



PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

TO: Fort Bragg Planning Commission **DATE:** February 12, 2025

DEPARTMENT: Community Development Department

PREPARED BY: Marie Jones, Marie Jones Consulting

PRESENTER: Marie Jones, Marie Jones Consulting

AGENDA TITLE: Receive a Report, Continue Public Hearing and Consider:

- 1) Adoption of a Resolution Recommending that City Council Deny Zoning Amendments to Eliminate Minimum Parking Requirements for Residential Uses in the CLUDC and the ILUDC and Instead Consider Alternative Policy Changes to Achieve the Pro-Housing Designation; and
 - 2) Adoption of a Resolution Recommending that City Council Approve Zoning Amendments to Amend the Parking Regulation of the CLUDC to Match the Changes Already Approved for the ILUDC by City Council and Address Inconsistencies in Landscaping Requirements for Parking Lots in Both Zoning Codes
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Planning Commission Action

1. Adopt a Resolution of the Fort Bragg Planning Commission Recommending that the City Council:
 - a. Adopt an Ordinance Amending Division 17 of the Fort Bragg Municipal Code (LCP 1-25) to Amend Chapter 17.36 "Parking And Loading" to 1) Amend the Parking Regulation of The CLUDC to Match the Changes that have Already been Approved for the ILUDC by City Council; and 2) Address Inconsistencies in Landscaping Requirements for Parking Lots.
 - b. Adopt an Ordinance Amending Division 18 of the Fort Bragg Municipal Code (ILUDC 1-25) to Amend Chapter 18.36 "Parking And Loading" to Address Inconsistencies in Landscaping Requirements for Parking Lots.
 - c. Pursue other Prohousing policy options to achieve necessary credits.
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BACKGROUND

Increasing the housing supply is a key priority for the City Council, as outlined in the 2024-2028 Strategic Plan, which includes the goal of adding 200+ housing units by 2026. Housing affordability has become a significant challenge, with many residents finding it increasingly difficult to purchase and/or rent a home. The community faces a shortage of both rental and for-sale properties, driven in part by Fort Bragg's growing appeal as a place to live, retire, and work.

The California Department of Housing and Community Development's Pro-Housing Designation includes incentives for jurisdictions that are compliant with State Housing Element Law and that have enacted Pro-Housing Policies. The State's Pro-Housing designation is awarded to cities that implement enough pro-housing initiatives to secure thirty points.

MJC reviewed the pro-housing initiatives after the Planning Commission in January of 2025, and determined that the City has already achieved 26 of the required 30 points, in part due to the City's recent contract with 4Leaf to review Building Permits. This has allowed the City to be eligible for additional Pro-Housing criteria (3 points), see Table 1 below.

Table 1 - Recently Acquired Pro-Housing Points.

2D	Establishment of permitting processes that take less than four months to complete. Policies under this category must address all approvals necessary to issue building permits. (Now possible with 4Leaf building permit review)	2
2I	Establishment of one-stop-shop permitting processes or a single point of contact where entitlements are coordinated across the city approval functions (e.g., planning, public works, building) from entitlement application to certificate of occupancy. (Now possible with 4Leaf building permit review)	1

Please see Attachment 1 for a list of all policy options for achieving the required 30 Pro-Housing Points. Table 2 illustrates two easy to achieve policy options for two more Pro-Housing points:

Table 2 - Potential Pro-Housing Points.

2L	Documented practice of publicly posting status updates on project permit approvals on the internet.	1
3G	Establishment of pre-approved or prototype plans for missing middle housing types (e.g., duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes) in low-density, single-family residential areas.	1

The new policy options in Table 1 bring the City's total pro-housing eligible points to 26 from the previous 23 points. The City Council has also initiated policy changes to achieve 2A and 2H below which bring the City's total to 30 points.

- 1F. Eliminate minimum parking requirements for residential development. (2 points)
- **2A. Establish a ministerial approval process for multifamily and mixed-use housing. (3 points)**
- **2H. Replace subjective development and design standards with objective development and design standards (as shown in Attachment 1) that simplify zoning clearance and improve approval certainty and timing. (1 point)**
- 3A. Waive or reduce development impact fees for residential projects that include units affordable to Lower-Income Households. (3 points)

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

This report provides a recommendation for how the Planning Commission can achieve their stated goal of retaining minimum parking requirements while updating the remainder of the Parking Code.

1. Continue to Rely on Existing Avenues to Reduce Parking Requirements for Residential Projects

Planning Commission can encourage the City Council to continue using existing regulations to request reduced parking. The following existing mechanisms can be used to reduce residential parking requirements, although they require either approval of a Use Permit and/or meeting specific requirements.

18.36.040. B. Use of on-street parking - Exception. Available on-street parking spaces cannot be used to meet the parking requirements identified in this Chapter. An exception to this provision may be granted according to the following procedure:

1. Criteria for approval. The Minor Use Permit may be issued if it meets all of the following criteria, in addition to the findings identified in § [18.71.060](#):

- a. The maximum amount of parking which is feasible shall be provided on site.
- b. The exception shall only be granted in situations where the Director, Public Works has determined that the exception will not result in potentially unsafe conditions for vehicles or pedestrians.
- c. The Director of Community Development has determined that the project is located in an area of abundant on-street parking.

18.36.080 - Reduction of Parking Requirements

A. Shared on-site parking.

1. Where 2 or more adjacent uses have distinct and differing peak parking usage periods (e.g., a theater and a bank), a reduction in the required number of parking spaces may be allowed through Minor Use Permit approval granted in compliance with § [18.71.060](#).
2. 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 use served for the duration of the use.

