

March 9, 2023

TO: Staff

FROM: Amy J. Bodek, AICP
Director of Regional Planning

SUBDIVISION AND ZONING ORDINANCE INTERPRETATION NO. 2023-02 PARALLEL PARKING POLICY

PURPOSE

This memorandum provides guidance on parallel parking space width dimensions within private development projects (e.g., residential, commercial, industrial, recreational, etc.), including parallel parking spaces within private roadways.

BACKGROUND

Title 22 of the County Code requires a width of eight and a half feet for parking spaces, or eight feet for compact parking spaces, but has no width or dimension standards for parallel parking spaces. However, LA County Planning's practice has been to require a width of 10 feet for parallel parking spaces because developers would often place the spaces along walls, fences, or other barriers. The rationale for this practice was that placing parallel parking spaces along a barrier would require extra "buffer" space between the barrier and the vehicle so that a driver or passenger could enter and exit the vehicle but the 10-foot width requirement was applied to all parallel parking spaces regardless of whether the spaces were located next to a barrier.

Implementing this practice has led to unnecessarily wide private roadway widths and larger development footprint sizes that increase impermeable surfaces, reduce permeable space for natural drainage, and contribute to the urban heat island effect. Implementing this practice has also resulted in wider private roadways that may induce drivers to increase their speeds to potentially unsafe levels and is not consistent with other Departments' requirements, as described below.

The Department of Public Works (Public Works) applies the County Code to public street designs and uses other State and Federal guidelines and manuals related to road and traffic safety. Public Works requires a width of eight feet for parallel parking lanes on public streets.

In 2009, Public Works and the Fire Department jointly prepared a Private Drives and Traffic Calming Manual (Private Drives Manual), which is an optional document for developers who want to have private roadways instead of public streets within a new development.

The Private Drives Manual requires a width of eight feet for parallel parking lanes on thru-access private roadways and a width of seven feet for parallel parking lanes on dead-end (cul-de-sac) private roadways.

In 2011, the Department of Public Health contracted with several private planning and design consultants to prepare a Model Design Manual for Living Streets (Living Streets Manual) as an “open source” document that could be used by the public. Pages 4-15 and 4-20 of the Living Streets Manual, in alignment with the Private Drives Manual, call for eight-foot-wide or seven-foot-wide parallel parking lanes depending on the context.

POLICY

1. If a developer chooses to use the Private Drives Manual, the parallel parking width standards in the manual shall be used for all private roadways within the development.
2. Within private parking facilities such as parking lots and parking structures, the parallel parking space width shall be eight feet.
3. Within private driveways and fire lanes, the parallel parking space width shall be eight feet unless the private driveway or fire lane is a dead-end or cul-de-sac (no thru-access), in which case the developer may reduce the parallel parking space width to seven feet if the space is located along the dead-end access.
4. The width of parallel parking spaces located along a barrier (wall, fence, building, or other lengthy structure or obstruction) may be increased by 12 inches if LA County Planning Staff determines that the additional width is necessary for practical reasons of entering and exiting a vehicle.
5. Tree plantings and planting strips located along a private parking facility or along a private driveway or fire lane shall not be considered a barrier for parallel parking spaces.

APPLICABILITY

This memorandum shall apply to all private development projects that include parallel parking spaces, including parallel parking spaces within private roadways.

AJB:DD:SMT:JSH:ML

c: Subdivisions Staff