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CITY OF PASADENA



September 3, 2008

Mayor Bill Bogaard  
Pasadena City Council  
100 N. Garfield Avenue  
Pasadena, CA 91109

RE: Council Agenda for September 15, 2008 – Bicycle Showers

Dear Mayor Bogaard and Councilmembers,

Please do not approve the staff recommendation for changes to the Zoning Code Revisions to require office developments of more than 75,000 square feet to install shower and locker facilities for bicyclists. This proposal, while well-intentioned, is wasteful and will do little, if anything, to promote commuting by bicycle.

While I appreciate that Planning staff has added provisions that would allow commercial office developers to find shower facilities offsite, that doesn't relieve the burden and won't apply to all commercial office developments.

Current ordinances require these same commercial developments to meet LEED environmental development standards. Under that requirement, these same developments could choose to implement bicycle showers for commuters if the developer feels that is the best alternative to helping create a sustainable building. However, requiring the bicycle showers means that will be a sustainable feature of every building, whether it furthers a real sustainability goal or not. By implementing this zoning code revision, the City will be hampering the ability of developers to creatively and effectively meet sustainability requirements. They will also not necessarily be able to utilize emerging technologies that may have much more of a positive impact on the environment, because they are forced to invest in showers.

Quite simply, more effective means will be left unconsidered because the developers will be forced to implement bicycle shower and locker room facilities. If Pasadena wants truly sustainable development, the City should allow developers the latitude to find the most effective means to accomplish that, not require installation of showers that could possible mean that some other measure that could to more to promote sustainability would not be contemplated or implemented.

Experience in Pasadena and other places clearly shows that very few workers actually use bicycles to commute to work and fewer still need showers once they arrive there. Is it really an effective means to accomplish sustainability goals to force each developer to do something that only a handful of commuters might ever utilize?

You should also consider what developers may cut to ensure the profitability of their project? Everyone wants a quality built environment in Pasadena, but if developers are burdened with the added costs to install showers and lockers for bicyclists, what compromise will have to be made to have the project meet its financial obligations to investors? We've all seen the result of cost-cutting and compromises made to meet financial projections. Are more such projects an unintended consequence we are prepared to live with should we require commercial office developers to incorporate showers and lockers into their buildings?



Finally, if we really want to promote bicycle use in Pasadena, shouldn't we be looking at making our streets safer for those who choose to pedal to their destination? Shouldn't we do more to promote bicycle use among young people? Shouldn't we be looking at providing safer routes and better access to increase bicycle use? And shouldn't facilities such as showers for bicyclists be created as part of a public effort to make those amenities available on public property for use by the public and maintained at the expense of the public?

Requiring developers to pay to install showers and lockers rooms is likely to accomplish only one thing: increased costs and fewer options resulting in less attractive and less sustainable buildings.

Please do not approve amending the zoning code to require office developers to provide showers and lockers. While it sounds like a good idea, it is not.

Thank you,



Paul Little  
President and Chief Executive Officer

Cc:  
B. Melekian  
M. Jomsky  
R. Bruckner