B. Reduction of required parking. The Director may reduce the number of parking spaces required by § [18.36.040](#) (Number of Parking Spaces Required), through the granting of a Minor Use Permit in compliance with § [18.71.060](#), based on quantitative information provided by the applicant that documents the need for fewer spaces (e.g., sales receipts, documentation of customer frequency, information on parking standards required for the proposed land use by other cities, etc.). Parking requirements may be reduced, by the review authority, where the project facilitates bicycle use by providing bicycle storage, lockers, changing rooms and showers and/or bicycles for employee use.

C. Central Business District (CBD) Special Parking Combining Zone. There are no minimum automobile parking requirements for areas within the CBD shown on the CBD Special Parking Combining Zone Map.

2. Seek alternative Pro-Housing policy options to achieve the required 30 points.

Planning Commission can encourage the City Council to seek additional Pro-Housing points as follows:

1. 2D. Establishment of permitting processes that take less than four months to complete. Policies under this category must address all approvals necessary to issue building permits. (Newly Achieved!) 2 points;
2. 2I. Establishment of one-stop-shop permitting processes or a single point of contact where entitlements are coordinated across the city approval functions (e.g., planning, public works, building) from entitlement application to certificate of occupancy. (Newly Achieved!) 1 point; and
3. 2L. Documented practice of publicly posting status updates on project permit approvals on the internet. 1 Point.

FISCAL IMPACT/FUNDING SOURCE

This proposed zoning amendment will be funded by American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funding. The proposed changes to parking regulations will have no fiscal impact on the City.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

Greenhouse Gas Emissions Impact. Encouraging densification and more housing development within existing cities is a smart growth strategy that results in reduced miles traveled and thereby reduces greenhouse gas emissions. Additionally, reducing the overall availability of parking will encourage people to drive or walk for shorter trips, which will improve health outcomes and reduce GHG emissions.

CEQA Exemption. Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b3), this project is exempt from CEQA if: *“The activity is covered by the commonsense exemption that CEQA applies only to projects which have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. Where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment, the activity is not subject to CEQA.”*

The California Environmental Quality Act no longer considers the availability of parking an environmental impact.

- The elimination of the minimum parking requirement for housing projects will reduce the overall parking lot development footprint which would have a positive impact on the environment (less disturbance, less impervious surfaces, fewer impacts).
- Reducing parking requirements to allow projects to achieve the maximum allowable density will not have a significant new impact on the environment, because the maximum development density for each zoning district has already been considered and mitigated in the EIR for the adoption of the Land Use and Development Code in 2004.
- The proposed changes will result in more pedestrian and bicycle trips as a percentage of all trips which will reduce GHG emissions.
- The project would not have an impact on stormwater other than to further reduce stormwater flows from the site by replacing impervious areas with pervious areas.

The Planning Commission can find that the proposed amendment is exempt from CEQA under the commonsense exemption.

STRATEGIC PLAN/COUNCIL PRIORITIES/GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY

The proposed ordinances have been reviewed for consistency with the City's General Plans and zoning codes, and no inconsistencies have been identified.

IMPLEMENTATION/TIMEFRAMES

Two months for ILUDC changes and 12 months for CLUDC zoning changes.

COMMITTEE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

On October 15, 2024, the City Council directed staff to obtain Pro-Housing designation from the State and increase zoning flexibility for Housing Project.

ALTERNATIVES

Discuss and provide input regarding alternative regulatory approaches or language in the proposed ordinances.

ATTACHMENTS

- 1) Pro-Housing Check List
- 2) A Resolution of the Planning Commission Recommending that City Council:
 - A) Adopt An Ordinance Amending Division 17 of the Fort Bragg Municipal Code (LCP 1-25) to Amend Chapter 17.36 "Parking And Loading" of Division 17 of the Fort Bragg Municipal Code to: 1) ~~Eliminate Minimum Parking Requirements for Residential Uses; and~~ 2) Amend the Parking Regulation of The CLUDC to Match the Changes that have Already been Approved for the ILUDC by the City Council; and 2) Address Inconsistencies in Landscaping Requirements for Parking Lots.
 - B) Adopt Ordinance Amending Division 18 of the Fort Bragg Municipal Code (ILUDC 1-25) to Amend Chapter 18.36 "Parking And Loading" of Division 18 of the Fort Bragg Municipal Code to: 1) ~~Eliminate Minimum Parking Requirements for Residential Uses; and~~ 2) Address Inconsistencies in Landscaping Requirements for Parking Lots.
 - C) Pursue Alternative Policy Options to Obtain Four Additional Points for the Pro-Housing Designation.
- 3) City Council Ordinance Amending Division 17 of the Fort Bragg Municipal Code (LCP 1-25) to Amend Chapter 17.36 "Parking And Loading" of Division 17 of the Fort Bragg Municipal Code to: 1) ~~Eliminate Minimum Parking Requirements for Residential Uses; and~~ 2) Amend the Parking Regulation of The CLUDC to Match the Changes that have Already been Approved for the ILUDC by the City Council; and 2) Address Inconsistencies in Landscaping Requirements for Parking Lots.
- 4) City Council Ordinance Amending Division 18 of the Fort Bragg Municipal Code (ILUDC 1-25) to Amend Chapter 18.36 "Parking And Loading" of Division 18 of the Fort Bragg Municipal Code to: 1) ~~Eliminate Minimum Parking Requirements for Residential Uses; and~~ 2) Address Inconsistencies in Landscaping Requirements for Parking Lots.

NOTIFICATION

"Notify Me" lists for Housing, Economic Development, Central Business District