



# City of Sunnyvale

## Agenda Item-No Attachments (PDF)

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### REPORT TO PLANNING COMMISSION

#### **SUBJECT**

Approve the Parking Structure Design Guidelines for Projects in All Zoning Districts and Find that the project is exempt under CEQA pursuant to Guidelines 15060(3) and 15378(b)(5) (Study Issue)

#### **BACKGROUND**

The City has experienced a recent influx of higher density residential and higher intensity office projects. These types of developments typically include underground or structured parking areas. Although the pending Toolkit for Mixed-use Development includes design guidance on parking structures in mixed use development, there is no adopted design guidance specific to parking structures in the current zoning code or City-wide Design Guidelines. In an effort to better guide the public, developers and decision-makers when considering projects that include structured parking, a study issue was selected for the development of specific design guidelines for parking structures (Attachment 1).

The City Council is scheduled to consider this item on July 28, 2015.

#### **EXISTING POLICY**

##### **General Plan:**

##### ***From Land Use and Transportation (LT):***

**GOAL LT-2 Attractive Community** - Preserve and enhance an attractive community, with a positive image and a sense of place, that consists of distinctive neighborhoods, pockets of interest, and human-scale development.

**Policy LT-2.1** Recognize that the City is composed of residential, industrial and commercial neighborhoods, each with its own individual character; and allow change consistent with reinforcing positive neighborhood values.

**Policy LT-4.2** Require new development to be compatible with the neighborhood, adjacent land uses and the transportation system.

##### ***From Community Character (CC):***

**Policy CC-1.3** Ensure that new development is compatible with the character of special districts and residential neighborhoods.

**GOAL CC-3 Well-Designed Sites and Buildings** - Ensure that buildings and related site improvements for private development are well designed and compatible with surrounding properties and districts.

**Policy CC-3.1** Place a priority on quality architecture and site design, which will enhance the image

of Sunnyvale and create a vital and attractive environment for businesses, residents and visitors, and be reasonably balanced with the need for economic development to assure Sunnyvale's economic prosperity.

**Policy CC-3.2** Ensure site design is compatible with the natural and surrounding built environment.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

Pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines 15060(c)(3) and 15378(b)(5), CEQA does not apply to activities that are not a project. Approval of the design guidelines is not a project within the meaning of CEQA because the guidelines are in the nature of an administrative activity that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment. The guidelines do not create zoning regulations; rather they provide detailed descriptions and graphic examples to follow when implementing zoning regulations. Accordingly, they are exempt from CEQA review. Projects that are subject to the design guidelines will be environmentally evaluated on an individual basis through the entitlement process.

### **DISCUSSION**

The draft Parking Structure Design Guidelines (Attachment 2) focus on providing criteria to guide developers in the design of structured parking and to help the public, staff and decision-makers in reviewing and considering these projects. The Guidelines are a set of guiding principles and do not include precise development standards. Standards such as setbacks, height, floor area ratio, etc. are addressed by the Zoning Code and are not proposed to be amended.

#### **Organization of the Guidelines**

The Guidelines are organized to first address basic design principles for structured parking in the City. This section is followed by defining four types of structured parking: parking deck, underground parking, podium, and parking garage. Specific design criteria for each type of structured parking is addressed, as well as universal design guidelines that apply to all parking structures. The Guidelines also include special contextual guidelines for five major areas within the City.

#### ***Basic Design Principles***

The basic design principles are intended to give a general direction for the development of structured parking and include the following:

1. Design parking structures to complement nearby structures;
2. Subordinate parking structures to the primary buildings;
3. Enhance the pedestrian environment;
4. Minimize vehicular/pedestrian conflicts;
5. Promote efficient site circulation and street access;
6. Design parking structures with strong architectural integrity;
7. Integrate substantial landscaping into all projects; and
8. Minimize impacts to adjacent neighbors.

#### ***Parking Structure Types***

Each parking structure type is defined and specific design criteria for each type are addressed after the universal design guidelines, which apply to all types of structured parking. The following parking structure types are addressed in the guidelines:

- Parking Decks
- Underground Parking
- Podium Parking
- Parking Garages

Guidelines cover site development, landscaping, plan layout, and architectural design and details. Parking garage guidelines also cover rooftop uses.

### *Universal Design Guidelines*

The universal design guidelines are general design criteria to be applied to all parking structure types in combination with the specific guidelines for each individual type. This section specifically discusses criteria for the following elements:

1. General - Addresses overall design issues.
2. Site Development - Addresses the siting and relationship of structured parking to surroundings on the same site and adjacent properties.
3. Landscaping - Addresses incorporating natural elements and the relationship of structured parking with the natural environment.
4. Plan Layout- Addresses the layout of structured parking, including interiors.
5. Bike Parking - Addresses the incorporation of bicycle accommodation and access.
6. Architectural Design and Details - Addresses exterior treatments and materials.
7. Lighting - Addresses appropriate lighting design.

### *Special Contextual Guidelines*

This section discusses specific criteria for structured parking located in five major land use settings or areas in the City, including office parks, Downtown, El Camino Real, residential districts, and areas adjacent to residential.

### Implementing the Guidelines

If the Guidelines are approved by the City Council, it will be added to a growing collection of adopted Sunnyvale design guidelines. These collective guidelines have been expanded in recent years to address specific topics, such as bird-safe building design, high density multi-family housing, and soon to be adopted, mixed use development. For easier reference and use, staff will combine all of the City's design guidelines into one organized document. Staff is targeting completion of this effort by the end of 2015.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

Consideration and approval of design guidelines for parking structures will not have a direct fiscal impact to the City. Indirectly it could streamline project reviews.

### **PUBLIC CONTACT**

Public contact was made through posting of the Planning Commission agenda on the City's official notice bulletin board, on the City's website, and the availability of the agenda and report in the Planning Division and in the Reference Section of the City's Public Library. Notices were sent to the neighborhood associations, developers and design professionals involved in development in Sunnyvale, and posted at the One-Stop Permit Center.

At their study session on April 27, 2015, the Planning Commissioners were receptive to the concept of the Guidelines as a whole. They expressed a desire to see guidelines that placed a focus on promoting: high architectural quality and integrity; design compatibility with surrounding buildings; interesting use of exterior treatments to disguise the bulkiness of structures; incorporation of pedestrian safety measures; and use of environmental friendly measures, such as landscaping, solar panels and active recreation on the top parking deck. The Commissioners comments have been taken into consideration in developing the Guidelines.

## **ALTERNATIVES**

Recommend that City Council:

1. Find that the project is exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines 15060(c)(3) and 15378(b)(5).
2. Approve the Parking Structure Design Guidelines (Attachment 2) for structured parking projects in all zoning districts.
3. Approve the Parking Structure Design Guidelines with modifications.
4. Make no changes and rely on existing zoning standards and design guidelines.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Recommend to City Council: Alternatives 1 and 2. Find that the project is exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines 15060(c)(3) and 15378(b)(5); and approve the Parking Structure Design Guidelines (Attachment 2) for structured parking in all zoning districts.

The Parking Structure Design Guidelines will provide all parties with clearly defined guidelines and expectations for these projects, and should result in better-planned and sited projects in the City. Staff recommends adopting the Guidelines to address all projects that incorporate any form of structured parking.

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Reviewed by: Trudi Ryan, Planning Officer

Reviewed by: Hanson Hom, Director, Community Development

Approved by: Deanna J. Santana, City Manager

## **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Study Issue Paper
2. Draft Parking Structure Design Guidelines