
Parking standards

Ministry of Public Housing, Spatial
Planning, Environment and
Infrastructure



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**Ministerie van Volkshuisvesting, Ruimtelijke Ordening,
Milieu en Infrastructuur**

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Infrastructure

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1. Introduction

Sint Maarten is characterized by rapid (urban) development over the last decades, combined with an increase in vehicle ownership and car use in combination with population growth. When proper parking facilities are not provided for, this creates parking pressure on the nearby environment, generally the public space. This parking pressure leads to cars looking for parking space and people parking their cars in areas not intended for this purpose. All of this is at the expense of the surroundings; the quality of public spaces deteriorates, it contributes to traffic congestion and creates unsafe situations for pedestrians. This increasing problem for Sint Maarten has been addressed in several studies over the years¹.

Additional need for parking spaces is created when, for example, homes, shops and offices are constructed. It has been found that a new building, addition to a building and/or change of function of a building will be a nuisance for the surrounding area if additional need for parking is created while no or insufficient additional parking spaces are created. If such is the case, a building permit may be (partially) rejected or conditionally approved in accordance with Article 22 sub 5 of the Building and Housing Ordinance (*Dutch: 'Bouw- en woningverordening (AB 2013, GT no. 136)*).

Article 22, respectively article 22 sub 5 of the Building and Housing Ordinance states as follows:

Een beslissing tot het verlenen van voorwaardelijke bouwvergunning of tot gehele of gedeeltelijke weigering is steeds met redenen omkleed en kan slechts gegrond zijn op of meer van de volgende omstandigheden:

5°: dat het gebouw of gebouwsgedeelte wegens de ligging of wegens de bouwwijze de omgeving ontsieren of hinderlijk dan wel brandgevaarlijk voor de omgeving zijn zal;

Parking standards have first been developed for Sint Maarten in the 1990's, as part of the temporary -and meanwhile expired- provision for subdivision plans, commonly referred to as "planning permits". These parking standards have also been used as a criterion for evaluating building permits in accordance with the Building and Housing Ordinance ever since. However, it has been found that the parking standards defined in the 1990's have become outdated, are not specific enough and are also insufficiently clear.

1.1 Objective

The objective of this policy document is to establish up to date parking standards for Country Sint Maarten that are functional, transparent and enhance, or at least preserve, the living environment.

The parking standards indicated in this policy document will be used for the evaluation and issuing of building permits and will be translated in the regulations of the development plans, commonly referred to as zoning plans.

1.2 Policy content

This policy contains the (new) parking standards, as well as some clarifications regarding the use of the parking standards, including exemptions which may be desirable in certain cases. Furthermore, the policy contains minimum design criteria for parking facilities, which are to be considered an integral part of the parking standards.

¹ DTV Consultants (2011), TKA et al. (2003) and Tu Delft (2008) among other studies.

2. The parking standards

The parking standards can be found in table 1 and were defined based on:

- an analysis of the current situation and problems;
- experiences with the previously used parking standards;
- parking figures in accordance with the ASVV 2004² as revised and parking standards being used in the region;
- the expert judgment of the various government departments (within the Ministry of VROMI) involved.

Based on the outcome of the above mentioned steps the following adjustments were made relative to the previously used standards:

- a parking standard of 1 parking space for every 50m² of commercial floor area was previously used. However, in most cases this parking standard proved to be far from sufficient. The new parking standards are much more specific, since the actual parking demand varies a lot based on the exact type of commercial function;
- parking standards for sport, religion, health care and social functions are now included;
- the parking standard for residential functions is somewhat different and in some cases slightly stricter than the previous standards, considering the increase in vehicle ownership and car use of households. The new definition is also based on the assumption that each separate dwelling contains a household and that each household has at least one car. It is furthermore assumed that as the number of bedrooms of a dwelling increases, the household size and number of visitors and therefore the parking demand increases accordingly.

