



REPORT TO PLANNING COMMISSION City of Sacramento

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915 I Street, Sacramento, CA 95814-2671

STAFF REPORT
May 10, 2012

Honorable Members of the Planning Commission:

Subject: The Zoning Code Parking Update (LR11-005)

Council District: Citywide

Recommendation: Review and Comment.

Contact: Greg Sandlund, Associate Planner, (916) 808-8931; Jim McDonald AICP, CFM, Senior Planner, (916) 808-5723.

Presenter: Greg Sandlund, (916) 808-8931

Department: Community Development

Division: Planning

Organization Number: 21001222

Description/ Analysis

Issue: A key initiative of the Green Development Code is to modernize the City's parking requirements. The Zoning Code Parking Update is intended to help create the balance of encouraging infill development consistent with the 2030 General Plan while reducing potential parking impacts to existing neighborhoods, particularly those that are adjacent to commercial corridors. The Zoning Code Parking Update is part of the City's effort to develop the Green Development Code, however, it will maintain a separate schedule and outreach efforts.

The 2030 General Plan and the Central City Parking Master Plan acknowledge the challenge of providing adequate off-street parking to meet the needs of businesses and residents, while also balancing the need to reduce development constraints caused by onerous or inflexible parking requirements. Parking requirements for new land uses are outdated and designed primarily for suburban development, as opposed to existing urban and traditional neighborhoods.

On March 8th 2012, Staff received the Planning Commission's input on key points of analysis and initial recommendations. Since that time, Staff has done intensive outreach to a variety of interest groups that are listed in Attachment 4. Input from stakeholders has been incorporated into a public review draft report that can be found in Attachment 5. Staff is seeking confirmation from the Planning Commission of the draft report's findings and recommendations, highlights of which can be found in Attachment 3. Key recommendations include:

- Alternative parking compliance
- Context based parking requirements
- Urban parking lot dimensions
- Incentivizing residential mixed use and adaptive reuse projects

Staff will also be presenting the draft report to the Law and Legislation Committee on June 7th for confirmation of the report's recommendations. Staff will then develop implementing ordinances for adoption by Council in September of 2012.

Policy Considerations: The Zoning Code Parking Update is consistent with the 2030 General Plan and the Central City Parking Master Plan. Policies that support the adoption of parking standards that facilitate urban, infill development include the following:

- **Implementation Program 28.** The City shall conduct a study of current parking requirements in the Central City and urban centers (i.e., Urban Center Low and Urban Center High) to evaluate options for dedicated parking spaces for car-sharing and incentives (e.g., receive credit for meeting the "parking minimum" zoning requirements).
- **M 6.1.1 Appropriate Parking.** The City shall ensure that appropriate parking is provided, considering access to existing and funded transit, shared parking opportunities for mixed-use development, and implementation of Transportation Demand Management plans.
- **M 6.1.2 Reduce Minimum Parking Standards.** The City shall reduce minimum parking standards over time to promote walkable neighborhoods and districts and to increase the use of transit and bicycles.
- **CC.M 1.2 Adequate Parking.** The City shall provide adequate off-street parking to meet the needs of shoppers, visitors, and residents.
- **CC.M 1.3 Residential Street Parking.** The City shall reduce the adverse impact of commuter parking on residential streets.

Environmental Considerations: No project is being proposed at this time. Staff is only presenting details about a pending planning initiative. Environmental review pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) will be conducted prior to the adoption of any implementing ordinances.

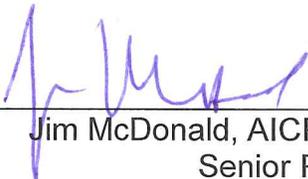
Public Comments: Staff has conducted outreach with stakeholders representing neighborhoods, developers, and neighborhood groups, which are listed in Attachment 4. Throughout this process, concerns about parking impacts have been expressed by midtown residents, specifically evening visitors to the Central City. The Sacramento Old City Association has submitted a letter expressing concerns about the parking impacts from nighttime uses, the lack of adequate transit options, and the need for the parking ordinance to incentivize adaptive reuse, that can be found in Attachment 6. Staff is addressing these comments and others in a question and answer format that can be found in Attachment 2.

