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## Planning Commission Recommendation

**To:** Burlington City Council

**From:** Burlington Planning Commission

**Project:** Comprehensive Plan Update – Code Revisions – Access and Parking Standards (Chapter 17.85 BMC)

**Date:** October 26, 2022

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### Summary:

As part of the ongoing comprehensive plan update effort the City is required to adopt development regulations (zoning codes) that are consistent with and implement the Comprehensive Plan. Importantly, the City’s development regulations must be sufficient to carry out the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan.

The Planning Commission previously recommended the adoption of a number of changes to the Land Use, Housing, Transportation, Parks and Conservation, Natural Resources, Economic Development, and Implementation elements of the Comprehensive Plan. In order to ensure the City’s Comprehensive Plan and development regulations are consistent, and to ensure the City’s development regulations are sufficient to carry out the objectives of the plan, the Planning Commission has determined that significant revisions must be made to the City’s development regulations. The Planning Commission has also determined that revisions should be made to improve the effectiveness and clarity of the zoning code, and to address long standing issues of public concern.

In order permit a thorough and thoughtful review, the Planning Commission requested that City’s Planning Department break this project into manageable components. The Planning Commission has reviewed a group of code changes prepared by the Community Development Department related to access and parking requirements. The Planning Commission recommends the changes to Chapter 17.85 BMC (Access and Parking) be adopted by the City Council.

## Findings:

The Planning Commission has reviewed the requirements of the Growth Management Act (GMA) related to consistency. The Planning Commission has also considered the goals and policies of the revised Comprehensive Plan elements, reviewed recent development projects, discussed the land use and environmental impacts associated with various development patterns, and reviewed concerns raised by the public. Based on this information the Planning Commission makes the following findings:

1. In order to address the requirements of the GMA Burlington adopted a comprehensive plan and implementing regulations in 1994.
2. The GMA requires that cities periodically update their comprehensive plans and development regulations. Specifically, cities must update their comprehensive plans and development regulations on an eight year cycle (RCW 36.70A.130(5)). Burlington last completed a periodic update in 2005 and was required to complete another update by June of 2016.
3. In order to address the periodic update requirements of the GMA, the City is currently working to complete a thorough review of its comprehensive plan and development regulations.
4. Comprehensive plans must include a number of elements including; land use, housing, capital facilities, utilities, transportation, economic development, and parks and recreation (RCW 36.70A.070).
5. The City is required to adopt development (zoning) regulations that are both consistent with, and sufficient to implement, the Comprehensive Plan.
6. The Planning Commission has reviewed, and preliminary approved the following comprehensive plan elements: Land Use, Housing, Natural Resources, Transportation, Implementation, Economic Development, and Parks and Recreation.
7. Chapter 17.85 of the Burlington Municipal Code establishes standards for parking, private streets, and access by drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists.
8. The Planning Commission has determined that revisions must be made to the City's Chapter 17.85 BMC in order to implement the following Comprehensive plan goals, policies, and objectives:

- a. Policies 2.4.4.3 and 2.4.4.5 (Land Use – Infill and Redevelopment) – Adopt measures to provide good access within, and between, developments, including methods to reduce block lengths, improve connections, and ensure that each new development functions as part of, and contributes to, the City’s overall transportation system. Also, ensure that streets, sidewalks, paths, and other improvements are designed and constructed to facilitate future development and redevelopment.

*Pedestrian access and circulation requirements specify that access be connected to adjacent sites whenever possible and that connections to adjacent undeveloped lots be provided to facilitate future development (BMC17.85.120.A.1). Proposed design standards for private streets require sidewalks, connected street networks, and connections to serve future development on adjacent undeveloped lots (BMC 17.85.140).*

- b. Policies 3.4.2.2 and 3.4.2.4 (Housing – Small Households) – Adopt measures to encourage the use of shared parking and flexible parking arrangements, and consider factors such as car ownership rates, the availability of transit service, and proximity to services when establishing parking and access requirements.