² ASVV 2004: Aanbevelingen voor verkeersvoorzieningen binnen de bebouwde kom (Recommendations for Traffic Facilities in Built-up Areas), CROW. Updated version available at <http://collecties.crow.nl>

2.1 Application of the standards

The following basic principles apply to the use of the parking standards and the calculation of the required number of parking spaces:

- the developer/applicant of a building plan is responsible for and obliged to provide the required number of parking spaces and must provide for them on the own premises subject to the building plan;
- a parking space has to meet the minimum design criteria as described in chapter 4. If a parking space does not comply with the minimum design criteria, it may not be considered as a parking space intended to meet the parking standards;
- if a certain function (use) is not included in table 1, the parking standard associated with the closest comparable function will be used. If this proves to be impractical, the Minister of VROMI can set a new standard for the specific function;
- the standards are regarded as minimum standards;
- any future change of use/function of an existing building, or addition to an existing building, that requires planning permission (e.g. building permit) may require a change in the parking requirements in accordance with the parking standards;
- if a development entails two or more functions to which different parking standards apply, the standards applicable for each function should be applied in proportion to the extent of the respective function;
- exact numbers of measuring units (e.g. gross floor area [GFA], amount of rooms) for the respective function(s) should be used while the total number of required parking spaces should be rounded to the nearest whole number.

2.2 Example calculation

Below is an example case of the calculation of the number of required parking spaces in accordance with table 1.

Case: development of a new 2 storey mixed-use building consisting of a shop of 200m² GFA, a restaurant of 120m² GFA and two (2) 2-bedroom apartments.

Calculation:

retail (200m ² GFA):	$5 \times 2 = 10$
hospitality no accom. (120m ² GFA):	$8 \times 1.2 = 9.6$
two 2-bedroom dwellings:	$\frac{2 + 2 = 4}{\quad}$
total required parking spaces:	$23.6 \approx \mathbf{24}$

Table 1: Parking Standards		
<i>Function</i>	<i>Example/ clarification</i>	<i>Minimum parking standards</i>
Labor-extensive and visitor-extensive companies	Warehousing, storage of materials	0.5 per 100 m ² GFA ³ with a minimum of 2
Labor-intensive and visitor-extensive companies	Garages (without retail), various types of industry (e.g. power plant, oil terminal, building sector).	1.2 per 100 m ² GFA with a minimum of 3
Hospitality: no accommodations	Café, bar, restaurant, discotheque, cinema, casino, theater, multi-purpose hall and other functions focused on entertainment and providing food and/or drinks	8 per 100 m ² GFA with a minimum of 4
Hospitality: provision of accommodation	Hotel, resort, guesthouse, bed and breakfast	1.2 for every 2 rooms
Office	All types of offices and public service	2.5 per 100 m ² GFA with a minimum of 4
Education: day-care center	Day-care and after-school care/nursery	1.5 per 100 m ² GFA with a minimum of 3
Education: school	Elementary school, high school and college	1.5 per classroom
Sport: sports field	Any type of sports field	0.25 per 100 m ² terrain
Sport: indoor	Sport centre including canteen, hall, fitness, dance studio and comparable	2 per 100 m ² GFA with a minimum of 4
Sport: stadium	Sports field surrounded by bleachers	0.15 per seat
Retail	Supermarkets, clothing shop, household shop, etc.	5 per 100 m ² GFA with a minimum of 4
Wholesale, department stores	Department store, home improvement, DIY, and comparable	2.5 per 100 m ² GFA
Residential	All types of dwellings: a dwelling here is defined as any self contained unit of accommodation, such as a house, apartment or condo.	1 per dwelling plus 1 for every 2 bedrooms
Healthcare and personal care	Hospital, family doctor/doctor's practice, pharmacy, dentist, beautician, barber, etc.	2.5 per 100 m ² GFA
Religion and social	Church and associated buildings, community center	2.5 per 100 m ² GFA

³ GFA = Gross Floor Area and is defined as the sum of all of the building's interior spaces plus the sum of all of the building's (semi) covered exterior spaces. All spaces are added up together. In other words, a 100-m² building with three floors has a GFA of 300 m².

