



City of Culver City

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CC:PC - Joint Study Session to Review, Discuss, and Provide Direction Regarding Comprehensive Zoning Code Amendments Relating to Parking Strategies and Requirements

Meeting Date: May 13, 2020

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Department Approval: Sol Blumenfeld, Community Development Director (05/04/20)

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the City Council and Planning Commission discuss and provide direction to staff regarding desired future parking requirements and strategies.

BACKGROUND

The City Council requested staff prepare a summary of potential Zoning Code Amendments

(Amendments) for various parking requirements that impact broader issues of urban design, livability, sustainability and mobility. The Amendments proposed for discussion are intended to address evolving parking trends and to achieve broader goals of livability, sustainability and mobility and to help the City respond more effectively to the economic impacts created by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Amendments involve a range of measures from relaxation of parking ratios to enhanced Transportation Demand Management and to developer incentives (such as design flexibility) for reduced on-site parking in order to reduce a project's parking footprint.

In summary, Culver City's existing off-street parking standards are based on requiring a minimum number of parking spaces be provided for any given land use, calculated as a ratio of parking spaces per square foot of building area. The parking ratio differs by land use, and where appropriate, the ratio is calculated using metrics other than square feet. For example, parking per dwelling unit varies by the type of residential land use. Non-residential structures with parking space deficiencies are allowed to expand or accommodate a change of use provided that the expansion or new use has the same or lesser parking requirements as the existing or previous use, or when the expansion or new use has a greater parking requirement, and a sufficient number of additional parking spaces are provided to accommodate the net increase in required spaces.

Where conditions preclude the provision of required parking spaces for a property or land use, alternative parking provisions are available. Such alternatives include standards for off-site parking, shared parking, automated or stacked parking, compact parking, tandem parking, and parking in-lieu fees. Two parking districts exist for parking impacted areas. Parking districts establish additional standards and means of providing required parking.

Reductions to required parking may be permitted for projects seeking a Density Bonus under state law, and through an administrative process if findings can be made that there is an involuntary hardship through an Administrative Modification up to 10%, and where City Council has authorized the parking reductions by resolution through the Alternative Parking Provisions of the Zoning Code, such as when a project is located within the Transit Oriented Development (TOD) District or implements mobility options in lieu of parking stalls

The City has also responded to the need to reduce carbon emissions through enhanced Electric Vehicle (EV) parking requirements, decreased parking requirements for studio micro-units and Single Room Occupancy units, and expansion of compact parking standards citywide. Additionally, a zone text amendment is underway modifying parking for studio uses under 3,000 gross square feet in mixed use projects and along the commercial corridors using a blended parking ratio responsive to the unique nature of being located in close proximity to transit and factoring in vehicle trips shared amongst uses.

While the City has made strides in reducing parking footprints to enhance sustainability, livability and mobility, there are more parking code provisions that may be addressed comprehensively. Experts in parking policy suggest that parking minimums in cities promote car-centric cities and perpetuate urban sprawl. Traditional parking policies provide an overabundance of free parking and fail to consider contextual differences within cities such as proximity to transit, demographics, and so on. The creation of more parking is prioritized over efficient management of existing parking resources and transportation demand management.

In response to current parking trends, many cities have begun to update their parking requirements. Santa Monica and San Francisco have implemented some of the most progressive comprehensive approaches to parking, with several other cities beginning to adopt progressive strategies. Among the most popular parking trends across cities, staff identified parking maximums, reduced parking minimums, shared parking provisions, parking trade-offs, parking credits, reduced parking incentives for Transportation Demand Management measures, and the creation of parking districts to address the unique parking needs of an area.

DISCUSSION

The following Zoning Code amendments are recommended for discussion and direction:

New Alternative Parking Provisions Related to Enhanced Mobility

- **Required Unbundled and Shared Parking** allow a reduction of code required parking serving separate on-site nearby uses. Many parking lots and garages are heavily used in the day during peak periods and go largely unused for the remainder of the day and evening. Rather than using this parking asset in this manner, it is more efficient to share it as a resource among surrounding land uses, which could include commercial and residential neighborhoods. This solution helps avoid wasting space dedicated for parking, allowing more developable area and reduces construction costs for parking. The funds saved can be put back into the project to achieve important urban goals such as creating great urban spaces that promote urban design goals. In addition, this strategy may help promote a “park once and walk” environment.

Question: Does the City want to require as a condition of approval that a portion of the ample saving from reduced on-site parking are returned to the project in the form of extra public open space, mobility measures or extraordinary design? The developer could be required to submit a project proforma identifying the parking cost savings and the additional gross leasable area revenues to establish the extent of the project improvements.

- **Mobility Rewards Programs** are currently required on an ad hoc basis in project conditions. The mobility incentives for employees to use alternative transportation could be a standard code provision. Mobility Rewards Programs include, but are not limited to, cash reimbursements for opting not to drive alone to work or in lieu of an assigned parking space, subsidized transit passes, end-of-trip facilities (i.e. secure bicycle parking, showers, changing facilities), or dedicated parking spaces for carpool/vanpool. On-going mobility rewards may require annual reporting and monitoring.