Sustainability Considerations: The Zoning Code Parking Update is consistent with the City's Sustainability Master Plan goals and policies as adopted by the Council in December 2007. The update of parking regulations will make possible sustainable land use and transportation policies identified in the 2030 General Plan and the Sacramento Blueprint by adapting the Zoning Code by incorporating development standards that are appropriate for new urban uses.

Rationale for Recommendation: The Zoning Code Parking Update is a priority implementation program for the 2030 General Plan. Improving development regulations will help ensure consistency between planning policies and zoning regulations; ensure a timelier, more predictable development review process; and send a message that the City wants to encourage development consistent with its general plan.

Financial Considerations: None.

Respectfully submitted by: _____


Jim McDonald, AICP, CFM
Senior Planner

Recommendation Approved:



Thomas S. Pace
Principal Planner

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Attachment 1

Background

The Zoning Code's parking requirements for new land uses are outdated and designed primarily for suburban development, as opposed to redeveloping our existing urban and traditional neighborhoods. These existing neighborhoods often include the reuse of lots and buildings that were created prior to the significant increase in the use of the automobile.

The Problem:

- Parking requirements can create substantial challenges to not only the cost, design, and development of infill projects but also the community's perceived negative impacts of the new development.
- Current regulations do not acknowledge the benefits of mixed-use, walkable neighborhoods that are well-served by transit in terms of reducing trips and the need for parking; they also do not provide incentives for owners of existing parking facilities to share their parking when it is not being used.
- Current regulations are inflexible both in how off-street parking can be provided but also in how parking lots are designed.
- Many existing infill sites contain little or no parking.
- New infill development is often expensive and cannot afford the cost or space required for suburban parking standards.

Recommended Solution:

In response, the City has contracted with Nelson/Nygaard Consulting Associates to assist staff to:

- Determine whether our current parking requirements are accurate for new land uses;
- Consider current parking supply, transit resources to identify appropriate context for parking considerations; and
- Evaluate the economic feasibility of complying with current parking requirements.

With information from this initial analysis, as well as input from the community, staff will develop a report which includes:

- The evaluation of the existing regulatory environment
- Recommended revisions to the existing parking ratios (if necessary)
- Recommended tools to provide alternatives to onsite or off-site parking requirements (e.g. in-lieu fees, car sharing, ministerial process)
- Recommended policy changes to support alternative parking standards (if necessary)

Timeline:

- 1. Planning Commission Discussion of the Preliminary Analysis **March 8, 2012**
- 2. Planning Commission Confirmation of Key Findings and Recommendations **May 10, 2012**
- 3. Law & Legislation Committee Confirmation of Key Findings and Recommendations **June 7, 2012**
- 4. Adoption of Report and Ordinances **September 2012**

Attachment 2

Frequently Asked Questions

1. How will parking impacts to neighborhoods be addressed in the future?

- Currently, our parking requirements require a waiver of on-site parking for most commercial development in the Central City and older commercial corridors. This permit process discourages development and does not effectively address neighborhood parking impacts.
- Staff is proposing that parking demand be met by allowing alternatives to onsite parking such as bicycle, scooter/motorcycle parking, carsharing, and other methods of encouraging alternative modes of transportation.
- An integral part of minimizing on-street parking impacts in residential neighborhoods include the following measures:
 - Expand parking meter time limits in residential/business transition areas.
 - Where feasible, convert existing parallel parking spaces into more efficient angled parking spaces.
 - Partner with residents to expand the use of the Residential Permit Parking Program, which restricts or prohibits non-resident parking in neighborhoods.
- Existing on-street and off-street parking has been found to be underutilized in certain parts of the Central City. Property owners of existing surface parking lots that would otherwise allow the public to park on their lots during non-business hours are concerned about the liability that comes with the more intense use of the parking lot.
 - Efforts are currently underway by the City's Parking Division to make these strategically located parking lots in midtown available to the public during evenings and weekends.

2. What is the Residential Parking Permit Program?

- This program allows residents within city limits to restrict the use of on-street parking spaces by non-residents for limited amounts for time or prohibit non-resident parking altogether. On March 6, 2012 the Council amended the program to allow the Parking Manager greater flexibility to administratively adjust these permit areas.
- The Parking Manager is currently working on expanding the size of residential parking permit areas in Midtown to address residents' concerns related to special events during evenings and weekends. A pilot program to expand these permit areas will occur prior to adoption of the new parking requirements recommended as part of the Zoning Code Parking Update.