3. Exemptions

In some specific situations having the required parking spaces on one's own premises does not preserve or enhance the surrounding area, and/or is practically impossible. In these cases the Minister of VROMI may grant a properly motivated exemption from the parking standards as part of the building permit and may include additional (alternative) conditions to the building permit. An exemption may be granted based on one or more of the following reasons:

- for areas where shared public parking facilities, such as garages and designated parking lots (paid or unpaid), with sufficient capacity are located in the immediate vicinity. The immediate vicinity here is defined as 100 m for residential and healthcare purposes and 250 m for other functions. This situation may apply in particular to Philipsburg, Maho and the 'Simpson Bay Strip';
- if the development concerns the change of function (and thereby the parking requirements) of an existing building and when the developer is able to demonstrate that it is physically impossible to realize additional parking spaces on the own premises. This may be the case when the property does not provide sufficient space for the required parking spaces and if an underground facility may not be possible. In this event alternative measures, such as a contribution to the construction of shared (public) parking facilities in the immediate vicinity may be included as a condition to the building permit;
- when the developer is able to demonstrate that part of the required parking spaces are not necessary, because alternative means of transportation are being used, thus lessening the parking demand. This will only be the case for very specific functions/ situations, such as recreational activities that are mainly attracting cruise tourists who are arriving by shuttle services.

4. Design criteria

As well as providing the required level of parking, the proper design of parking facilities is equally important. In the current situation the bay size of parking spaces is often too small (also considering the growing average vehicle size on Sint Maarten) and insufficient room is available to navigate in and out the parking space. Therefore, the following minimum design criteria are set:

- different types of parking spaces 45°, 60°, 70° angle parking, 90° square parking, parallel parking, or a combination, are possible depending on the terrain and type of use;
- the size of a parking space shall comply with the minimum dimensional requirements in table 2;
- sufficient (open) space should be available to navigate in and out a parking space. The minimum dimensional requirements in table 2 regarding the width of parking lanes are being used as a point of reference;
- the location and lay-out of parking space(s) shall be indicated in the building permit request and has to be realistic and may not cause a danger and/or nuisance to the surrounding area, for example parking spaces indicated at locations which are not accessible, where a structure, protected tree, or evacuation route is located cannot be permitted;

In addition to the foregoing design criteria, the following design criteria apply for parking lots:

- within the parking lot provisions should be made, so that pedestrians can walk through it easily and safely;
- developments likely to generate bus traffic should provide appropriate off street parking facilities for the stopping, dropping off and picking up of passengers as well as appropriate turning facilities;
- the onus is placed with the developer, to analyze and demonstrate that the proposal includes sufficient provisions for servicing requirements (if any) such as loading, offloading and turning of vehicles delivering goods to, or removing goods from premises;
- parking lanes (aisles) shall be designed and located so that adequate visibility is ensured for pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists when entering individual parking spaces, circulating within a parking facility, and entering or leaving a parking facility;
- parking lanes (aisles) shall comply with the minimum dimensional requirements in table 2;
- in the case of a one way system a clearly marked route for drivers should be set out using appropriate signs and surface arrows;
- parking lots shall be designed to prevent access at any point other than at designated entry and exit points, which need to be properly designed in line with all regulations of ordinances that may be applicable thereto.

Table 2: Required parking space and parking lane dimensions			
<i>Angle of parking</i>	<i>depth of parking space in meters</i>	<i>width of parking space in meters</i>	<i>width of parking lane in meters</i>
0 degrees (parallel)	6	2	3.5
30 -45 degrees	5	2.5	4
46- 60 degrees	5	2.5	5
61- 90 degrees	5	2.5	6