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## Memorandum

**To: Beverly, Danvers, Peabody, and Salem Planning Staff**  
**From:** Liana Banuelos, MAPC Transportation Department  
**On:** January 21, 2020  
**Re:** Perfect Fit Parking Initiative: Phase 3 Update

MAPC's Perfect Fit Parking Initiative is an effort to better understand the factors that influence parking demand at multifamily developments. Over two phases of research, MAPC surveyed nearly 200 sites throughout the Inner Core, and found 30% of spaces sitting vacant during peak demand times. While the average parking supply was exactly one space per unit, the actual parking demand was 0.73 spaces per unit. This indicates that there is more work to be done to align parking supply with demand and limit the construction of excess parking spaces. Excess parking is not only costly to construct, but is associated with more driving (and therefore more traffic congestion). With greater parking also comes increased housing costs, and more land area dedicated to asphalt rather than open space or other amenities.

The Inner Core, however, is distinct from other subregions in terms of greater population and employment density, more transit options, and greater access to jobs. Therefore, to better understand how these findings translate in more cities and towns beyond the inner core, MAPC collected similar overnight parking data for four communities in the North Shore: Beverly, Danvers, Peabody, and Salem.

MAPC worked with municipal staff to identify buildings that met the same criteria as Phase 2 of our Perfect Fit Initiative:

- Apartments or condominiums with 9 units or more;
- On-site parking is provided for residents, and;
- The building was constructed after the year 1999.

After surveying property managers from buildings throughout the four communities, MAPC conducted overnight parking counts at the surface lots and garages associated with these properties to measure parking demand. As has been the case in previous phases of this research, overnight counts took place overnight on a weeknight when it was assumed most residents were home and parking occupancy was at its peak.

Average parking utilization in North Shore communities echoed the findings from Phase 2 of Perfect Fit. During peak demand, 76% of parking spaces at observed multi-family residential developments were occupied. At these properties, the average total parking supply was 1.25 spaces per unit, whereas

average parking demand was 0.95 space per unit. For more information, please see the attached spreadsheet of findings.<sup>1</sup>

**Perfect Fit Phase 3 Findings:**

Properties Surveyed – 20 (mix of apartments and condos, studios to three bedroom units)

Municipalities – Danvers (1), Peabody (5), Salem (4), and Beverly (10)

Average Utilization Rate – 76%

Utilization Rate Dataset Range – 0.45 to 1.0

Average Parking Demand – 0.95

Parking Demand Dataset Range – 0.30 to 1.53 spaces per unit

Average Parking Supply – 1.25 spaces per unit

Parking Supply Dataset Range – 0.43 to 2.09 spaces per unit

Sites observed in the North Shore experienced greater parking demand and supply than those observed in the Inner Core. This is likely due in part to a greater share of commutes made using cars among North Shore residents, and fewer transit options. However, there was still an observed discrepancy between supply and demand at multi-family residential buildings. If this trend continues, valuable real estate will be devoted to spaces that sit empty, rather than using that space to build common areas, retail, or additional housing.

In previous phases of research, MAPC's Data Services staff analyzed over two dozen variables to better understand what building and neighborhood characteristics influence parking demand. Parking supply stood out as the primary factor influencing demand. In other words, the provision of ample parking at multifamily sites likely attracts car-owning residents. Two additional factors proved significant in determining parking demand—the number of jobs accessible by transit, and the percentage of units that are deed-restricted affordable. In this case, as the number of jobs accessible by transit increased and the percentage of deed-restricted affordable units increased, parking demand decreased. One major takeaway these findings offer is that parking requirements should be nuanced and context-specific, rather than a one-size-fits-all approach ascribed to an entire city or town.

Looking ahead, we will work with our Data Services team to determine what additional analysis can be done with the data collected in the North Shore. As a next step for our Perfect Fit Parking Initiative as a whole, we are eager to continue our work with cities and towns to assess what zoning and local policy changes can be made to modernize local parking requirements and regulations. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions about the data collected or are interested in us working with us to consider parking reforms in your community.

For more information about the Perfect Fit Parking Initiative, please visit <https://perfectfitparking.mapc.org/>.

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<sup>1</sup> There were two properties in Danvers, three in Peabody, one in Salem, and one in Beverly for which MAPC was able to obtain survey information, but was not able to gather overnight parking occupancy data. For the vast majority of these sites (six of seven), there were individual garaged parking spaces for each unit. Furthermore, the cost of the parking spaces were bundled with rental costs, so there was no way to estimate the number of parking spaces occupied based on any discrete parking revenue information. One additional mixed-use site in Peabody was excluded from the analysis because there was insufficient information provided through the property manager and no visible distinction between residential spaces and spaces allocated for other users of the site.