3. Out of town patrons of bars and nightclubs have created a nuisance late at night for residents. How are the new parking regulations going to address this problem?

- Accurate, context sensitive, parking requirements coupled with alternative ways of reducing parking demand will be an improvement from the current system of requiring too much parking- and then waiving it.

4. If you do not have minimum parking requirements how will this impact the parking supply in the long term?

- Nothing prevents a developer from providing more parking than is required. Parking adds value to a project and staff anticipates that parking will be provided when there is an opportunity to do so. Some development projects will not be financed if the funder is not comfortable with how clients/residents will park.
- Data is collected every three years in the Central City to determine how much our on-street and off-street parking is utilized. Staff will be able to see how changes to the Zoning Code's parking requirements and our parking management efforts are affecting the parking supply.

5. Do we need to improve our transit service before reducing our on-site parking requirements in urban areas?

- The City cannot continue to unnecessarily constrain development while transit improves. Furthermore, abundant and free on-site parking will discourage the use of transit rather than improve it.
- Transit is improving. Regional Transit's light rail service would be extended to approximately 11 p.m. on weekdays and Saturdays; and bus service on nine routes would be extended to approximately 10 p.m. on weekdays. Other bus service improvements would increase frequency, realign routes and add service. Additionally, a new private bus service called the Sactown Hopper is connecting the Sacramento State campus with Central City restaurants and bars until 3 am on Friday and Saturday nights.

6. How can our parking requirements encourage adaptive reuse?

- Staff is recommending that if a listed historic structure is to be converted from a nonresidential use to a residential use, no minimum parking is required for the residential units. Only the original square footage is exempt from the minimum parking requirements. If the project is a mixed use development, the nonresidential component does not have a minimum parking requirement if at least 50% of the square footage is devoted to residential uses.

7. Why do we have parking maximums?

- Parking maximums are intended in many cases to reduce traffic, parking demand, CO2 emissions, preserve space for active uses, and incentivize alternative modes of transportation. Staff is recommending that we allow parking maximums to be exceeded on condition that the project has active ground floor uses and allows the additional parking to be publicly accessible.

8. Why have minimum parking requirements at all?

- Minimum parking requirements will continue to address parking demand in areas that do not have excessive parking reserves, adequate transit service, are not walkable, or lack other factors that reduce parking demand. Eliminating minimum parking requirements in these areas could create a shortage of parking in the long term.

Attachment 3

Key Findings and Recommendations

The following highlighted findings and recommendations are from the larger public review draft report which can be found in Attachment 5. The draft report provides further detail and the rationale behind the recommendations.

Findings

- Constructing more off-street parking will not relieve on-street parking congestion.
- The impact of parking standards on development feasibility is highly sensitive to the size of the site and scale of the project, especially for mixed use projects.
- Current parking requirements associated with storefront commercial uses are exceeding parking demand rates associated with urban retail, are onerous for in-fill projects, and are overly specific.
- Current Central City office and residential parking standards are consistent with the current market. However, greater flexibility to meet evolving market demand for on-site parking is desirable.
- The current entitlement process regarding parking creates uncertainty and absorbs an inordinate amount of time and resources.
- Parking dimensions are oversized and unnecessarily consume valuable land.

Recommendations

- Eliminate minimum parking regulations for the Central Business District.
- Exempt nonresidential projects on lots 6,400 square feet or less from minimum parking requirements.
- Vertical mixed use projects that have more than 50% square feet devoted to residential uses will not have minimum parking requirements for the nonresidential component.
- Listed historic structures that are converted to residential uses will not have minimum parking requirements.
- Allow multifamily developments the ability to require less than one parking space per unit in urban areas.
- Use the same parking requirement for restaurants, office, and retail in urban and traditional areas.
- Permit, through an administrative process, offsite parking for clients and/or employees; carsharing; parking space sharing; scooter/motorcycle parking; additional bike parking; and/or an in-lieu fee in meeting parking requirements.
- Allow projects that have transportation management plans the ability to reduce their parking requirement by 35%.
- Allow for lower minimum stall depth and maneuvering width dimensions.
- Require both short-term and long-term bicycle parking for all land uses.