Question: Does the City want to require that a developer include a mobility rewards program in their project?

- **Car-share or rideshare on-site or pick-up and drop-off** can be substituted for a percentage of required parking. Rideshare and car-share provide relief for first and last mile travel and

promote mobility goals and reduces the need for on-site parking.

Question: Does the City want to require reduced on-site parking when there is rideshare on site?

- **Vision Zero goals** can be tied to entitlements through required TDM measures, pedestrian improvements, and reduced parking. The emphasis on land use dedicated to people instead of cars makes public spaces safer for pedestrians and helps achieve Vision Zero goals.

Question: Does the City want to require Vision Zero goals when there is reduced on-site parking?

New Amendments to Existing Zoning Code Provisions for Reduced Parking Footprint/ Reduced Parking Count

- **Mandatory stacked parking and automated parking** may effectively reduce the parking footprint by up to half the size of conventional parking. Screening of stacked and automated parking may be required to reduce noise and visual impacts.

Question: Does the City want to mandate stacked and automated parking to reduce parking count and parking footprint?

- **Reducing stall size and back up drive aisles**, including the expansion of compact parking, also reduces the land area required for parking.

Question: Does the City want to mandate reduced stall size and drive aisle dimensions to reduce parking footprint?

- **Mandatory parking maximums**, applied at individual sites or district-wide to discourage excessive parking supply. For example, parking counts could be revised to indicated “no more than X stalls per square foot, etc.)

Question: Does the City want to mandate parking maximums?

- **Above ground convertible parking garages** allow eventual replacement with more attractive and financially efficient land uses as the demand for parking diminishes. The convertible garages require flat floor plates and site planning that locate the building toward the street edge and provide appropriate street-level design and adequate screening that contributes to the pedestrian environment.

Question: Does the City want to mandate convertible parking garages?

- **Mandatory mixed use development reduced parking requirements** have the potential to shrink the parking footprint as part of new project design through shared parking.

Question: Does the City want to mandate reduced parking ratios for mixed use development

without a shared parking study?

- **Consolidated on-site parking** may be shared with a surrounding commercial when there is a lack of parking supply in the area. When a development provides current code required parking, the City can mandate that the off-peak parking supply must be shared within a neighboring parking district or within a mixed-use development. Consolidated parking can also be used with congestion pricing to promote remote parking assets.

Question: Does the City want to mandate this requirement?

- **Pricing may be used to optimize parking utilization through congestion pricing.** This may reduce on-site parking demand and discourage auto use in areas of congestion. When the true value of the parking is established in areas, people refrain from using it due to cost. The indirect effect is to drive parking into remote locations where it can be absorbed, preferably not in residential neighborhoods but in remote parking districts, freeing up the land for more attractive alternative land uses. Pricing strategies can be combined with employee incentives to further incentivize remote parking use outside of congested areas. This requires developing a citywide public parking pricing strategy and applying it to meet city objectives.

Question: Does the City want to mandate a congestion pricing strategy for select areas of the City and use of peripheral parking?

- **In-lieu of providing all on-site parking, projects can be required to provide pedestrian and biking improvements.** These may include contributions to construct new bike paths, landscape and streetscape improvements, special crosswalks, pedestrian lighting and street furniture to elevate urbanism and enhance mobility by making streets more walkable.

Question: Does the City want to mandate reduced parking for pedestrian and biking improvements?

- **Applying an extra Mobility Fee to projects that propose more than code required parking should discourage extra on-site parking.** This will require adoption of another mobility fee beyond the fee contemplated with the City's pending VMT model

Question: Does the City want to mandate an additional mobility fee beyond that contemplated with the VMT model ?

- **Remove replacement parking requirements for legal nonconforming uses.** Existing legal nonconforming properties face difficulty in creative repurposing of buildings due to parking constraints. Properties which are legal nonconforming must provide replacement parking when existing legal nonconforming parking has been lost and when there is net new parking for an intensification of a use. Existing uses may not expand without providing the required complement of parking.

Question: Does the City want to dispense with required replacement parking or net-new parking requirements for change of use or for legal nonconforming uses.

CONCLUSION:

For several years, the City has been making incremental strides in addressing best practices for parking. However, the City has an opportunity now to address broader issues regarding, sustainability, mobility and livability by addressing the above questions. This is an opportune time to do so given the expected downturn of the economy related to the pandemic and the expected slowing of the development cycle. The above parking concepts and amendments will allow the City to develop dynamic code provisions, which shift parking requirements to disincentivize sprawl and encourage development which prioritizes multimodal transportation and development incentives.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. City Council Staff Report - May 13, 2019

MOTION:

That the City Council and Planning Commission:

Discuss the recommended parking strategies and provide direction to Current Planning Division staff as deemed appropriate.