



The City of San Diego

Staff Report

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TO: City Council

FROM: Mobility

SUBJECT: Parking Policy Reform for Non-Residential Uses in Transit Priority Areas and Neighborhood Commercial Uses Citywide

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Council District(s): Citywide

OVERVIEW:

To align the City's parking policies with its climate and long-range mobility goals, the Mobility Department is proposing a Municipal Code amendment to eliminate minimum parking requirements for a majority of non-residential land uses within transit priority areas (TPA's), as well as neighborhood serving commercial land uses citywide. This effort complements many of the City's previous efforts, most immediately, the recently completed effort to reduce parking requirements for multi-family residential developments within TPA's, as well as the City's Climate Action Plan and Complete Communities-Mobility Choices Initiative. Overall, the project seeks to help reduce reliance on vehicles, which reduces vehicle-generated greenhouse gas emissions and traffic congestion. The project also seeks to help streamline the non-residential development process by removing parking requirements and giving business operators, property owners and developers flexibility to choose how much parking is needed for their operations.

A technical study was conducted for the project, which includes a review of national and local studies that show and prove that a reduction in parking requirements has a positive effect on the reduction of vehicular use, as well as a reduction in vehicle miles travelled. The study also includes a benchmarking review of other U.S cities' approach to reducing parking requirements near transit, and an evaluation of the region's current transportation demand management program (SANDAG's iCommute) which provided data to support the reduction/elimination of parking requirements. In addition, transportation demand management programs designed to inform, educate, and incentivize transit use, biking, walking, and ridesharing would not only help the City achieve its

Climate Action Plan goals but would also create complete communities that are walkable, bikeable, and environmentally friendly.

The Proposed Regulations include the following:

- Elimination of minimum parking requirements for a majority of non-residential land uses within transit priority areas (TPAs).
- Elimination of minimum parking requirements for neighborhood serving land uses (CN zones) citywide.

No additional requirements for active transportation improvements will be proposed with this regulatory reform as this proposal will work in tandem with the Complete Communities - Mobility Choices Initiative, which currently has a requirement for employment uses to provide transportation amenities that are aimed at educating, informing and incentivizing transit use, biking, walking, ridesharing and the use of micromobility/shared devices and would benefit communities as well as the City of San Diego.

PROPOSED ACTIONS:

Staff is requesting recommendation of the Planning Commission to the City Council for approval of an amendment to the City's Municipal Code, Land Development Code and Local Coastal Program to eliminate minimum parking requirements for a majority of non-residential uses within transit priority areas (TPAs) and neighborhood serving commercial land uses (CN zones) citywide (Proposed Regulations).

DISCUSSION OF ITEM:

The Proposed Regulations are consistent with the City's General Plan, Climate Action Plan, Complete Communities Mobility Choices Initiative and similar California Legislative bills currently in process, and is aimed at reducing the reliance on vehicles within the City of San Diego. The proposal was developed based on analysis of recent studies at the national and local level which show that reduced parking requirements lead to reduced vehicular use. The City's study for the Proposed Regulations builds upon a similar statistical analysis that was conducted under the previous phase of the City's parking regulatory reform for multifamily residential developments within transit priority areas, which determined the social, economic, and lifestyle factors that have the greatest influence on vehicle ownership. This study also includes an evaluation of peer U.S. cities, which have completed similar parking policy reform. The peer evaluation shows that cities that enacted the most comprehensive parking policies saw the most benefit in transit and active transportation use.

In recent years, the California State Legislature has adopted many transportation and housing laws which the Proposed Regulations align with. SB 32 requires the state to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. State Bill (SB) 375 requires regions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from automobiles through land use and transportation planning. SB 743 states parking availability is no longer an environmental impact under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). SB 35 streamlines certain development projects near transit and allows them to eliminate parking requirements as an incentive. Additionally, AB 1401 (Friedman) proposes to prohibit a minimum automobile parking requirement, on residential, commercial, or other developments that are within a half-mile of public transit. The Proposed Regulations are thus consistent with the State's adopted and proposed legislation.

