



MINUTES

SUNNYVALE SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION October 15, 2012

The Sustainability Commission met in regular session in the West Conference Room at 7:00 p.m. with Chair Harrison presiding.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Commission Members Present:

Commission Chair Sue Harrison
Commission Vice Chair Srivastava
Commissioner Barbara Fukumoto
Commissioner Andy Frazer
Commissioner Gerry Glaser
Commissioner Joe Green-Heffern
Commissioner Dan Hafeman

Council Liaison: Councilmember Jim Davis (Present)

Staff Present: Diana O'Dell, Senior Planner
Dustin Clark, Sustainability Coordinator, Staff Liaison

Guest: Councilmember Tara Martin-Milius
Planning Commissioner Gustav Larrson

SCHEDULED PRESENTATION

None

PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chair Harrison opened the public hearing to public announcements.

There were no announcements.

Chair Harrison closed the public hearing.

CONSENT CALENDAR

1.A. Approval of draft minutes of Sustainability Commission meeting of September 17, 2012.

Commissioner Green-Heffern moved and Commissioner Fukumoto seconded the motion to approve the meeting minutes of September 17, 2012.

VOTE: 6-0-1 (Motion carries; Commissioner Srivastava abstained)

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chair Harrison opened the public hearing to public comments.

There were no comments.

Chair Harrison closed the public hearing.

PUBLIC HEARINGS/GENERAL BUSINESS

1. ACTION: Tentative Staff Recommendation for Non-Residential Parking Requirements

The Planning Division is completing study issue CDD 12-10 Consideration of Non-residential Parking Requirements. Diana O'Dell, Senior Planner, brought staff's tentative recommendation on non-residential parking requirements to the Sustainability Commission to solicit their input. Senior Planner O'Dell had two central questions for the Commission. The Commission commented on each of the questions and made separate motions for each question to forward their comments and recommendations through the planning process.

The comments provided to staff for the first motion were based on the following key objectives and findings for the parking code identified by staff.

1. Sufficient parking for daily or weekly peaks is important to further economic goals;
2. Flexible parking ratios enhance opportunities for re-use of buildings and stimulate economic vitality;
3. The needs of vehicular traffic shall be balanced with the need for adequate bicycle and pedestrian facilities;
4. Rarely-used parking spaces create negative impacts by discouraging pedestrian and bicycle travel, unnecessarily increasing impervious surfaces, and discouraging other productive uses of land;
5. Shared parking or other parking management tools are an effective method of ensuring adequate parking while maximizing land use;
6. Parking spillover into residential neighborhoods should be avoided; and
7. Street parking shall not be considered towards meeting the parking needs for private uses.

The first question addressed by the Commission was "Does the Commission concur with the objectives and findings for the ordinance, as presented by staff?"

Senior Planner O'Dell summarized the Commission's comments regarding Question #1 as follows:

- Staff heard questions about minimums and use changes and flexibility for adding parking. Staff heard that the Commission's statements strongly support items 1-3.
- After some discussion, the Commission reiterated their support for items 6 and 7 with comments that parking spillover into residential neighborhoods should be avoided and that street parking should not be considered toward meeting parking needs for private uses
- Conversation on item 4 and whether it can be rephrased to talk about rarely used parking land could be repurposed to enable pedestrian and bicycle travel and reduce stormwater runoff and also move away from just "adequate" bicycle and pedestrian facilities to "ample".

Chair Harrison opened the public hearing to public comments.

There were no comments.

Chair Harrison closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Hafeman moved and Commissioner Green-Heffern seconded the motion that the Commission's comments and recommendations regarding Question #1 have been accurately reflected by staff and can be forwarded through the planning process.

Commissioner Glaser opposed and commented that the reason for not supporting this motion is that, fundamentally, the City should get rid of the code, so rationalizing it and having a new set of reasons for having something that ought to be done differently, Commissioner Glaser does not want to support.

Commissioner Srivastava abstained because the way the actual comments are written up and integrated into staffs report may not be firm enough or may not be interpreted in a way the Commission agrees with.

VOTE: 5-1-1 (Motion carries; Commissioner Glaser opposed; Commissioner Srivastava abstained)

The second question addressed by the Commission was "What issues or concerns would the Sustainability Commission like to see added or addressed in the staff analysis?" The Commission's comments for the second motion were based on the table below that was excerpted from the staff analysis.

RECOMMENDED CHANGE	DESCRIPTION	JUSTIFICATION
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RECOMMENDED CHANGE	DESCRIPTION	JUSTIFICATION
1. Lower Rates	For medical and general office, financial institution, stand-alone retail, shopping center, hotel, fast food restaurants and bars	Based on parking counts and comparisons with surrounding cities, the rates for these uses may be too high.
2. Raise Rates	For child care and convalescent hospitals.	Changes in how these uses operate increase the parking required.
3. Clarify Rates	For recreation and athletic facilities, institutions of higher learning, outdoor seating, assisted living, adult day care	Current rates are described in a confusing way (“seating area” for a gym). Rates are re-phrased and adjusted to be clearer.
4. Establish Maximums	Establish parking maximums for commercial uses. Maximums currently exist for industrial uses.	This reduces incentives to “over park” a site. The exception process will allow flexibility when necessary.
5. Create Exceptions	Create a new process to allow exceptions from minimums, maximums, and bicycle parking standards. Can be approved at a staff level with a discretionary permit.	Variances are not the right way to “allow” flexibility. Exception standards established in the ordinance will provide clear guidance on appropriate situations for parking exceptions.
6. Standardize Dimensions	Eliminate compact spaces and institute universal spaces for all industrial and commercial development. Standardize aisle width and angled parking standards. This applies to new development only.	Simplifies parking lot layout and increases consistency with industrial and residential-sized spaces. Compact spaces create inefficiencies with large cars parking in them.
7. Enhance Design Guidelines	Update Citywide Design Guidelines for parking lots and bicycle parking installation.	Parking lot design can be as important as number of spaces. The recent Precise Plan for ECR has a good template for parking lot design guidelines.
8. Address Special Parking	Update standards for bicycle parking, loading spaces, and car sharing. Address parking lifts.	Our bicycle parking standards are out of date. We also want to address new trends such as parking lifts.

