

TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MERION

Building & Planning Committee

Issue Briefing

Topic: Bryn Mawr Village District Amendment to Off-site Parking

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Date: April 3, 2018

I. Action To Be Considered By The Board:

Consider for recommendation to the Board of Commissioners authorization to advertise and hold a public hearing on May 16, 2018, and consider for adoption an ordinance adding a definition for an “Expanded Building or Structure” and amending the off-site parking provisions in the Bryn Mawr Village District.

II. Why This Issue Requires Board Consideration:

Zoning Code amendments must be adopted by the Board of Commissioners.

III. Current Policy Or Practice (If Applicable):

The Bryn Mawr Village District currently allows existing uses and expanded buildings to designate up to 25 off-site public parking spaces toward their minimum parking requirements. New buildings may count up to 10 off-site parking spaces toward their minimum parking requirements.

IV. Other Relevant Background Information:

All zoning districts will receive a comprehensive evaluation as part of the Zoning Code update underway by DPZ, the consulting firm retained by the Township. However, given the limited supply of public parking spaces in the commercial areas, an amendment to the off-site parking provisions was requested by the ward commissioner. Similar amendments have been made to the zoning districts in Ardmore and Bala.

Section 1: Definition of Expanded Building or Structure

The Township Solicitor prepared the definition of an “Expanded Building or Structure” to provide clarity with regards to the applicability of the off-site parking provisions. The definition applies to all zoning districts with off-site parking provisions, including: Mixed-Use Special Transportation Overlay District (MUST), Ardmore Special Development District (ASDD), City Avenue District-Bala Village (CAD-BV), and the Bryn Mawr Village District (BMVD).

Section 2: Off-site Parking Provisions

The commercial areas in Lower Merion Township are characterized as Traditional Main Streets in the Comprehensive Plan, include Ardmore, Bala, and Bryn Mawr. These areas developed around the train stations and have a unique, historic character. The commercial areas are compact and walkable and include a variety of uses. Many of the buildings were constructed prior to the enactment of the Township's first Zoning Code in 1927 and do not have parking onsite. Each of these commercial areas are served by public on-street parking and public parking lots owned and operated by Lower Merion Township.

In order to encourage investment in the commercial areas off-site parking provisions were created to allow development to count public parking spaces towards the minimum parking requirement. The off-site parking provisions were used in several instances in Ardmore, Bala, and Bryn Mawr. In some instances, existing buildings were demolished and the new development utilized the off-street parking provisions. Recognizing that there is a finite number of public parking spaces, the off-site parking provisions have been amended in each of the Traditional Main Street areas to limit the application to existing and expanded buildings. There have been recent developments approved in each of Main Street areas and now is a good time to scale back the ability to designate public parking spaces until we are able to evaluate the impact of the recent developments. The intent is to incentivize the enhancement and preservation of existing buildings and structures that contribute to the unique character of the commercial district, which otherwise may not have had the land to provide the required parking.

The proposed amendment limits the off-street parking provisions in the Bryn Mawr Village District under §155-214, Parking and Loading, to decrease the number of off-site metered public parking spaces that may be counted towards required parking calculations for existing buildings from 25 to 10. The ordinance also removes the ability for new buildings to count off-site public parking spaces towards their required parking. New buildings are still allowed to utilize on-street parking immediately in front of the property and off-site, private parking towards the required parking calculations, provided necessary agreements are in place.

The proposed ordinance advances the following policy and zoning requirement recommendations of the 2016 *Bryn Mawr Parking Study*:

- Consider parking requirements for all new construction and expansion projects.
- Require parking on-site or within close proximity.

Since 2011, a total of 107 public parking spaces have been allocated towards various properties, as listed in the table on the following page. A total of 1,010 public parking spaces are located in the Bryn Mawr commercial district, including the SEPTA lots and residential permit parking.

A map showing Township parking lots and on-street metered spaces is provided at the end of this memo. Not included on the map are SEPTA lots and residential permit parking.

Off-Site Public Parking Space Allocation: Bryn Mawr Village District (2011-2017)					
LD#	Project Address	Development Name	Public Parking Lot	Lot No.	No. of Spaces
3721	907-931 W Lancaster Ave & 24 N Merion Ave	Bryn Mawr Village	Morton	11	5
3721	907-931 W Lancaster Ave & 24 N Merion Ave	Bryn Mawr Village	S Warner	19	5
3721	907-931 W Lancaster Ave & 24 N Merion Ave	Bryn Mawr Village	N Warner	8	5
3721	907-931 W Lancaster Ave & 24 N Merion Ave	Bryn Mawr Village	Central BM	10	20
3693	1112 W Lancaster Ave	Cosi	Water	22	10
NA	876 (874) W Lancaster Ave	Showcase Comics	S Warner	19	2
3685	822 W Lancaster Ave	Bryn Mawr Theater			60
TOTAL ALLOCATED PUBLIC PARKING SPACES					107

The proposed amendment is consistent with the following Comprehensive Plan recommendations:

- C6: Address parking needs as part of commercial area revitalization, including appropriate parking/loading requirements for multi-family, commercial, and mixed-use developments throughout the Township.

On April 2, 2018, the Planning Commission recommended approval of the proposed amendment.

V. Impact On Township Finances:

There is no impact on Township finances.

VI. Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends that the Board authorize a public hearing to consider the proposed amendment.

Map of Public Parking in Bryn Mawr