The Proposed Regulations incorporate successful components of the peer cities' approaches to reduce single-occupant vehicle mode share and increase commute by transit, walking, and biking

through parking regulatory reform and strategies in transit areas. Data shows that San Diego is currently trailing in terms of transit ridership and a sustainable transportation system, and vehicle ownership is higher than the peer cities. It is anticipated that with the Proposed Regulations, the City of San Diego would see reductions in vehicle ownership over time as the transit system continues to develop, continuing the City's progress toward meeting the Climate Action Plan goals. These positive trends were demonstrated in the peer-cities through the benchmarking effort and follow up interviews where results showed sustainability, commute mode shift and housing production improved.

For the City of San Diego, a zero-minimum automobile parking space requirement for non-residential uses within a TPA as well as for neighborhood serving uses citywide is proposed through the Proposed Regulations. In addition, employment uses would be required to provide transportation amenities through a previous effort, Complete Communities Mobility Choices, which are features provided by a development that reduces vehicle trips and inform, educate, and incentivize transit use, biking, walking, and ridesharing.

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City Strategic Plan Goal(s)/Objective(s):

Goal #3: Create and sustain a resilient and economically prosperous City.

Objective #1: Create dynamic neighborhoods that incorporate mobility, connectivity, and sustainability.

Objective #4: Prepare and respond to climate change.

Fiscal Considerations:

N/A

Charter Section 225 Disclosure of Business Interests:

N/A

Environmental Impact:

This activity is exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) (Common Sense Exemption) as the City's reduced parking requirements would not cause a significant effect on the environment. The Proposed Regulations are directed at development that meets the requirements described in SB 743 and would, thus, support a reduction in Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT). As such, consistent with SB 743, reduced parking requirements for non-residential land uses that are located on an infill site and within a TPA would not result in a significant impact on the environment under CEQA. Also, As stated in Section 131.0502 of the San Diego Municipal Code, neighborhood serving commercial, or CN zones "allow development of a limited size with a pedestrian orientation". Therefore, the Proposed Regulations for non-residential land uses and neighborhood commercial uses would be exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3), which states that CEQA applies only to projects which have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. Additionally, the Proposed Regulations are consistent with the Climate Action Plan and the Complete Communities: Mobility Choices Initiative, and their respective Environmental Impact Reports. Specifically, this project is consistent with Climate Action Plan Strategy 3, which calls for

strategic land use planning involving new development being located within TPAs, which increases the mode share for walking, bicycling, and transit, and development would be required to comply with Complete Communities: Mobility Choices, which requires the provision of active transportation VMT-reducing measures.

Equal Opportunity Contracting Information (if applicable):

N/A

Previous Council and/or Committee Actions:

Community Planners Committee:

This item is scheduled to be heard at the May 25th Community Planners Committee meeting.

Key Stakeholders and Community Outreach Efforts:

Extensive community outreach to key stakeholders, including environmental and mobility advocacy groups, business groups, and organizations within communities of concern, took place over a four-month period and included between 20 and 30 individual meetings and presentations. In addition, the following organizations have expressed general support for the Proposed Regulations: City of San Diego Mobility Board, San Diego Building Owners and Managers Association, National Association for Industrial and Office Parks, SD Chamber Transportation & Land Development Committee, and the San Diego Downtown Partnership.

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Jeff Sturak

Department Director

Deputy Chief Operating Officer

TF/cb

Attachments:

1. Parking Policy Reform_Non-Residential_Technical Report
2. Ch 11 Art 03 Div 01_DraftUpdate
3. Ch 14 Art 02 Div 05_DraftUpdate
4. Ch 15 (multiple sections)_Draft Update
5. Parking Policy Reform Non-Residential_Environmental Memo
6. Map of Parking Policy Reform