Senior Planner O’Dell summarized the Commissions comments regarding Question #2 as follows:

- The Commission had interest in the possibility of lowering parking rates for properties that provide more electric car chargers
- Incentives for bicycles parking or bicycle facilities
- Incentives or lowering rates for car share types of facilities
- Incentivizing parking lifts, such as increasing maximums or doing something else, to encourage more efficient land use for parking
- Incentives for multilevel garage or multilevel parking

- Include examples of exceptions and how they would come into play
- Although outside the scope of this study, the Commission commented on connectivity
- General comment that Sunnyvale would like to model itself as very progressive and at the forefront of sustainability and ways to incorporate that more fully into this code
- Look at moving away from minimums
- Five year update reconsideration of this code to see where to go from there
- Imperative to change the minimums based on alternative transportation in the area, for example lower rates if there is alternative transportation

Chair Harrison opened the public hearing to public comments.

Sunnyvale resident, Betty Green-Heffern, commented as bicyclist in the City. As far as parking, Ms. Green-Heffern commented that retail establishments have little or no parking for bicycles making it difficult to be a consumer on a bicycle because there is nowhere to park. This forces Ms. Green-Heffern to drive in order to be a consumer. Ms. Green-Heffern commented that it concerns her that a City as progressive as Sunnyvale has no place for her as a consumer, who chooses to ride her bicycle, does not have a place to park it and lock it up. This imposes a level of risk because bicyclists are forced to lock their bike to itself and pray that the City is safe enough that it will still be there when leaving the store. Ms. Green-Heffern commented that it seems ironic that the City does not have parking for bikes, but there is a lot of parking for cars. Ms. Green-Heffern commented that she would like to see bicycle parking on the retail side of things, even medical offices, be addressed in the requirements. Ms. Green-Heffern commented that the term “parking” should be encompassing and holistic and not only assume automobiles.

Councilmember Martin-Milius commented building on Ms. Green-Heffern’s comment, that from an economic purpose, how you get people into a store from pedestrian and alternative methodologies, like a Segway or bike or scooter, is an important piece and an alternative use to nonpermeable surfaces.

Chair Harrison closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Fukumoto moved and Commissioner Green-Heffern seconded a motion that the Commission’s recommendations regarding Question #2 have been accurately reflected by staff and can be forwarded through the planning process.

Commissioner Srivastava abstained because the way the actual comments are written up and integrated into staffs report may not be firm enough or may not be interpreted in a way the Commission agrees with.

VOTE: 6-0-1 (Motion carries; Commissioner Srivastava abstained)

NON-AGENDA ITEMS AND COMMENTS

Commissioner Oral Comments

Commissioner Fukumoto commented that she attended the SPUR Climate Action Planning Workshop.

Commissioner Fukumoto commented that she attended the City's community meeting regarding a ban on expanded polystyrene (EPS). Commissioner Fukumoto commented that there were many students from Homestead High Schools Advanced Placement Environmental Science class.

Commissioners Green-Heffern, Harrison and Frazer attended a meeting of the Lawrence Station Area Plan advisory group. Commissioner Frazer commented on one objection he had regarding the meeting that the way the plan was presented with three alternatives with different uses. Each of the alternatives had a different number for estimated job growth and dwelling units added. Commissioner Frazer first concern was how those different numbers impact traffic, schools and park lands. Commissioner Frazer thought it would be more useful to subject each of the options to traffic studies to more tightly define the parameters before going to the public and asking to choose between the alternatives.

Commissioner Srivastava commented on the meetings held by the CCA Subcommittee. The subcommittee has made good progress toward organizing the CCA workshop.

Commissioner Harrison commented that she attended a VTA Board meeting.

Commissioner Harrison attended a Healthy Community seminar.

Staff Comments

Sustainability Coordinator Clark discussed efforts with Joint Venture Silicon Valley to secure a location and confirm logistics regarding the informational CCA presentation to be hosted in Sunnyvale that includes potential governmental partners interested in a CCA partnership. The CCA forum will be held at NetApp on November 14.

Sustainability Coordinator Clark that the Commissions proposed study issue to identify sites at public facilities appropriate to locate electric car chargers was pulled and will be a "just do it" by staff.

INFORMATION ONLY ITEMS

CDD 12-10 Consideration of Non-residential Parking Requirements

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dustin Clark, Environmental Sustainability Coordinator

Reviewed by: John Stuffbean, Director of Environmental Services
Melody Tovar, Regulatory Programs Division Manager