Attachment 4

Outreach Summary

To date, Staff has presented the project to the following organizations, or their representatives:

Neighborhood Groups

- Neighborhood Advisory Group for the Central City and East Sacramento
- Sacramento Old City Association
- McKinley East Sacramento Neighborhood Association
- East Sacramento Improvement Association
- Community Partnership Meetings representing neighborhood associations from the north, south and southeast sections of the City

Business Districts

- Sacramento Downtown Partnership Strategic Development Task Force
- Midtown Business Association
- Greater Broadway Partnership
- River District

Advocacy Groups

- WALKSacramento
- Breathe Sacramento
- Sacramento Area Bicycle Advocates
- California Infill Builders Association
- Urban Land Institute
- Central Valley Chapter of the American Institute of Architects
- Sacramento Builders Exchange
- Sacramento Region Builders

Public Agencies

- Regional Transit
- Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality District
- Capitol Area Development Authority
- Sacramento Area Council of Governments

Transportation Management Authorities

- Sacramento Transportation Management Authority
- North Natomas Transportation Management Authority
- South Natomas Transportation Management Authority
- Power Inn Alliance

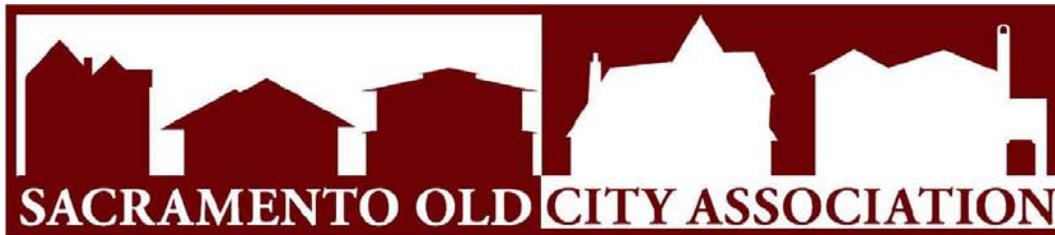
Attachment 5

Public Review Draft Report

Due to the size of the document, the public review draft report has been posted on the Planning Commission agenda as a separate document. The agenda can be found at:

http://sacramento.granicus.com/ViewPublisher.php?view_id=29

Attachment 6



Sacramento Old City Association - PO Box 162140, Sacramento CA 95816 – (916)455-2935 – info@sacoldcity.org

Greg Sandlund

Associate Planner, Community Development Department

300 Richards Boulevard, 3rd Floor

Sacramento, CA 95811

April 9, 2012

Dear Mr. Sandlund,

On behalf of the Sacramento Old City Association, I would like to thank you for presenting information regarding suggested Green Development Code proposals and changes to parking in the central city to the SOCA Board on Monday, April 2. The presentation was very informative and inspired much discussion. On behalf of SOCA, I am writing this letter to follow up on some of the ideas generated at the meeting.

First, regarding the list of alternate means for central city projects to reduce parking requirements, SOCA board member Sean deCourcy suggested adding adaptive reuse of existing buildings to this list, to incentivize reuse of existing building stock constructed without parking spaces. Currently, a project in a zero lot line historic building must pay for a special permit to exempt them from parking requirements, just as other suggested code alternatives currently do. A review of code should reflect options that incentivize green approaches to infill, such as adaptive reuse, instead of discouraging the use of existing building stock by adding the higher costs of in-lieu fees, or other options as listed in your presentation that are better suited to new construction..

Second, if the objective of the city is to minimize the effects of vehicle traffic on central city residents, as outlined in the presentation and the city's general plan, the parking plan must include resident-only parking in neighborhoods most affected by evening visitors to the central city, and street lighting between visitor parking areas and business districts to facilitate safe nighttime walking paths. The objective of resident-only parking is not to discourage central city business or visitor traffic, but to direct it back into the business district and encourage visitors to use parking garages and lots, or use alternate means to reach the central city. This has multiple effects: It is more physically convenient for business patrons, it makes more money for private parking lots and garages, and it keeps the neighborhoods quieter and more livable, and thus more desirable as places to live. Increasing population in the central city reduces the number of vehicle trips, and each central city resident has a far greater economic effect on central city businesses than outside visitors, because far more of their disposable income is spent in the central city. Encouraging the use of residential neighborhoods as business parking lots discourages resident investment and encourages central city residents to consider the suburbs for peace and quiet, adding their cars to the parade of traffic entering and exiting the central city every weekend.

