

**CITY OF ALBANY
PLANNING AND ZONING AGENDA
STAFF REPORT**

Agenda date: 1/24/12
Prepared by: ALH

ITEM: 6a

SUBJECT: **Parking Discussion-** As requested by the Planning & Zoning Commission at the October 25, 2011 hearing, this is a joint effort by the Commission, the Traffic & Safety Committee and Sustainability Committee to review existing parking policies. All Committees will begin discussions to amend policies within their respective purviews, for consistency with the City's Climate Action Plan.

SITE: City-wide

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning and Zoning Commission receive the report for the Parking Discussion and discuss strategies for future policies and amendments with the Traffic & Safety Commission and the Sustainability Committee.

PREVIOUS REVIEW

The Planning & Zoning Commission conducted a preliminary discussion of parking issues at its October 25, 2011 hearing. It was decided by the full Commission that further parking discussions should include the Traffic & Safety Committee as there are policy items within that Commission's purview. The Commission also asked that a comprehensive history of Measure D be provided as background information for any future discussion. The Sustainability Committee also asked to be included in the discussion as there are policies within the City's Climate Action Plan which support policies to amend parking standards and City practices.

HISTORY OF MEASURE D

In 1974, the City of Albany adopted a new General Plan. In 1978, the City Council adopted revised Zoning Ordinance. Provisions were included in both policy documents establishing and expanding multifamily zoning in the City. Citizens in the community were upset with the Council decisions allowing expansive multi-family zoning. As a result, concerned citizens circulated a petition "to restore a reasonable balance between single and multiple unit homes in Albany, and to halt the steady increase in congestion City streets." Proponents called the proposal the "Community Preservation Ordinance." Measure D passed with 53.3% of the vote, with 75% voter turnout, on November 21, 1978.

When Measure D appeared on the ballot, it contained three (3) proposals.

1. Rezone portions of central Albany, from Brighton Ave. south, and extending from Masonic Ave to Stannage Ave, to R-1 Single-Family Residential.
 - At that time, the area was zoned for multi-family uses.
 - Measure D also stipulated that any future change from R-1 zoning would require approval of 50% of residents within 300 ft. of the affected site.
2. Increase the required off-street parking ratio to two (2) spaces per dwelling unit, from 1.5 spaces per unit.
 - No distinction was made with regard to size or occupancy.
 - The measure did provide that the Planning & Zoning Commission could make an exception to allow 1.5 spaces per unit, where it could be found that on-street parking was sufficient.
3. To limit the density of future development on the west side of Albany Hill to eighteen (18) dwelling units per acre, amending the 35-unit acre designation of the Albany Hill Specific Plan.
 - This related specifically to the 11 acre vacant parcel south of the high- rise Gateway Condominiums.

Discussions began in 1998 to consider bringing the Measure back to the voters for an amendment twenty years after adoption. The Commission, with the assistance of the Zoning Code Technical Advisory Committee, (an ad hoc group which helped with the Zoning Code rewrite) crafted ballot language to amend Measure D. A resolution was prepared for Council action so that this could be included on the ballot. Ultimately, the Council voted to table the resolution and concluded that that was not the appropriate time to re-open the issue.

Since then, public discussion involving amendments to Measure D have occurred in 2000, 2002, 2003, and 2006. In each instance, it was decided that amendments should proceed at a later date.

The majority of development within the City is in-fill, and there are often lot size constraints, parking exceptions through the Planning Commission are sought regularly, for commercial and residential projects. This practice is consistent with the Provisions of Measure D. The processing of parking exceptions adds time and expense to Planning applications. In most cases, exceptions are approved without substantive discussion.

ANALYSIS

Climate Action Plan

The City's Climate Action Plan was adopted in April 2010. A Transportation and Land Use Strategy Component is included within the document and establishes a goal of reducing 4,665 metric tons of Greenhouse Gas Emissions (GHG). Within the component are five (5) objectives:

- Facilitate Walking & Biking

- Make Public Transit More User Friendly
- Promote Pedestrian/Transit Oriented Development
- Reduce Vehicle Emissions and Trips
- Prepare for Peak Oil

Each component contains detailed policy measures which are intended to support the CAP objectives. The timetable and responsibility of review for each policy action is designated within the CAP. There are two specific measures related to the Planning & Zoning Commission purview which support policy discussion and potential action for parking reductions. These measures are intended to be reviewed through the General Plan update process.

Measure TL 1.5 C-Conduct and audit of land use, zoning, development standards, and other regulations that may act as barriers to neighborhood serving businesses and mixed-use development.

Measure TL 3.2 B-Evaluate the residential and commercial parking requirements and the height and setback requirements for commercial and high density residential uses.

Measure TL 4.5- Evaluate and consider implementation of community parking management strategies.

There are other strategies detailed within the City’s Climate Action Plan. In addition to reviewing the parking standards prescribed within the Code, other policy strategies that could be considered for review include:

- Paid Parking
- Permit Parking
- In-lieu parking fees

PURVIEW

Each Committee participating in the discussion maintains a distinct purview over various City policies. The respective Committees may review and make recommendations for new policies/policy amendments to the City Council.

Planning & Zoning Commission

The Planning & Zoning Commission retains authority over Chapter 20 “Land Development” of the Albany Municipal Code. Policies related to parking standards, exceptions, and zoning requirements fall exclusively with their purview. As part of this discussion, it is recommended that the Planning & Zoning Commission consider the following:

Efficacy of Existing Parking Policy

- Realistic parking standards for a community which is built-out
- Regularity of parking exception requests
- Effectiveness of Measure D

The Commission may direct a review of parking standards for future amendment in the Zoning Code. Alternatively, the Commission could defer the discussion until the General Plan update commences later in 2012.

Traffic & Safety Commission

The Traffic & Safety Commission retains recommending authority over policies contained in Chapter 9 "Motor Vehicles and Traffic." Additionally, the Commission may make policy recommendations for paid parking of which there are no provisions contained in the Albany Municipal Code. There are existing provisions for Permit Parking contained in Section 9-12 of the Albany Municipal Code. (See Attachment 2).

Paid parking has been discussed in the past by the City Council. An informational report presented in 2008 is included as an attachment to this report and provides context on prior discussions.

If an in-lieu fee policy were to be pursued, it would be a collaborative discussion and effort among both Commissions. An in-lieu fee policy would establish a fee structure, fee collection procedures, and allocation of the revenue which is collected. Currently, there are no provisions for in-lieu parking fees.

Sustainability Committee

The Sustainability is responsible for providing oversight on the implementation of the CAP and a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions throughout the City.

FUTURE DISCUSSIONS

After having a collective discussion about parking policies, both Commissions will have their respective policies agendaized for future discussion. It is recommended that both Commissions meet once a quarter to reconvene and provide a status update on policy discussions.

Attachments

1. Transportation and Land Use Strategy Excerpt from the City's Adopted CAP
2. Section 9-12 of the Albany Municipal Code
3. City Council Staff Report on paid parking
4. Planning & Zoning Commission Staff Report on paid parking in 2008