



February 12, 2014

To the Burlington City Council:

I am writing to communicate to you Local Motion's strong support for the ordinance change to waive downtown parking requirements that you are considering at your February 18 meeting. We have been following the issue closely for a number of months, and it is our assessment that waiving downtown parking requirements is the right thing to do for several reasons.

**First, flexible parking standards will encourage developers to build for walkability first and parking second.** Our current one-size-fits-all approach to parking results in buildings that are dominated by parking garages rather than by people-friendly storefronts -- something you would expect in a suburban Walmart, not a walk-friendly downtown. Any developer who wants to stay in business will continue to provide parking as part of a project, but given the option, many developers will begin to use creative strategies to meet parking demand that are more consistent with and supportive of a walkable downtown.

**Second, flexible parking standards will make it easier for our community to create a network of bike lanes throughout the city.** Our current approach to managing parking makes it very hard to remove parking spaces -- even when preserving parking comes at the expense of a safe and continuous network of bike lanes. If we want a future where anyone eight to eighty years old feels safe and comfortable on a bike anywhere in our city, we absolutely must become more nimble in how we manage parking. Freeing up space on our streets will be much easier if we move towards an integrated and adaptive approach to parking management, and this waiver is the essential first step in that direction.

**Finally, flexible parking standards will make it easier for developers to build high-quality projects that make Burlington a vibrant and attractive place to live.** Providing parking -- especially structured parking -- is very expensive, and every dollar spent on parking means one less dollar to spend on the kind of high-quality architectural design that our city deserves. A flexible approach to parking will also make it easier for developers to build housing that regular people can afford by dedicating more space to living and less space to parking -- an arrangement that is particularly attractive to many young professionals.

**Thank you for your consideration of this important issue.** Providing for flexibility in how much parking is built as part of new development is the right decision for so many reasons. In our assessment, promoting walkability, creating options for biking, and creating a vibrant and attractive downtown are reason enough to institute flexibility in parking standards. For these and other reasons, I urge you to vote for this ordinance change.

Please contact me if I can be of assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "J. Van Driesche", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jason Van Driesche  
Director of Advocacy and Education  
Local Motion