Finally, in addition to greater residential density in the central city, the best way to encourage alternate means to reach the central city is to create linkage between central city development and public transit. Choking off parking supply without providing transit alternatives does nothing to create a transit-oriented, walkable neighborhood. It simply discourages both residential and commercial investment, and forces central city residents and customers to seek car-centric neighborhood alternatives. **Transit-oriented development requires sufficient transit.**

Many of these points were outlined in a December 8 letter presented to the Planning Commission and provided to staff. A copy of that letter is attached for your review.

William Burg, President, SOCA

Cc: Tom Pace, Jim McDonald, David Kwong, Max Fernandez



December 8, 2011

RE: Green Development Code (LR11-006)

Members of the Planning Commission and City Staff,

The Sacramento Old City Association (SOCA) salutes the efforts of the City of Sacramento to embrace sustainability in its development process, and offers the following recommendations to City staff and the Planning Commission regarding adaptive reuse, affordable housing and parking, all of which are issues of interest to SOCA members and residents of Sacramento's historic neighborhoods.

Adopt an Adaptive Reuse Ordinance

"The greenest building is one that is already built" is a long-held truism in the preservation community, and this philosophy must be expressed in green development codes. In addition to their value as expressions of our cultural and architectural legacies, our existing building stock represents an enormous quantity of embodied energy that is lost when old buildings are demolished and replaced with new. Restoration of historic buildings is less materials-intensive, sparing our landfills from new construction waste materials and demolished old buildings. Restoration is labor-intensive rather than materials-intensive, creating more jobs per dollar spent when compared to new construction, and a more positive economic effect.

In addition to the identification and designation of historic buildings and districts, cities like Los Angeles have created policies to facilitate adaptive reuse of existing buildings and conversion to residential use, including those as recently built as the 1970s. This ordinance has resulted in the tripling of downtown Los Angeles' population in less than a decade, a testament to both the demand for downtown housing and the effectiveness of an adaptive reuse ordinance. A Sacramento adaptive reuse policy would incentivize the occupation and revitalization of existing building stock in the urban core, and discourage "demolition by neglect." In addition to its "green" sustainability, these policies promote economic sustainability by allowing property owners to better utilize current building stock in a more cost-effective manner. Simplifying adaptive reuse also makes housing more affordable through use of vacant buildings.

References:

<http://preservation.lacity.org/reuse-ordinance> Los Angeles adaptive reuse ordinance



Parking Reduction through Transit Mitigation, Parking Sharing and Resident-Only Parking

The city's General Plan directives include several apparently contradictory statements: reduce minimum parking standards while providing adequate off-street parking, and reducing the impact of commuter parking on residential streets. Reducing parking minimums must be accompanied by alternatives that promote use of other transit modes. Recently passed legislation (AB 147, Dickinson) authorizes local agencies to charge fees, dedications, reservations or other exactions on development projects to construct pedestrian, bicycle and public transit facilities. By requiring transit facilities in lieu of parking spaces, new development can facilitate other transit modes instead of shifting the burden of parking to nearby neighborhoods without providing alternatives. This legislation also facilitates adaptive reuse of older buildings, by providing parking alternatives in neighborhoods where there are no adjacent private lots.

References:

http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/cgi-bin/postquery?bill_number=ab_147&sess=CUR&house=B Bill text of AB 147 (Transportation Mitigation Impact Fees)

Parking sharing agreements allow multiple businesses with different hours of operation share a common lot. Currently, there are no means for businesses to create formal parking sharing agreements through the city. Instead, businesses ask for exemption from parking requirements, which requires a special permit, and establish these agreements on an ad-hoc basis. Creating a formal procedure for parking sharing agreements simplifies the regulatory process and meets parking needs while discouraging the creation of new parking lots.

Finally, reduce the effects of commuter parking on residential streets through expanded use of resident-only zones in neighborhoods most impacted by commuter and late-night parking. This strategy channels traffic to paid parking lots in commercial zones and on-street parking. This strategy will also enhance the livability and safety of the walkable neighborhoods adjacent to business districts, discourage pollution by commuters who "orbit" neighborhoods seeking free parking, and encourage residents to walk or bike for trips within their own neighborhoods.

William Burg
Preservation Chair, Sacramento Old City Association