborhoods and even buildings. This code adjusts to the city's historic form. That's a big principle. In doing so, we embrace a lot of concepts that many modern cities are trying to build," Mehaffy said.

The changes in zoning and in land use will affect the city in numerous ways by promoting walkable neighborhoods, mixed developments, historic character, environmental sustainability and mass transit.

"Think of a building you think was ugly," Mehaffy said. "What does that do for the neighborhood, versus a nice building that fits in really well? That's why we have gone through this entire exercise. It wasn't something we could come up with in City Hall alone. We had to get that opinion from the people who live and work here."



People walking along Hertel Avenue on Monday, Dec. 26, 2016. (Sharon Cantillon/Buffalo News)

The Green Code will wipe off the books numerous antiquated zoning laws, including the technical allowance of asbestos factories on the Outer Harbor and housing in Delaware Park.

Passage will also overhaul the city's land use plans for the first time since 1977.

In all, the document is expected to bring direction, uniformity, clarity and simplicity to zoning and land planning for the city's 94,000 parcels in 24 neighborhoods, districts and corridors.

Even before its passage, the Green Code has served as a model for rewriting the code in Somerville, Mass.

Here are a half-dozen ways in which the city's current code and the Green Code – which would take effect 45 days after passage – differ.



Public two-hour parking next to Gecko's on Hertel Avenue. (Sharon Cantillon/Buffalo News)

Parking

The current code focuses on how people get to buildings in cars. Under the Green Code, the city will be established as one in which people use multiple forms of transportation to get where they're going.

The biggest change is the elimination of minimum parking standards. How rare is that? Many cities have selectively eliminated minimum parking requirements, such as Rochester, which eliminated them downtown. But Buffalo will be the first in the United States to eliminate minimum parking requirements citywide.

The current system has relied on a fairly complex formula, which assigns a minimum number of parking spaces to such uses as a residence, office or bowling alley. Now, an analysis will be required for each project above 5,000 square feet. Other forms of transportation besides automobiles will be considered, so if the building is on a metro line parking needs would be different than in an area that isn't.

"Now we can be more efficient with land, because we're not dedicating more space than is needed for parking," Mehaffy said.

There will also be aesthetic standards for parking lots to promote their appearance through plantings, buffers and other methods.



The new Green Code would encourage more development like what's found on Elmwood and Hertel avenues. (John Hickey/Buffalo News)

Promoting walkability

The current code doesn't address how buildings look and are situated on commercial corridors. The Green Code does. Convenience stores and drug stores, for instance, will be required to be built closer to the street, with parking in the back or on the side.

Think shopping on Elmwood and Hertel avenues.

"We're going for the enjoyable stroll, in which you can go from shop to shop," Mehaffy said.

Many city neighborhoods also haven't conformed with the current zoning code, to the extent that if a house burns down the owner might not necessarily be able to rebuild without going through bureaucratic steps. The Green Code has been designed to reflect the city as it is today, rather than the less dense vision in the current suburban-heavy plan.



Bikers ride on designated bike paths on Fuhmann Boulevard near Wilkeson Pointe on Buffalo's Outer Harbor. (Mark Mulville/Buffalo News)

Street design

The public will now have more say in how streets are designed. Improvements in the right of way will be reviewed for the first time as part of the planning board review process.

"How you design a street has a significant impact on the neighborhood that surrounds it, including businesses and residents," Mehaffy said. "Where the curb cuts are. Whether you have benches or what the lighting will look like. The bike lanes. The bus stops. Before there were ad hoc meetings, but now it will be part of a formal review process, so the community can look at the whole picture, including the streetscape, and not just the buildings."

User-friendly

Another goal was to make the code understandable to the average person on the street. The simplified, 338-page document includes numerous graphics so people can apply the words to the images. The current code is some 1,802 pages, more than five times larger.

"We understand people will not pick it up like a novel and read it in their free time," Mehaffy said. "However, when there is a development in someone's neighborhood and they decide to take interest, we wanted it to be something they could understand."

21st century innovations

The new code addresses solar panels, which were not clearly allowed before, and urban agriculture, which was technically not legal in the city. Wind power and craft industries, such as beer making, are also addressed.



A view of Outer Harbor land on Sept. 7, 2016. (Robert Kirkham/Buffalo News)

Outer Harbor

The current code allows industrial development on the Outer Harbor. Under the Green Code, 90 percent of the Outer Harbor would remain green space, with 10 percent permitted across several defined parcels for nonresidential development.

Future residential development is restricted to a parcel near Wilkeson Pointe and Times Beach, where a marina now operates, and at Terminals A and B and the former Freezer Queen building.