*Proposed regulations include a new section (BMC 17.85.100.C) allowing for alterations to required parking quantities and establishing a process for unlisted uses. This section addresses the factors outlined above. Existing section 17.85.070 allows for, and encourages the use of shared parking.*

- c. Goal 4.4.3 (Natural Resources - Natural Hydrologic Processes) – Establishes a goal of maintaining or restoring natural hydrologic processes through the use of low impact development (LID) stormwater improvements.

*Existing regulations require the use of LID measures for streets and parking areas (BMC 17.85.140.E and BMC 17.85.105.C). The proposed parking incentives in BMC 17.85.060 encourage placing parking under building which encourages more efficient development patterns and reduces impervious surface coverage.*

- d. Policy 5.5.6.4 (Economic Development – Retail and Services) – Requires the adoption of regulations to accommodate future retail needs through flexible and adaptable land use patterns, including fully connected street and pedestrian networks and smaller building footprints.

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*sidewalks, connected street networks, and connections to serve future development on adjacent undeveloped lots (BMC 17.85.140).*

- e. Goal 8.6.1 (Transportation – Access and Resilience) – Establishes a goal of creating a more interconnected street network, reducing the block lengths, and meeting the needs of residents and businesses by providing additional transportation choices without promoting one mode to the detriment of another.
  - f. Policy 8.6.1.2 (Transportation – Access and Resilience) – Requires measures to improve street connections, reduce intersection spacing, and discourage dead-end streets.
  - g. Policy 8.6.1.2 (Transportation – Access and Resilience) – Provides direction on considering the needs of those who rely on cars for transportation, including families with young children, the disabled, and those who have physical mobility challenges.
  - h. Goal 8.6.3 and policy 8.6.3.2 (Transportation – Access and Resilience) – Encourages measures to reduce the number of vehicle miles traveled and to shift transportation demand to lower cost modes. Policy 8.6.3.2 specifically calls for the provision of sidewalks, crosswalks at regular intervals, and high quality pedestrian infrastructure.
9. In addition to revisions necessary to implement the goals and policies listed above, the Planning Department prepared a revised parking quantities table. The revised table is intended to replace the current table in BMC 17.85.060.B. The table has been revised with the goal of identifying uses that are consistent with the uses listed elsewhere in Title 17 to ensure internal consistency. The table was not revised with the intention of making major substantive changes to required parking quantities.
10. On September 21, 2022 the Planning Commission held a public meeting to consider changes to the City’s development regulations to implement the Comprehensive Plan goals and policies identified above. Based on public comment the Planning Commission directed the Community Development Department to develop standards for alternative private street designs.
11. On October 26, 2022 the Planning Commission held a public hearing and reviewed code amendments prepared the Community Development Department for the approval of alternative private street plans. The Planning Commission finds that by adopting a process for reviewing and approving alternative private street designs a more flexible range of alternatives can be considered based on site constraints. The Planning Commission further

finds that such a process will reduce monotony and excessive repetition in city’s built environment by encouraging innovative design practices.

12. The Planning Commission finds that the revised access and parking standards prepared by the Community Development Department are necessary to implement the Comprehensive Plan will improve the clarity and effectiveness of the City’s development regulations.

**Recommendation:**

Based on the findings above the Planning Commission makes the following recommendations:

1. The City Council should adopt updated access and parking standards substantially in the form of attached exhibits “A”, “B”, and “C”;
2. Minor changes to the proposed code amendments may be necessary prior to final adoption to correct grammatical, formatting, and organizational problems; to ensure consistency; and to incorporate input from the public and state agencies;

**Dated this \_\_\_\_\_ day of October 2022**

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Marianne Manville-Ailles  
Chair, City of Burlington Planning Commission

Attachments:     “A” – Proposed Changes to Chapter 17.85 BMC  
                          “B” – Revised parking quantities table (to replace existing table in BMC 17.85.060.B)  
                          “C” – New alternative private street plan approval process.